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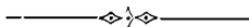
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come across an ignorant rustic who could say the Book of Job word for word. All men and women, high and low, were most untiring in teaching—"they never ceased day or night." As an instance of their zeal, he mentioned that a man swam the river Ibis every night in winter to make one convert. He charges their version with many errors, but from the examples he adduces they are not, it is evident, mistranslations, but slips of the pen, *e.g.*, "sues" for "sui," and "harundinis" for "hirundinis."

H. J. WARNER.



### ART. III. — THEORIES OF ECCLESIASTICAL INERRANCY.

A WELL-BALANCED Christian faith may be likened to a sacred tripod of which the supports are the Scriptures, the Church, and the illumined individual conscience. To the New Testament age our reason turns for logical proof of all doctrine. Our ideal of a living Church satisfies our social instincts by contributing historical illustration and regulative system. On the Divine instinct within we rely not only for individual realization, but for all new methods of development.

Withdraw any one of these three supports, or assign to any one a work that is not its own, and the result is loss of equilibrium.

In the time of the Apostles there was no need for such differentiation. From one point of view the New Testament itself is only the outcome and expression of a corporate faith and life. From another, again, it is the adoring record of certain dominant individual influences. But, whichever view we take, we are face to face with a quite exceptional influence of the Holy Spirit, one which had from time to time operated in the Old Dispensation, and which gives us our concept of miracle and even our popular idea of "inspiration."

The next generations continually confess themselves to be on a lower level. The aim now is to record accurately and hand down the substantial proofs of the faith, and to adjust to these whatever regulative system is best suited to the times. For controversial purposes, the great Christian writers<sup>1</sup> turn to the Scriptures as of paramount authority, even as we do to-day.

<sup>1</sup> For the Apostolic Fathers, *cf.* Westcott, "Canon of the New Testament," Part I., chap. i., § 2. For the Fathers at the close of the second century, *ibid.*, Part II., chap. i.

The age of the great Fathers, in fact, recognises broadly our three factors: authoritative Scriptures coming from a time of peculiar inspiration; a regulative but expansive ecclesiastical system; and powers of individual appropriation and development which are no less to serve the needs of the community.

Church history and the needs of the spiritual life can alike only be done full justice to as we realize this triple play of forces. The Bible, the Church, the inner light—according as these are adapted harmoniously to the wants of the day, there is utility and moral progress. Just as any one of the three is exclusively pressed will there be loss of balance, perversion of moral principle, arrears that have to be dealt with in the future.

This ideal of Christendom necessarily connotes a life of continuous spiritual advance. There have doubtless been periods when the tide of intellectual and moral progress ebbed as if never to flow again under conditions that violated this law of harmony. But the norm of true ecclesiastical life, as of the individual spiritual life, is progress. The Church was intended to recognise cheerfully whatever ore should be brought to light by intellect or spiritual discernment, to hallmark it, and convert it into current coin. Even in the stagnation of the Middle Ages there was recognition of this purpose on the moral and spiritual side. But from the intellectual aspect medievalism lies cramped and benumbed in its procrustean bed of deductive philosophy. Its theologians are to us arid pedants; ever spinning new inferences, indeed, but from postulates which are often more than questionable. It is the theology of Roman lawyers, ever harping on precedent. The lawyers Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine have each done much to give it its peculiar features. It breathes the spirit of the conquering race of old, and it has the defects as well as the merits of its lineage. Admirable for organization and discipline, medievalism pens up the free winds of heaven in the narrow conduits of a Christianized Roman jurisprudence. The result is a theology marvellously contrasting with that of the great Greek Fathers, Justin, Clement, Origen, or Athanasius—a theology incapable of induction, feeding evermore on its own vitals, unable to absorb the nutriment of advancing thought.<sup>1</sup> To this age belongs of right the fiction of ecclesiastical infallibility.

