

ORDERS AND UNITY

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Orders and unity by Charles Gore

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CHARLES GORE

**ORDERS
AND UNITY**

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BY

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BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM

BV
070
G67
1909

'Quia vita spiritualis consistit in caritate et unitate, ideo convenientissime debuit ordinari, ut homines vice Christi administrarent sacramenta salutis hominibus, ut magis fierent unum inter se.'

RAYMUND OF SABUNDE

REGIS
BIBL. MAJ.
COLLEGE

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1909

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PREFACE

BARON VON HÜGEL in his work on *The Mystical Element in Religion* has recently expounded to us anew and with profound insight the relation of the institutional, the intellectual, and the experimental or mystical elements in Christianity. If there is any one who is irritated at the very idea of a writer maintaining that the episcopate is an essential constituent of Christianity, I hope he will read von Hügel before indulging his irritation further. Certainly I should wish to identify myself with this wise man's words.

My motive in writing this book has been the frequency with which it is asserted that recent criticism—dating from Lightfoot's essay on the Christian Ministry—has weakened and rendered untenable the position that the episcopate is the necessary and divinely given link of continuity and cohesion in the church universal. I had published a book on this position twenty-one years ago (*The Church and the Ministry*,

Longmans), to which, as much larger and more comprehensive than anything that I can now attempt, I must still refer on many points connected with the ministry. But I determined to think the whole subject through afresh ; and the results of this attempt were presented in some lectures given in the Birmingham Cathedral in the Lent of this year, which formed the basis of this book.

As a result of my fresh inquiry into the matter I feel more strongly than ever that the verdict on the effect of recent criticism which I have just referred to is by no means in accordance with the facts. I am sure that, with the laudable desire not to be 'bigoted' or 'narrow', we are in serious danger of underestimating, or even ignoring, a fundamental law of the church's corporate and continuous life. Neither in face of the popular undenominational tendency, nor in face of the Roman claim, nor in view of the wide movement in human society towards social reconstruction, are we making the best of the position which God has given to us Anglicans to maintain—the position which is best described as a liberal catholicism.

Archbishop Trench speaks of 'the hours

which we rescue and redeem' for the writing of a book. Certainly I have found it very difficult to rescue and redeem the hours necessary for preparing and writing even so small a book as this. I am painfully conscious that I might have put my matter much better. But to keep the book back to rewrite it would have caused a year's delay; and the improvement, as far as I can judge, would have been in the exposition, not in the thought. So I have decided to let the book go as it stands.

C. BIRMINGHAM:

All Saints' Eve, 1909.

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