

new system maintains its ground. But even these diverse beliefs may be severally upheld without a breach of Christian charity, and the grounds of our belief may be set forth so clearly and so lovingly as to tend to a much larger understanding of our several views, and perchance at last to some reconciliation.

Now, we so read Scripture as to believe that our Blessed Lord intended His Church to be essentially one in inward love and in outward unity; and in order to carry this out He chose the Apostles, and subsequently, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, others, prophets or apostolic men, to Govern His Church, so that it was truly founded on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.

And every apostolic gift and every work they, as rulers of the Church, were given to do was normally transmitted by them in the varying degrees of work to separate persons by the laying on of hands with special graces for the performance of the several duties to which each was appointed; and we see that the powers of transmittal to others were among the gifts given by the Apostles and apostolic men to those set apart for that purpose. This is a government from without, coming with Christ's authority, and tending to unity, and is the reverse of a government from within at the discretion of two or three, which contains in itself the essence of division.

Mr. Charles Gore writes, 'It is a matter of very great importance to exalt the principle of the Apostolic Succession above the question of the exact form of the ministry in which the principle has expressed itself, even though it be by Apostolic ordering. The Apostolic Succession has taken shape in a threefold ministry, consisting of a single Bishop in each community or diocese, with presbyters and deacons, the Bishop alone having the power of ordaining or conferring ministerial authority on others, the presbyters constituting a "co-operative order" which shares with him a common priesthood; and the deacons holding a subordinate and supplementary position; but this is rather the outcome of a principle than itself a principle—at any rate a primary or essential principle. No one, of whatever part of the Church, could maintain that the existence of what may be called, for lack of a distinctive term, *monepiscopacy*, is essential to the continuity of the Church. . . . For that continuity would not be broken if in any diocese all the presbyters were consecrated to the episcopal office, and governed as a co-ordinate college of Bishops without presbyters or presbyter Bishops. . . . The principle of the Apostolic Succession would not be violated. . . .

'There have always (it is here supposed) existed in the Church ministers who, beside the ordinary exercise of their ministry, possess the power of transmitting it, they may so far be one or many in each community; but when they ordain men to the holy offices of the Church they are only fulfilling the function intrusted to them out of the Apostolic fount of authority. There are other ministers, again,

who have certain clearly understood functions committed to them, but not that of transmitting their office. Should these ever attempt to transmit it, their act would be considered invalid. For this is the Church's principle—that no ministry is valid which is assumed, which a man takes upon himself, or which is merely delegated to him from below. That ministerial act alone is valid which is covered by a ministerial commission received from above by succession from the Apostles.'

Again in pp. 344-5:—

'But it will appear at once as a consequence of all this argument that the various Presbyterian and Congregationalist organizations, however venerable on many and different grounds, have, by dispensing with the Episcopal successions, violated a fundamental law of the Church's life. It cannot be maintained that the acts of ordination, by which presbyters of the sixteenth and subsequent centuries originated the ministries of some of these Societies, were covered by their commission or belonged to the office of presbyter which they had duly received; beyond all doubt they took to themselves those powers of ordination, and consequently had them not.'

If it cannot be proved that presbyters or even presbyter abbots ever claimed the power of ordaining others, it follows that such a ministry cannot justify its existence within the terms of the covenant; but it does not follow that God's grace has not worked, and worked largely, through many an irregular ministry where it was exercised and used in good faith; so that from our point of view we should not ask our Nonconformist brethren to deny any spiritual experience of the past or the present. 'The blame for separation lies, on any fair showing, quite sufficiently with the Church to make it intelligible that God should have let the action of His grace extend itself widely and freely beyond its covenanted channels.' Again to quote Mr. Gore:—

'If it be the case that we are bound to seek organic unity; if it be the case that the results of our past divisions, of our past individualism, are such as to satisfy ourselves that there has been something fundamentally wrong about current conceptions of Christian liberty and Christian progress; if, further, it be the case that new moral and doctrinal perils, consequent upon the collapse of Christian discipline and accompanied with "the shaking" of established institutions in all directions, are constantly pressing upon us the obligation to consider afresh the basis of Christian life and order—all this coincides to give new force and meaning to the claims of the Apostolic Succession; for it alone, embodying as it does the principle of the historical continuity of the Church, affords a possible basis of union.'

In conclusion, I would endeavour to make it clearly understood that we of the Church of England in asking for a reunion on such a basis are not asking for the cause to be decided all our own way—in a return to her truest principles the Church has much to learn from those bodies which have been for a time separated from her. The Presbyterians have

taught her that in any endeavour to attain to the primitive purity of the Church the presbyters must resume their old appointed position as the Councillors of the Bishops. Congregationalists have shown us that we should look back for that free voice of the laity in the choice of our Bishops and presbyters which was so clearly recognised in earlier times. And both Presbyterians and Congregationalists have shown us the importance of that freedom in all things spiritual which should require in the Reunited Church, at the least, that spiritual freedom which the Established Church in Scotland has won. I have long thought that these and other freedoms so difficult while one body of Christians remains antagonistic to the other, could easily be accomplished when we were united.—LORD NELSON, in *Church Bells*.

A PRESBYTERIAN PRAYER BOOK.

A GREAT change is now being quietly and gradually effected in the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland. Until recently what was at least supposed to be extemporaneous prayer was rigorously and universally imposed upon ministers in the services of the Scottish Establishment. In late years, however, a "Church Service Society" has been formed, under whose care a book has been issued which reached the fifth edition in 1884, entitled "A Book of Common Order." That the prayers are couched in rich and nervous English, and that there is a high spiritual tone throughout, goes without saying. But it is further remarkable in the best sense, how often recourse has been had to the ancient Liturgies of the Church. Much has been taken from our own Book of Common Prayer. On the other hand, the deep-rooted antipathy in Scotland to Liturgical exactness has found expression in a course of different services for the several Sundays in each month. The "Book of Common Order" is issued in three parts, of which, curiously enough, the First and Third are bound up together, and the Second is in a volume by itself. There is, however, more reason for this division than appears at first sight, as will be seen when we add that the First Part consists of morning and evening services arranged for a month, and the Third is composed of an Appendix to the First Part, "containing materials for daily and other services." The Second Part is intended to be a Sacramentary and Occasional Office Book in one, consisting, according to the title, of "The Administration of the Sacraments and other Ordinances of the Church."

The larger of the two volumes commences with a combined "Table of Psalms and Lessons for Divine Service on every Lord's Day throughout the year." This table is given in three parts, for two years and for alternative use respectively. We next come to a Daily Lectionary for one year; and after that to a "Table of the Psalms for a month," which is taken from our Prayer Book. The morning services begin with "one of the invitatory Psalms," though the use of such an introduction is apparently optional. Then we have