Progressive thought is now expressed only in the smothered

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Heard's "Alexandrian and Carthaginian Theology contrasted," Hulsean Lectures, 1892-93; also Allen, "Continuity of Christian Thought," §§ 1-3.

protests of a few—"rari nantes in gurgite vasto." It speaks, and speaks in vain, from such mouthpieces as John Scotus, Roger Bacon, Massiglio the author of the "Defensa Paris," or our own "invincible" schoolman William of Ockham. Ockham, however, is the spiritual parent of Wyclif, and from Wyclif we pass rapidly to the sixteenth century Reformation. The Reformation leaves our Church not only severed from Rome (whose biddings Professor Maitland shows us had been the real statute law of the English clergy for centuries), but henceforth not debarred from attainment of truth by that former conceit of "inerrancy" or "infallibility." Scripture is reinstated as the source of all saving principles. And Scripture exegesis is not for our Church, as for Pius IV., that interpretation "according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers," which you have only to read the Fathers to find to be a mere figment. The Church, too, is relegated to a conviction that though the "keeper and witness of Holy Writ," it is possible for her "authority in controversies" to be used woefully amiss. "General Councils" themselves may "err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God."

My object in this paper is to justify this admission of ecclesiastical fallibility. Reaction from that narrow type of Evangelical pietism which suppressed the ideal of corporate Christian life altogether, and hedged in our study of the Bible itself with the irritating pedantries of Scribism, threatens to reinstate an equally senseless ideal of the ecclesia. "*Simeon and Levi are brethren.*" Bibliolatry and ecclesiolatry are, indeed, more closely connected than is generally supposed. The vice in each is usually a practical denial of the Divine Immanence in its true fulness, and of men's progressive realization of Christianity under the Holy Spirit's guidance. Consistently, then, the same type of unintelligent clericalism that I can recollect breathing threatenings and slaughter against scientific Biblical exegesis, and claiming with Baylee and Burgon<sup>1</sup> Divine authority for "every verse, every word, every syllable," now sets to the chimera of "ecclesiastical inerrancy." Let us confront to-day's idol of the market-place. Let us search for its credentials. Let us see the effect its adoration has had in actual history.

There are, for my purposes, two quite distinct forms of this theory of Inerrancy. The one I will call the "practical"—that which existed in rather nebulous form before the Reformation, and in July, 1870, was condensed and bottled in the dogma of Papal Infallibility. The other, the "hypothetical,"

<sup>1</sup> Baylee, "Verbal Inspiration," p. 48; Burgon, "Inspiration," p. 89.

the product of a narrow English school of thought, relegates ecclesiastical inerrancy to the bygone age of a united Christendom. "There was infallibility in the unbroken Church a thousand years ago," this school assumes, "and if Christendom were reunited there would be infallibility again."

There is much virtue in an *if*. "But a living dog," one may say with the wise man, "is better than a dead lion." The Roman reply to these hypotheses of Tractarianism is alike obvious and crushing.<sup>1</sup> "It is easier to believe that the gift of infallibility was never bestowed at all than that the Church has practically ceased to be infallible for twelve centuries out of nineteen." Or, "If ecclesiastical infallibility be what was intended by Christ's promise, your hypothesis admits that the Holy Ghost has failed of His mission during two-thirds of the lifetime of the Church." Let us, then, treat first the more pretentious theory. Let us apply to the medieval ideal of infallibility the light of common-sense and of experience.

I. Test this ideal, and it crumbles at the touch of any scientific analysis. Jeremy Taylor, more than two hundred years ago, could show that Council had contradicted Council, and Pope Pope, and that Councils had dethroned Popes and undone their edicts.<sup>2</sup> To-day the Vatican Council rules it that the Pope is infallible, and by adding to the pile of inconsistencies makes Taylor's argument against all infallibility stronger still.

"*Fide Catholica tenendum, concilium esse supra Papam*," said Basle, as had said Constance, and suspended Pope Eugenius IV. accordingly.<sup>3</sup> Need I stay to contrast Basle and Constance with the Vatican Council of 1870, where, in defiance of really learned divines like Döllinger and Hefele, the supple Italian majority vested in the Pope himself the extremest pretensions of "inerrancy"?

Or take another modern illustration of the subject, the dogma of the Virgin's Immaculate Conception. It was certainly denounced by the medieval luminaries Bernard and Aquinas. It was only kept from absolute extinction in the Middle Ages by the Franciscans in their jealousy of the Dominicans. To-day, by the Papal decree of 1854, it has to be regarded as "a truth contained in the original teaching of the Apostles," and this it is heresy to doubt.

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Salmon's "Infallibility of the Church"; "Dr. Pusey's Theory of Infallibility, and Harper's Criticism on it," Lecture XV.

