

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer Book.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."---Eph. vi., 24.
"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."---Jude: 3.

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RECOVERY OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

THE *N. Y. Churchman* has the following, which should be carefully considered by Churchmen as well as by Presbyterians:—

Some months since we published an account of a debate in the General Assembly of the Scotch Kirk, showing how much truth was uttered by several of the members upon points of Church order and doctrine. A late Scottish journal has an account of a case in the Aberdeen Presbytery, in which some utterances of the like kind were made, and which are equally significant.

A complaint was made against the Rev. Mr. Cooper of that presbytery, by several elders, for teaching things inconsistent with Presbyterian doctrine. Mr. Cooper defended himself before the presbytery in a speech, the more important parts of which we give in brief outline. In opening he said that he was a minister of the Church of Scotland, "not because it was one of several religious clubs out of which he might choose, but because he believed it to be the national branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, with divine claims, therefore, on the allegiance of the people." One complaint against him was that he held that "the Church of Scotland had the apostolic succession, and that her ministers received, in virtue of their ordination, a special grace and special gifts from the Spirit, and that only thereby are they fitted to minister the word and sacraments." He quotes the words of another Presbyterian clergyman in Glasgow, who said, "many Presbyterians believe in the apostolic descent of their orders as firmly as Bishop Wilberforce did in his." This is high ground, we think, for Presbyterians of this day to take. We may err, but we believe that few now affirm any special ordination grace. Another complaint was that he taught the Lord's Supper was a "sacrifice." "I admit that I have taught that the Eucharist, like all Christian worship, has a sacrificial aspect, but it is not an expiatory sacrifice. The sin-offering has been accomplished, and only the commemoration, the Thanksgiving, and the Participation are now going on." "We have the sacrifice of praise, including as its very chiefest part in the great Thanksgiving service of the Christian Church, the Holy Eucharist. Where, having in remembrance the Death of the Redeemer, His mighty Resurrection and prevailing Intercession, we make with all possible praise and thanksgiving our solemn memorial of them before the Father, and plead (with the symbols in our hand, of Him who is himself our plea in Heaven) that God would for His sake bless the Church and save our brethren of mankind. We do not need (God could not give) another Victim, another Mediator. We thankfully lay hold of Jesus; we plead His sacrifice; we do it till He come."

Another complaint was that Mr. Cooper invited communicants to partake of Christ's body and blood, and taught that "the outward elements, after being duly set apart, were not in substance and nature, truly and only, bread and wine." After strongly denying transubstantiation, he adds, "I never asserted any change in the substance of the elements, but that the consecrated elements still remaining bread and wine are made the channels of a real communication, the means whereby the Holy Spirit conveys to the faithful the heavenly food which our Lord bestows."

Another complaint was respecting the teaching on baptism, that Baptism was, except in extraordinary cases, indispensable to salvation. "What I have maintained is, that we are not at liberty to dispense with an ordinance which God has instituted; a thing more important to be maintained now, when I see, as I unhappily do in many quarters, such a despising of this sacrament, as almost amounts to a positive hostility toward it." As to the efficacy of this sacrament Mr. Cooper said: "It is attributed me as a fault that I hold that the grace of baptism is given by the Holy Ghost to infants at the time when it is administered, and that I have said on such occasions, 'may the spark which has this day been kindled in this child's bosom, be kept alive.'" Mr. Cooper then quoted from the Catechism and other Presbyterian authorities to show that this is Presbyterian doctrine.

Another complaint was that he held to a change in the condition of the soul after death and before resurrection. This Mr. Cooper emphatically denied. "There is a making perfect of the holy, but no conversion, no passing from one side to the other. It is a heresy condemned by all Catholic teachers, that a disembodied soul can pass either out of Christ or into Christ."

