

supremacy of Scripture" (p. 199). Of course, the Church of England is sharply distinguished from "the great rebellion against the hierarchy" which created the Protestant Churches. If only it would "recall its unhappy surrender to the State of the necessary functions of spiritual government," it would soon demonstrate its superiority. So we are led to four "elements of this work of internal recovery." We must become severely denominational, narrowly dogmatic, self-governing, and more patient of variety. Thus we shall satisfy the world's need of "a liberal Catholicism." Meanwhile we shall attend the Roman churches abroad, and limit our connection with the Anglican churches to the indispensable duty of "making our communions." "At home we shall make the most of our opportunities of co-operation with Nonconformists for *social and philanthropic objects*," and even go so far as to "join with our fellow-Christians in prayer, wherever we can *on really neutral ground*"; but on no account must we give the least countenance to the cardinal heresy of the age, undenominationalism (pp. 200-208).

The Bishop of Birmingham has a notion of the Church of England which neither its history, nor its constitution, nor its formularies, will authenticate. In his evidence before the Ritual Commission, his lordship offered an interesting sidelight on his mental attitude. "I was what people call a ritualist from the time I was a boy," he said. In this volume he discloses a view of the National Church as ritualists conceive of it, not as it has been, or is, or possibly can be, if in any sense it is to remain what for nearly four centuries it has been—the spiritual organ of a Protestant people.

II.

BY THE REV. CANON HAY AITKEN, M.A.

Amidst the thronging occupations of his strenuous and useful life, the Bishop of Birmingham has managed to find time to write yet another book upon a subject which he has already treated pretty fully, and which seems to exercise a

strange fascination over his mind, and more particularly over his imagination. His latest work, "Orders and Unity," is, more than anything else, one prolonged plea in favour of the dogma of Apostolical Succession; and the strangeness of the thing lies in this, that evidently the bent of the Bishop's mind is critical rather than credulous—he is more disposed towards inquiry and scientific examination than to the submissive acceptance of traditional assumptions, as he showed once for all in his notable essay in "Lux Mundi." Yet here we find him practically sacrificing all real hope of the reunion which he so earnestly desires, at the shrine of a theory of Episcopacy which has been discredited and abandoned by almost all the critical spirits of our time.

In this respect this volume is a most disappointing book. After the heart-stirring utterances of the Pan-Anglican Congress, and not least those that were heard from the pulpit of Westminster Abbey, one naturally opened the volume with the hope that some such reasonable modification of the old traditional view would be indicated in its pages as would open the door for further *rapprochement* between Anglicans and Nonconformists. But no; it is obvious that the object of the treatise is to show the impossibility of any sort of compromise in this respect. Monarchical Episcopacy, according to the Bishop, is not to be regarded as an evolutionary development, deserving respect alike because of its antiquity and because of its practical value; it is part of the original Divine plan concerning the Church, and must therefore take its place among the essentials of Christian religion.

Now, nothing is more obvious, if this is to be the attitude of the Anglican Communion towards this subject, than that all hope of Home Reunion is absolutely illusory, and should in the name of sincerity and truth be finally abandoned. It is no more possible for Nonconformists to admit this claim on behalf of the Episcopate than it is for Anglicans to admit the Roman claim on behalf of the Papacy. Nothing is gained by ignoring the obvious. Better far that we should sorrowfully admit the hope-

lessness of the position, and make the best of things as they are, than that we should both tantalize and stultify ourselves by futile efforts after the impossible.

But is Bishop Gore consistent with himself? On page 196, in dealing with the Papal pretensions, I find him saying: "Our appeal is to the principle, thoroughly recognized and assured in the Church of the Fathers, of the supremacy of Scripture as the testing-ground of doctrine. This means that the substance of the faith was once for all delivered and declared in the first Apostolic preaching of the Gospel; that it is the function of the Church to protect and propagate this faith; but that it has no commission to reveal or enforce new truth."

Now, where was this doctrine of the necessity of mon-episcopal government delivered and declared in the first Apostolic preaching of the Gospel? What indication is there in the New Testament Scriptures (1) of the existence of such an officer as a Bishop in the sense in which we now use the word, and (2) of the institution of the laying-on of hands as the means whereby he was admitted to his office? I venture to say, without fear of contradiction, there is *absolutely none*; and yet the position of such an official in the Christian scheme, as conceived of by the Bishop, is one of such enormous and vital importance that one would have expected the office and all connected with its perpetuation to have been a matter of the most explicit revelation.