<sup>2</sup> "Liberty of Prophesying," §§ 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> The decrees of the Council of Constance were confirmed by Pope Martin V., who also convened the Council of Basle, which was recognised by Eugenius IV. himself, and confirmed in part by Nicholas V., but rejected by Leo X. two generations later.

Are we happier as we work back and find that the astronomical truths revealed by Copernicus and Galileo were branded by the ecclesiastical oracle as "absurd, philosophically false, and formally heretical"? There is no possibility of wriggling out of the dilemma in this case. As Dr. Salmon shows, the new teaching was condemned as "expressly contrary to Holy Scripture," and of the sense of Holy Scripture the Church is, by the Creed of Pius IV., the true interpreter. It is here, as in the case of the Jansenists, a claim *de fait* as well as *de droit*. Educated Romanists have yet to come to terms with Galileo, and to-day they must do it with their hands fettered by the dogma of 1870.

Are we happier as we go another century back and consider our oracle's pronouncements on the canon of Scripture? Here, if anywhere, is its proper province. Yet the Fathers of Trent are so little up to the level of the scholarship of their day, that they rule that the Old Testament Apocrypha is to be received with the same veneration (*pari pietatis affectu*) as the Holy Scriptures. Such had doubtless been the general opinion of the Western Church for a thousand years. But, alas! advancing scholarship and research have made havoc of even our own Church's temperate approbation of the Apocrypha. We now regard the Fourth Book of Esdras as an outcome of post-Christian Judaism. No longer do we read publicly Tobit or Bel for "example of life and instruction in manners," as in my days of boyhood. It is perhaps fortunate that our Church's formularies are not primed with these notions of inerrancy, or shotted with anathema.<sup>1</sup>

It may be replied here that the pronouncements of Trent or Pius IV. or Pius IX. are nothing to us Anglicans. But at least let us face truly all that is implied by that modern panacea of ecclesiastical unity. Had the Western Church remained unbroken, there is no reason to doubt we should be committed with our Continental brethren, first, to acceptance of the Fourth Book of Esdras *pari pietatis affectu* with the four Gospels, under penalty of an anathema; secondly, to a pronouncement that the diurnal motion of the earth is an "absurd" proposition, "philosophically false," and "theologically considered at least erroneous in faith"; thirdly, to all those contradictions involved by the dogma of Papal Infallibility established in 1870.

II. Before I pass to that presumably golden age of a united

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Trent Decree of Fourth Session, Appendix, 1546: "Si quis centem libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus . . . pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit . . . anathema esto."

Christendom, the first seven centuries, I notice two forms of the medieval theory which might seem at first to lead to more substantial results. The first is expressed in the celebrated Propositions of liberal Gallicanism in the seventeenth century. Broadly, the inerrancy of the Church, while still maintained, is here made dependent not on the decrees of Popes or Councils only, but also on the "general consent" of Christendom. I have much sympathy with the school of Bossuet and Pascal; but surely this theory shades off into Protestantism of the worst type. The "inerrancy" is no longer that of presumably learned divines, but of the probably ignorant majority. "General consent" does, of course, give attestation to the uneducated who have no means of investigating the true reason of their belief. But to vest the opinion of the man in the street with "authority" on that account is a sheer confusion of cause and effect. Further, if this is all the authority the ecclesiastical luminary can claim, it becomes at once, as Dr. Salmon so wittily puts it, "a lantern that can only cast its rays backwards and not forwards," an arbiter that can only speak when men have made up their minds. Augustine's postulate in regard to authority of Councils, "Concurrente universali totius ecclesiæ consensu,"<sup>1</sup> is, I suppose, the keynote of Gallicanism. Broadly, this gives us a rough test of sound doctrine. But we may notice that the great Church of Alexandria never accepted the dogmas of Chalcedon at all. It would be hard to say from the Gallican standpoint how or when those dogmas become "inerrant."

The other definition of inerrancy attempts to adjust it to that hackneyed dictum of St. Vincent, "Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus," and lands us in that rigid conservatism with which Rome itself has found it necessary to break. I think these words of Vincent's are probably more familiar to us clergy than their history and first application. They are used in his "Commonitorium"<sup>2</sup> against certain innovations of doctrine. The innovator, however, was Augustine, and that gloomy Carthaginian's ideas of God's dealings prevailed. "Sin Agostino nul predigo," says the Spanish preacher still, and the Calvinistic sects owe him almost as great an obligation. To my mind, Nazianzen and Vincent were quite right in opposing the dogmatism of that great Father, from whose thrall our own generation is only at last making its escape. But a Catholicism which sits at the feet of Augustine can hardly cite Vincent's dictum as a test of ecclesiastical inerrancy. Its own history is the confutation of the saying.