Mr. Cooper having finished his address, the matter was taken up by the presbytery. The moderator made a speech in which he said that Mr. Cooper "held views or had modes of expressing them which were perhaps not common or familiar among them." But as to doctrinal errors, he thought no ground had been shown that would warrant the presbytery in going into any judicial process. It was the undoubted doctrine of the Presbyterian Church that a special grace was conveyed to the minister in the service of ordination and the imposition of hands. As to apostolic succession, "it is one I attach much importance to, and I think we have as much right to claim it as our Episcopalian or our Catholic friends. As to the Lord's Supper, I hope the petitioners do not hold it to be merely a commemoration of Christ's Death. If they do we must have them up before the presbytery. It is a kind of low-church doctrine. It is a most distinct heresy." The moderator proceeded at considerable length to prove this point by citations from Calvin and others. "As to the sacrifice in the Eucharist, after the satisfactory explanation given, it is not necessary to take up the matter. The statements in regard to baptism, and to the state of the soul after death, were equally satisfactory."

The moderator moved a resolution to the effect that no doctrinal statements attributed to Mr. Cooper, and submitted to the presbytery, were such as to warrant a regular judicial inquiry. This motion was seconded by a member, who said that there was no case before the presbytery. Other members spoke, among them Professor Milligan, of the Aberdeen University; some advising delay, but none speaking on the points touched on by Mr. Cooper. The matter was then adjourned. Of its final disposition we are not informed.

This debate is one of the many signs showing that there is a strong movement in various parts of the Christian Church toward the recovery of sounder principles respecting Church doctrines and sacraments. The question whether presbyters can and do take the place and fulfil the functions of bishops will soon have its turn, and old truth will re-assert itself here also.

THEN AND NOW.

ONE of the most unanswerable arguments in favour of Christianity, one that appeals instinctively to the heart of every man, is the fact which can not be denied, that Charity, as the world now understands the word, is the result of Christian teaching. Only those who have studied the old-time authors, who are versed in the history of the soul darkened days which preceded the Advent of the Messiah and are acquainted with the minute details of that ancient world which has happily passed away, can fully realize the change. To the fools who have said in their hearts there is no God such a study would be at once irksome and unprofitable; to those who humbly profess and call themselves Christians, it could not but strengthen their faith and fill them with a lively sense of gratitude, that they had seen the light in a time when old things had indeed passed away and all things had become new.

Dr. G. Uhorn, a learned German divine, has just published a very remarkable work, which has excited great attention throughout the whole civilized, that is to say throughout the whole Christian world, under the title "Christian Beneficence in the Ancient Church." He has compiled with great skill and completeness a series of the most convincing arguments for our Holy Religion that have ever been given to the world.

Any man, we care not who he be, who calmly and impartially sits down to a study of history must admit that eighteen centuries ago a change of which it wot little at the time began to operate upon the world, that a spirit of love began then to move over the troubled waters of humanity, and that little by little humanity began to recognise the beauty and truth, and to live according to the teachings of the One Man Who called Himself the Brother and Friend of every man, and at Whose Birth was heard the sublimest anthem: "Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace, good-will to men."

FAITH AND REASON.

It is important for scientific men to bear in mind that faith underlies all reasoning, whether inductive or otherwise. Mr. H. Griffith, in his recent book "Faith, the Life-Root of Science," earnestly reminds us of what we are too apt to forget, that experimental science *assumes* the trustworthiness of our perceptions, and that moral science *assumes* the accuracy of our moral instincts. How enormous is the assumption in the former instance the students of Berkeley will understand. Science rests upon the evidence of senses which have often misled us, and for which constant corrections have to be made by experience; the faith therefore which men necessarily repose in their perceptive powers, it is only reasonable to extend to those moral and spiritual intuitions which are no less facts of our nature.—*Selected.*

It is well to remember that the Christian Religion makes no greater demands upon either our Faith or our Reason than do some other things which we readily accept as unquestionably true. Let people who would cast doubts upon Revealed Truth not forget this fact, and have their Faith in God made strong.