

SCHISM, APOSTASY, ANGLICAN ORDERS AND ECUMENISM

1. HENRY VIII - SCHISM

In popular understanding, King Henry VIII is regarded as having founded the Church of England. He did not; and this fact is central to the understanding of both 16th Century Church history and modern ecumenical issues. Henry was awarded the title "Defender of the Faith" for having defended the doctrines of the Catholic Church against the German heretic Martin Luther. Subsequently in declaring himself to be the Supreme Head of the Church in England in 1534 after the Pope had upheld the validity of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, by refusing him a declaration of nullity, (he had not sought a divorce) he went into schism and, in usurping papal authority, into heresy. But he never founded a separate Church. With the exception of Bishop (later Cardinal) John Fisher, all the Bishops, many perhaps in fear for their lives, took the oath of allegiance to him as "Supreme Head" of the Church in England.

2. EDWARD VI - PROTESTANTISATION

Henry died in 1547, and was succeeded by the young Edward VI. Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was now free to set about the protestantising of the Church and started the process by commissioning the preparation of a "Book of Common Prayer".

This 1549 Prayer Book did not contain a rite for ordination. Because of the strong opposition he met from the more Catholic-minded of the Bishops, Cranmer dismissed the Bishops, with the exception of Nicholas Heath, from the Committee appointed to draw up a new rite of ordination. The Bill for the preparation of the new Ordinal came before Parliament in January 1550. Of the 27 Bishops, 13 absented themselves, and 5 of the 14 who attended dissented — including Heath who was committed to the Fleet prison for his dissent on 4th March 1550.

3. MARY I - RECONCILIATION

When Edward died in July 1553, Mary I the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, became Queen. Mary's "Act of Repeal" (Mary and Philip c. 1), passed by a vote of 270-80 in the House of Commons on 8th November 1553, abolished the nine Acts of the Edwardine settlement with the words "all such Divine Service and administration of the Sacraments as were most commonly used in the realm of

England in the last years of our late Sovereign Lord Henry VIII shall be restored from 20th December onwards". The Church in England was reconciled to Rome by Cardinal Pole. Pole's instructions from Rome were that all Orders conferred by the use of the Cranmerian Ordinal were null and void, (compare Leo XIII "Apostolicae Curae"), but that those so ordained could, if suitable, be ordained in the Catholic rite. Heath was to be re-consecrated and appointed to be Archbishop of York. Heath protested at this, pointing out that both his priestly and his episcopal Orders had been conferred with the Roman Pontifical. Rome withdrew the instruction that he be re-consecrated before taking up his appointment to York. Thus was the Henrician Schism healed.

Even before official instructions had been received from Rome, Bishop Bonner of London and others began to re-ordain the Edwardine clergy, recognising the invalidity of their Orders.

Seven Edwardine bishops were deposed, and degraded from the priesthood (their episcopal consecrations were ignored, as invalid). They were Scory and Coverdale (of whom see later), and Ponet, Hooper, Harley, Taylor and Ferrar. Ferrar had been consecrated in 1548, in a manner different from the Roman Pontifical. The other six had been consecrated with the Cranmerian Ordinal. Only Taylor, who was unmarried, was actually deposed on grounds of the nullity of his consecration, but the consecrations of the others were equally invalid for that reason.

4. ELIZABETH I - APOSTASY

Queen Mary and Cardinal Pole both died on the same day, 17th November 1558. Elizabeth I, daughter of Anne Boleyn, became Queen, and immediately set about bringing "an alteration to religion". The Church of England dates from 29th April 1559, with the passage of the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity. The Diocesan bishops were required to take the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen as "Supreme Governor". They refused, and were "deposed". Those who did not escape abroad were imprisoned — though Bishop Kitchin of Llandaff at 81, was restored in office despite his refusal to take the oath. The Acts did not apply to the Isle of Man, so Bishop Thomas Stanley of Sodor remained free although also not taking the oath.

In order to preserve some link with the ancient hierarchy, Elizabeth ordered that before the oath was tendered to the last three they must consecrate Matthew Parker as archbishop of Canterbury. When they refused, she turned to Kitchin, the only bishop still in possession of his See, and others. But only Scory and Coverdale (see above), Hodgkin and Barlow turned up. Hodgkin, former auxiliary in Bedford, had been validly consecrated, and reconciled by Cardinal Pole, but had later absconded to the continent. Barlow may have been validly consecrated but,

having fled abroad and married an apostate nun, had not been reconciled. Both lacked canonical appointment and jurisdiction. Under the Canon Law of that time, it would have been through Barlow, as consecrator, that the Apostolic Succession passed, had he had the proper faculties and used the Catholic Pontifical — but he had not, and did not.

Barlow and Scory were members of the Edwardine Convocation of 1553 which drew up the original 42 Articles of Religion and later (with Parker) of the Convocation of 1562, which added to Article XXV's statement that "There are two Sacraments ..." the words "Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel ... for they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God".

One might wonder how, if Anglican Orders are not a Sacrament, anyone can claim that they confer Orders in the Apostolic Succession, and why they need to be conferred by a bishop?