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *De Bapt. contr. Donat.*, Lib. I., c. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii. : "In ipsa item Catholica ecclesia magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique quod semper quod ab omnibus creditum est."

The truth is this "Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus," is little better than an ecclesiastical bogey. It sounds grand to insinuate that all who differ from you are "nobodies" and "nowhere." But as a fact, every Church has accepted as of essential consequence much that Vincent's dictum really excludes, unless we are merely playing with words. Take Infant Baptism, for instance. We hold that in adopting it we interpret best the mind of the Apostles and of Christ, and we may quote proofs of its early and general adoption. But the usage was certainly not accepted in the fourth and fifth centuries "ubique" nor "ab omnibus." Among children of Christian parentage whose baptism was deferred till nonage were Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, nay, Augustine himself. There are many grounds a pædobaptist may take in arguing his is the better way. But whatever the line taken, we certainly part company with Vincent's dictum as a test of inerrant orthodoxy.

III. But now let us quit these theories of working Infallibility and approach the great Tractarian hypothesis, with its conception of the dead or "sleeping" lion. It is assumed that in the age of great Councils and unbroken unity the Church spoke with infallible authority; and what I have called the "hypothetical" theory infers that, were all branches of the Church united, it would do so again. Conversely, I may add, many of us, if we find this doctrine was not propounded, say, in the first four centuries of Christianity, will not care to read it into Christianity at all. Does examination, then, of the first four centuries warrant this confident hypothesis? I answer, "Not in the least." Men evidently had in those days to steer their course between the Scylla of ecclesiastical Toryism and the Charybdis of neologian vagary, even as we have now. They had only the same lights that we have. Indeed in the absence of critical scholarship and printed books they contended against difficulties we can scarce conceive of. We all know something of the great Councils of the fourth and fifth centuries. This period is sometimes called the age of great Councils, and our Church has accepted what four of those Councils propounded *de fide*. But we must note the caveat of Jeremy Taylor.<sup>1</sup> She does so not because those Councils were infallible, but because they decided "wisely and holily" and well. It is a simple truth that these Councils neither claimed inerrancy nor were credited with it, and we cannot give them powers their own generations were unconscious of. Both for the Councils and the Church at large it was by the intelligent study of the

<sup>1</sup> "Dissuasive," Part II., Book I., §§ 1, 4.

Apostolic records that those problems *de fide* were decided. Those Councils that interpreted the New Testament teaching rightly after times made much of. Those that interpreted them wrongly were forgotten or branded as heretical. The test, in short, becomes a purely intellectual one. We are led on to the saying Taylor quotes approvingly: "In matters of faith the opinion of a single individual is preferable to the dictate of a Pope or of a whole Council, if he be guided in his decision by better arguments."<sup>1</sup>

When we speak about the inerrant voice of the Church in this age we are apt to forget that perhaps the largest expression of that voice ever given was that which denounced the Homousians at Ariminum and Seleucia and made Athanasius a fugitive and a heretic. Lengthened investigation proved that Athanasius' interpretation of the Apostolic teachings was right—that he was, in fact, Taylor's "single individual, guided in his decision by better arguments." Athanasius thus becomes a saint and the Council of Ariminum an assemblage of heretics. Now, when once we have grasped this experimental test of authority we shall see that all the glamour of infallibility is simply a posthumous colouring. The age of the four Œcumenical Councils never claimed it. After ages honour those Councils, not for their own sake, but because rational investigation confirms their interpretation of the Scriptures.

Was the Council of Nicæa recognised as infallible? No. The majority of Christians sent their Bishops to disavow the Homousians at Ariminum and Seleucia. A long and bloody warfare raged before Arianism was finally extinguished.

Was there infallibility at the Council of Constantinople? Certainly no one thought so at the time. Apart from any opposition its decrees encountered, it was a small Council which no one reckoned as œcumenical till seventy years after its assemblage.

Was infallibility claimed for the Council of Ephesus? On the contrary, we find this assemblage broke up amid disturbance and mutual anathemas, in consequence of Cyril's disgraceful attempt to rush a verdict in his favour.

