

HIS FINAL SHOT.

Reader Concludes The Episcopacy And Says Farewell.

DEAR SIR.—I resume the consideration of the subject of the Episcopate by quoting a few of the statements of facts from the letters of the illustrious Ignatius. Mosthem (a Congregationalist) the great historian says respecting his Epistles that: "Perhaps there would have been no contention with most persons about the Epistles of Ignatius, if those who contend for the divine origin and antiquity of Episcopal government had not been enabled to support their cause with them." Accordingly A. B. has endeavored to destroy his unmistakable testimony in advance by saying that some of his writings have been interpolated. He says this because he cannot translate Ignatius by the hair of his head to his side of the question. It is important for A. B. to remember that if there be interpolations in the Epistles which I quote, all copies agree precisely in the quotations which I give regarding Episcopacy. He must prove that the Epistles are spurious before he can destroy my quotations. This no man on earth can do.—If A. B. give the book in trade quotations from Ep. Lightfoot, let him remember that Ep. Lightfoot strongly repudiated such misrepresentation a few years before his death and strongly supported the claim of our ordinals—tracing the Episcopate to the Apostles. Other Bishops both living and the dead made the same clear protest against misrepresentation of their meaning—I presume we shall see that A. B. makes a strange use of "his right of private judgment" in rejecting or "twisting" the quotations which I shall advance from Ignatius—an apostolic Bishop, and martyr.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians he writes:—

"Wherefore is it fitting that ye should run together in accordance with the will of your Bishop, which thing also ye do. For your justly renowned Presbyter worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the Bishop as the strings are to the harp." ch. 4.

"Ye obey the Bishop and Presbyter with an undivided mind, breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality," etc. ch. 20.

In his Epistle to the Magnesians we find the following: "Since, then I have had the privilege of seeing you, through Demetrius your most worthy Bishop, and through your worthy Presbyters Bassus and Apollonius and through my fellow-servant the Deacon Sotio, whose friendship may I ever enjoy, inasmuch as he is subject to the Bishop as to the grace of God, and to the Presbyter as to the law of Jesus Christ," etc. chap. 2.

"Study therefore to be established in the doctrines of the Lord and the Apostles, that so all things, whatsoever ye do, may prosper both in the flesh and spirit, in faith and love; in the Son and the Father, and in the Spirit; in the beginning and in the end; with your most admirable Bishop, and the well compacted spiritual crown of your presbyter, and the Deacons, who are according to God. Be subject to the Bishop," etc. chap. 13.

In his Epistle to the Trallians, he thus writes: "It is therefore necessary that, as we indeed do, so with out the Bishop ye should do nothing, but should also be subject to the presbytery, as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who is our hope, in whom, if we live, we shall, at last, be found. It is fitting also that the deacons, as being (the ministers) of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, should in every respect be pleasing to all. For they are not ministers of meat and drink, but of the Church of God," chap. 2.

"In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the Bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the Presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God, and assembly of the Apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church," Chap. 3.

"He that is within the altar is pure, but he that is without is not pure: that is, he who does anything apart from the Bishop, and presbytery, and deacons, such a man is not pure in his conscience." Chap. 7.

In his Epistle to the Philadelphians he writes: "When I was among you, I cried, I spake with a loud voice: Give heed to the Bishop and to the Presbyter and the Deacons. Now, some suspected me of having spoken thus, as knowing beforehand the division caused by some among you. But he is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I got no intelligence from any man. But the Spirit proclaimed these words: Do nothing without the Bishop; keep your bodies as the temple of God; love unity, avoid divisions, be the followers of Jesus Christ, even as he is of the Father." Chap. 7.

In his Epistle to the Smyrnians: "See that you follow the Bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the Presbyter, as ye would the Apostles, and reverence the Deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the Bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is (administered) either by the Bishop, or by one to whom he has intrusted it. Wherever the Bishop shall appear, there let the people also be; as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." Chap. 8.

And in his Epistle to Polycarp, he says: "Give heed to the Bishop, that God also may give heed to you. My soul be for theirs that are submissive to the Bishop, to the Presbyters and to the Deacons, and may my portion be

along with them in God." Chap. 6.

I have quoted more particularly this Apostolic Father, because he is one whose writings have come down to us with great completeness, and because he is a witness who has a right to be heard; and I want to emphasize the statement, that, as a witness of facts, existing in the Church, in the days of the Apostles, his testimony not only may, but absolutely ought to be received by us. It is not honest dealing with his works to try to discredit them, because they cannot translate him by the hair of the head over to their side of the question. I could easily quadruple quotation. I could easily quadruple quotation from his writings, but the following positions are clearly proved.

1. That the same organization is recognized as existing in all those Churches, though widely scattered in Asia and Europe.

2. That in all those Churches the three orders of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, are spoken of as constituting the Christian Ministry.

3. That in each Church, there was only one Bishop, but yet a plurality of Presbyters and Deacons.

4. That Presbyters and Deacons were spoken of as subject to the authority of the Bishop, who was regarded as the visible head of said Church.

5. That union with the Church thus constituted, is spoken of as a high privilege and solemn duty, and separation from said Church was regarded as dangerous and sinful.

Now, I say, considering the time when Ignatius lived, that he was personally acquainted with the inspired Apostles, and with their practice, and that he could not possibly have been mistaken in the facts which he asserts; and when we remember, that he sealed the truth of his testimony with his own heart's blood, for he had a most certain and most tragic death staring him in the face, and but just before him, that there is no possible room to doubt in what manner Jesus Christ constituted His Church, through His inspired Apostles.