The Church of England did not "break away from Rome". Truly its founders broke from their former allegiance to Rome, but the Church of England qua Church of England is not, and never was, a part of the Universal Church. It is a completely separate foundation, deriving its Orders not from the Apostolic Succession but from English Acts of Parliament.

That the Elizabethan establishment knew and understood that the Cranmerian rite does not confer Catholic Orders can be seen from the outcome of a case brought against Edmund Bonner, Catholic Bishop of London, in 1564. Horne, State bishop of Winchester, in whose diocese Bonner was jailed, demanded that he take the oath of allegiance — the penalty for refusing which a second time was death. Bonner responded that "the said Mr Robert Horne, not being lawful bishop of Winchester, but a usurper, intruder, and in unlawful possession thereof, as well for that, according to the laws of the Catholic Church and the statutes and ordinances of this realm, the said Mr Robert Horne was not elected, consecrated, or provided, as also according to the canons of the Catholic Church".

The case was dropped, and in 1566 Parliament passed the Validating Act (8 Eliz, c. 1) with its "Supplying Clause" retrospectively restoring the legal sanctioning of the Cranmerian Ordinal which the 1559 "Act of Uniformity" had omitted to restore in express terms. As Rev. F.J. Shirley points out in his response to Mr. Whitebrook ("Elizabeth's First Archbishop": SPCK, 1948), this clause would not have been inserted if that (deficient) Ordinal had not been used between 1559-66.

NOTE: In "The Consecration of Matthew Parker", (London: 1945: Mowbray; NY: Morehouse-Gorman), J.C.Whitebrook uniquely suggests that Matthew Parker was; consecrated not by Dr. Barlow on 17th December 1559, but validly by Bishop Kitchen on 29th October of that same year. He accepts, however, that Anglican Orders are null and void in terms of Catholic teaching by reason of the use of the illicit Cranmerian Ordinal for a hundred years from the death of Bishop Kitchin in 1563, leaving no possibility of valid Orders being retained and passed on.

5. MORE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Pope Leo XIII re-examined the Church's position on the validity of Orders conferred by the Anglican Ordinal, and in *Apostolicae Curae* 1896, confirmed the decisions of his predecessors that the Ordinal, being deficient in both Form and Intention, cannot confer the Catholic priesthood. But in the ecumenical climate of our century, the truth concerning the validity of Anglican Orders has been clouded by claims — heard from some Catholic as well as Anglican sources — that the participation of schismatic Old Catholic bishops (whose Orders are recognised by Rome) in some Anglican consecrations since 1932 may have introduced valid Orders into the Anglican church "by the back door".

It has to be remembered, however, that even a validly consecrated bishop cannot confer valid Orders if he uses a deficient ordinal. Each case needs to be examined on its own merits, but if an Anglican clergyman can show legitimate grounds for doubt as to the invalidity of his Orders, he may seek conditional ordination after reception into the Catholic Church. This would make sure that he is validly ordained but would, of course, have no effect if he were so already.

It has been suggested that the Pope might find it possible to accept the words of the 1978 revised Anglican ordinal, provided that they were removed from their Cranmerian context, as sufficing to allow future Anglican Orders to be recognised as valid; but even were that so, valid wording is insufficient to confer valid Orders in the absence of a validly consecrated bishop to administer the Sacrament.

An Anglican bishop convinced of the validity of his Orders could, of course, follow the example of Archbishop Frederick Linnell of the "Old Roman Catholic Church" (of Beckenham, Kent) who sought and obtained a declaration from Rome confirming the validity of his Orders in 1962.

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Statement of the Lower House of Convocation, 28th February 1559, protesting at two Acts which subsequently, against the opposition of all the Bishops and the

Lower House, were passed into law:

"We affirm, and so God help us in the Day of Judgement, we assert:

1. That in the Sacrament of the Altar, by force of the word of Christ duly pronounced by the Priest, there is present, really, under the appearances of bread and wine, the natural Body of Christ, conceived o the Virgin, and, in the same way, His natural Blood.
2. That, after the consecration, the substance of bread and wine does not remain, nor any other substance, except the substance of God and man.
3. That in the Mass the true Body of Christ and His true Blood are offered, a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.
4. That to the Apostle Peter, and to his lawful successors in the Apostolic See, there has been given, as the Vicars of Christ, the supreme power of pasturing the Church Militant of Christ, and of strengthening his brethren.
5. That the authority to treat of or define whatever concerns the Faith, the Sacraments and ecclesiastical discipline, has hitherto belonged, and ought to belong, to the pastors of the Church alone, whom the Holy Ghost has placed in the Church of God for this purpose, and not to laymen".

Note the matters that the Catholic bishops defended against the "Reformers": the Real Presence, Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Prayer for the Dead (and thus Purgatory), and the Supremacy of the Pope both in matters of doctrine and of ecclesiastical discipline.

THE ACTS OF SUPREMACY AND OF UNIFORMITY (Eliz.1.c.1 and 2),
FOUNDING THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, BOTH BECAME LAW ON 29th
A P RII 1559.

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