As a matter of fact, it is open to question whether any single act of ordination is described or referred to in the New Testament. There are only three passages that seem capable of bearing such an interpretation. With regard to the first of these, the laying of Apostolic hands upon "the Seven," it is the fashion now to affirm that Stephen and his colleagues were not ordained deacons at all, and should not be so designated. Certainly they are nowhere called deacons in the Book of Acts, and, if they were not ordained to this office, it would follow that the laying-on of the Apostles' hands was a solemn dedication of them to a particular form of service, and a claiming for them

of the gifts that it required, and not an act of ordination at all. The act would find its parallel in the solemn laying-on of hands that separated Paul and Barnabas for the work to which the Holy Ghost called them.

As for the laying-on of hands referred to in St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, I am much interested in the information which this volume brings me, that so sober and careful a scholar as Bishop Chase of Ely holds that in that passage (2 Tim. i. 6) St. Paul is referring to confirmation, and not to any form of ordination. I have long feared that I was in a minority of one in holding this view very strongly, and am delighted to find that I am now in such good company.

There remains a single passage in the First Epistle to Timothy, where a gift is referred to as given to Timothy by prophecy with the laying-on of the hands of the presbytery; but whether this was an ordination or the communication of some special spiritual capacity, such as the gift of healing, or whether prophecy or the laying-on of hands had most to do with its bestowal, we have literally no means of judging. Where, then, is the revelation of the "Sacrament of Orders" in the New Testament?

And where were the Bishops? Everybody knows that those whom St. Paul addressed by this title were presbyters. Their business was to have oversight over the flock, but where were the officials that were to have oversight over them? Timothy and Titus clearly were not local Bishops, but, as Bishop Gore rightly calls them, Apostolic delegates. They seem to have occupied towards the infant Churches exactly the same position that a white missionary from a Christian land would exercise amongst the new converts of Africa or India to-day. Their authority arose from the fact that they, together with their great leader, were the introducers and exponents of the new faith. It is apparent from the very words of St. Paul that their connection with these Churches was temporary, not permanent, and that it arose from the exigencies of circumstances, not from any plan of Episcopal organization. Where, then, is

the revelation of the Episcopal office? Those who can find it in the fact that St. James, who was probably full brother to our Lord, naturally enough took the chair in the First Council at Jerusalem, must be very easily satisfied.

In considering possible objections to this theory of the transmission of certain special gifts and capacities, essential to the unity, and, indeed, to the continued existence of the Church by the quasi-sacramental act of the laying-on of hands, Bishop Gore refers to the repugnance that some people feel to this theory of the Divine method of action, and quotes words that I wrote some years ago in a pamphlet entitled "The Mechanical *versus* the Spiritual" as illustrating that repugnance. The words which he quotes are these: "The theory assumes that God has been pleased to attach the power of the Holy Ghost to certain mechanical acts, accompanied by the recital of particular formulæ, so as to produce consequences of a distinctly supernatural order, whenever these mechanical conditions are complied with." Therefore, the Bishop goes on to state, it is argued that the theory must be false.

Here is the Bishop's reply: "The theory only assumes this mechanical aspect where it is applied by unspiritual men. The rejection of it implies that we cannot believe that God would have—so to speak—rendered Himself and His gifts liable to be so abused." But this, he proceeds to affirm, is not true. This is a "risk which God wills to run." And he proceeds to enforce this conclusion by an argument which I can only characterize as *most amazing*. "There is no human power," he affirms, "so spiritual as the power to bring into being an immortal soul or spirit. But God has given this power to men by human generation." The argument, when fully stated, would appear to be something of this kind. If God has ordained that the very existence of the human spirit shall depend upon an act that may be described as mechanical, why should He not, with perfect consistency, affect the moral or spiritual interests of that human spirit by means which might also be called mechanical?

To this I reply, the generation of man is a natural process, and no one can think of denying that God has ordained that all such natural processes shall be in some sense mechanical. Nature itself is one huge machine worked by the Divine power, in which that most mysterious force which we call life is quite as prominent as is steam-power in a modern factory. But, when we pass from the natural to what, for want of a better word, we may call the supernatural plane, we are met, not by machinery, but by direct personal action on the part of a personal God, and this action is responsive to moral and spiritual, and not to mechanical, conditions upon the part of man.