Had I space I should produce the testimony of the "Blessed Polycarp" who was ordained Bishop of Smyrna by the Apostle St John. Iren. Adv. Her. iii 4.—In chapter 3 of the book just referred to Irenaeus says of Clement what A. B. cannot explain away—I will quote the whole chapter because of its importance. "The blessed Apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the Apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man as he had seen the blessed Apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the Apostles still echoing in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone in (this) for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the Apostles. In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome despatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the Apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who through Abraham, and called the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angles. From this document, whoever chooses to do so, may learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolical traditions of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who con- jure into existence another god beyond the Creator and Maker of all existing things. To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then sixth from the Apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him Telephorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Ilygnus; after him Pius; then after him Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the Apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate. In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the Apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the Apostles until now, and handed down in truth." Will the reader, please, read the above quotation again carefully. It proves to my mind most convincingly that 1. The Apostles founded the Episcopate. 2. That there had been an unquestioned succession in the Episcopate to the days of Irenaeus. 3. That that was the belief of all early orthodox Christians. And 4. That that succession was the strong argument which the early Churchmen relied on to detect and expose the heretics of those early days. A. B. admits that episcopacy everywhere prevailed from the second to the sixteenth century. So I need not refer to the multitudinous hosts of witnesses by which we can prove its continuity and universality during all those centuries.

The learned French Protestant Guizot says: "The Apostles themselves appointed several Bishops, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and many Fathers of the second and

third centuries do not permit us to doubt this fact." The learned Grotius himself a Presbyterian, through force of circumstances, was candid enough to give up the attempt to invalidate Episcopacy. Like many of the continental reformers, he regretted that the Church of Holland had lost the Apostolic Ministry. He was as familiar with the Fathers as most Protestants are ignorant of them; and this is what he says of their evidence for Episcopacy: "To reject the supremacy of one pastor above the rest is to condemn the whole ancient Church of folly, or even of impiety." And, "The Episcopacy had its commencement in the times of the Apostles. All the Fathers without exception testify to this." Again he says: "The Episcopate is of Apostolic institution, because it appears that the Bishops were ordained or approved in some Churches by the Apostles. * * * What the whole Church maintains, and was not instituted by Councils, but was always held, is not, with any good reason, believed to be handed down by any but Apostolic authority." Grotius also admits that James, the brother of our Lord, was Bishop of Jerusalem, that Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, that Titus was Bishop of Crete, that Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch, that the "Angels of the Seven Churches" were the Bishops of those Churches respectively; that this Chief of the Presbyters was first called Apostle, or Angel; that the title of Bishop was given to him before the death of Peter and Paul, and about 40 years before the death of St. John.—The constant defence of the Foreign Reformed Churches for rejecting Episcopacy was the plea of necessity. Could they have enjoyed full liberty at the time of the Reformation, they would never have forsaken the ancient Episcopal System. In the Institutes Book 4 c. 4, Calvin says openly, "It will be useful to observe anew the form of the Primitive Church, which will set before us a kind of image of the Divine institution. For although the Bishops of those times published many canons, in which they may seem to have expressed more than is expressed in the Holy Scripture, yet they framed their whole economy so cautiously in agreement with that only rule, the Word of God, that they were evidently in this respect scarcely anything different from the Word of God.—"As we have shown that three kinds of ministers are commended in the Scripture, so the ancient Church divided all their ministers into three orders; for from the order of Presbyters they chose some Pastors and Teachers, the rest taking care of discipline and morals; and to the Deacons was committed the care of alms. They who had the office of teaching they called Presbyters. These chose out of their number one in each city, to whom they especially gave the title of Bishop, lest, as it commonly happens, dissensions should arise from equality. But the Bishop was not so superior in honor and dignity as to have absolute rule over his colleagues, but the office which a consul held, in proposing matters to the Senate, collecting votes, directing them by advice, admonition, exhortation; and guiding every action by his authority, and executing that which was decreed by common consent, that office had the Bishop in the assembly of the Presbyters."—We shall find that the Bishops aimed at framing no other form of governing the Church than that which God prescribed in His Word." On this the judicious Hooker observes Bk. 7, chap 6. "Thus much Calvin, being forced by the evidence of truth to grant, doth yet deny the Bishops to have been so in authority at the first, as to bear rule over other ministers; wherein what rule he doth mean I know not. But if the Bishops were so far in dignity above other ministers as the consuls for their year above other senators, it is as much as we require." Again on Necess. Eccles. Ref. he says: "If they would present unto us a Hierarchy in which Bishops shall so rule as they refuse not to submit themselves to Christ, as that they depend on Him, etc., etc., then surely they that will not reverently and with the greatest obedience submit themselves to that Hierarchy, if any such there should be, I confess there is no anathema of which they are not worthy." Again, "We confess, therefore, that these Bishops are reverently to be obeyed, so far as they teach the Word of God according to their due function." Strype tells us, Life of Cranmer" p. 418.—"That Calvin, Bullinger, and others, in a letter to King Edward 6th, offered to make him their Defender, and to have Bishops in their Churches, as they were in England. I need not give the cause for its failure. The language of the Augsburg Confession was the universal sentiment of 'the Reformed Churches in Europe.' 'The cruelty of the Bishops is the cause why that canonical government, or Policy, which we earnestly desire to preserve, is in some places now dissolved.' Bishop Hall says Vol. 9:516: "that as late as the Synod of Dort (1638), the President of that assembly Bogermanus, allowed that the Episcopal Discipline would have rendered the Churches of the Netherlands more happy." The Bishop then adds, "all the world of men judicious and not prejudiced with their own interests, both do and must say, and confess with the learned Casaubon, Fregeville, and Saravia, that no Church in the world comes so near the Apostolic form as the Church of England."

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