Thus, surely, Bishop Gore would admit that the mechanical act of immersing an intelligent and responsible adult in water, along with the equally mechanical act of the recital of a formula, will not produce that spiritual regeneration which St. John describes so impressively, and render the man thus baptized "born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God." The relation between the natural and the spiritual process, as depicted in this text, is not one of similarity or analogy, but of contrast. A natural birth may be brought about by the will of man acting in accordance with the laws of Nature, but regeneration can only be brought about by a direct Divine intervention in response to a certain definite moral attitude—the attitude of faith in the name of the Christ (John i. 18). In order for the mechanical act to become the means of bringing this great spiritual change about, it needs to be the expression of a "repentance whereby we forsake sin," and a "faith whereby we steadfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that sacrament."

But if God does not, by His Divine appointment, render spiritual issues dependent upon mere mechanical conditions in the case of the individual, why should He accept this appalling "risk" in the case of His Church? Just let us reflect on what this risk involves. "Thy money perish with thee!" exclaimed the indignant Apostle in addressing Simon Magus; "because thou hast thought that the gift of God can be purchased with

money." But according to this theory Simon Peter was all wrong in repudiating this possibility, and Simon Magus was perfectly correct, in supposing that this might be. In the Dark Ages the purchase of a bishopric was quite a commonplace transaction, and thus the power to administer the gifts of the Holy Ghost must again and again have been purchased for money.

But even this is not the gravest anomaly involved in the Bishop's position. Let us look at the Reformation period, as he himself describes it, and at the action of the Reformers as depicted by him. They found themselves face to face with a state of things "unspeakably shocking" (p. 175). The Church refused to reform itself, and the Reformers "were vigorously and bravely vindicating Divine principles," "especially the principles of the supremacy of Scripture in the Church against the corruption of tradition and the principle of human liberty against spiritual tyranny." "To deny God's presence with them," says the Bishop, "and His co-operation in their work and ministry, would seem to me to approach to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." And yet these very men were, at this very time, in their work and ministry, "rebels against a Divine law." Apparently, then, God Almighty co-operated with these men in carrying out a rebellion against His own law, or in a work which, under existing conditions, could not have been carried out without rebellion against His own law. I say it with all reverence, this was a risk too great for even God to run. I could not, for my own part, worship a God who had so little prevision as to ordain laws, in rebellion against which He Himself would have to take part, as the result of their obvious and inherent liability to abuse. If this is not the *reductio ad absurdum* of the mechanical theory, I am at a loss to know what can be called absurd.

Of course, if you invest men with absolute autocratic power, whether in Church or State, you will be sure to have tyranny sooner or later. Such is human weakness. Can we believe that God "risked" having to back such tyranny by

Divine sanctions? Can we believe that He "risked" the necessity of having to deprive His own servants of all the benefits that flow from communion with His Church for no other crime save this—that, at the peril of their lives, they co-operated with Him in daring to take their stand for truth and righteousness against "unspeakably shocking" corruption?

If alike our moral sense and our religious instincts constrain us to repudiate so monstrous a conclusion, Bishop Gore's whole theory of Apostolical Succession must perish with it, and along with this all necessary impediment to Home Reunion. There is nothing that need permanently keep us apart from our fellow-Christians, if once we can bring ourselves to regard the authority of the ministry as a delegated authority, inherent in the Church, and thus capable of being transmitted to her executive.

It is to the Church, not to any particular form or type of ministry, that Christ has promised His presence "all the days," and to her He has granted the power of binding and loosing (Matt. xviii. 18). We may believe that the Episcopal form of government has been providentially evolved in the history of the Church, and that it is the wisest and best form of government that can be adopted, and this is my own profound conviction; but it is not a matter of revelation, and therefore any attempt to make it an essential feature of Christian religion is to commit the Pharisees' error of teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.



The Date of the Crucifixion was A.D. 29.

By LIBUT.-COL. G. MACKINLAY (LATE R.A.).

THE subject of Gospel chronology has, until lately, been generally regarded as almost insoluble, and therefore unprofitable; it has consequently been neglected or left to the consideration of only a few specialists.

During recent years, however, historical knowledge has