Or was infallibility recognised at Chalcedon? Pope Leo himself, whose pretensions it favoured, denounces this Council's inconsiderate temerity. It did not stop Monophysite Bishops being appointed even to the great Patriarchates. In fact, Egyptian Christianity never recognised it at all.

The fact is, this romantic Anglican theory, with its dread of strong lights, has succeeded in colouring the Bishops of

<sup>1</sup> "Liberty of Prophesying," chapter on "Uncertainty of Councils."

the so-called age of unity with tints by no means discernible to the best men of that day. We may be thankful to the Councils for doing, by dint of much wrangling and even bloodshed, the sort of constructive work which is really done to-day by our leaders of thought by means of printed books. But if anyone supposes that the arguments of the orthodox prelates were invariably sound, or their behaviour in Council up to our ideal of Christian and gentlemanly deportment, they should study contemporary testimony on the subject. Gregory Nazianzen, who himself took a prominent part at the second of our Œcumenical Councils, has left a pathetic record of his experiences. I venture on a metrical translation of his elegiacs and his hexameters. Here is a testimony from his "De falsis Episcopis":

Heaven grant I may never foregather where synods episcopal sit,  
Where cranes discordantly blather, and ganders retort with their wit;  
'Tis to battle, not synod, one's bidden, where wranglings and tumults  
resound,  
And calumnies heretofore hidden are dealing destruction around.

And here is the more bitter invective of his "Ad Episcopos." A herald thus summons Bishops to an imaginary Council:

Ride hither all stains to our species, ride hither on vice as on horse-  
back;  
Gluttons with mouths wide distended, immodest, of pompous demeanour,  
Wine-bibbers, too, and demented, vain jesters and men of soft raiment,  
Liars and insolent braggarts, most happy to swear to all falsehood.

Truly, if this be our golden age of ecclesiastical inerrancy, one may hope our men of convocations and congresses will long be content to confess themselves fallible beings.

If we turn from theory to fact, we find that for that Age of Councils, even as for us, the appeal in essential matters is ultimately to the Apostolic teaching. Read Athanasius. His argument is continually this: that the doctrine of the Homœousians is deducible from *θεία γραφή*. I find a good instance in the "De Synodis,"<sup>1</sup> where he points out how the Nicene Bishops, while attaching the term *ἔδοξε*, or "decretum est," to their own canons, did not venture in the case of the Homœousians to appeal to any authority of their own. "This," he says, was "to show that their own sentiments were not novel but Apostolical, and that what they wrote down was no discovery of theirs, but is the same as taught by the Apostles." There is the contrast. On the one side the regulative canons of the

<sup>1</sup> Migne, § 5. Also cf. Nicen. Def., v., § 21; vi., § 27; and Disc. III., chap. xxvi., § 7, Newman's translation.

Council, which served their day and are now universally infringed<sup>1</sup>; on the other the essential verities of the faith, which, whether elicited by Councils or by individual discernment, are binding, because shown to be attested by the authority of the Apostolic times. Dr. Salmon illustrates this feature from Augustine's admission in his argument with an Arian opponent somewhat later: "I must not press," Augustine says, "the authority of Nicæa against you, nor you that of Ariminum against me. I do not acknowledge the one, as you do not acknowledge the other. Let us come to ground that is common to both—the testimony of Holy Scriptures."<sup>2</sup>

The fact is that it was only when corruption was very rife and fallibility most obviously apparent that this claim to ecclesiastical inerrancy was openly propounded. It is just on the principle that a bankrupt sometimes asserts a pretended solvency by lavish expenditure and profuse display of wealth. We do not find inerrancy claimed at the first Council of Nicæa. But the second Council, four and a half centuries later, is far bolder. Here it is we first have the rule that the bare authority of Fathers and Councils is to be recognised as a warranty for doctrine apart from sanction of Scripture. By that time mechanical ecclesiasticism had fairly taken the place of godliness. Lying wonders and pious forgeries were rife. Image-worship was more and more shutting out the realization of a spiritual Deity. Intellect was beginning to be shackled. Milman descants on that moral perversion which makes the monk historian, Gregory of Tours, eulogize every blood-stained scoundrel who had chanced to fight on the side of Frankish orthodoxy.<sup>3</sup> Such ideas of duty have taken the place of those high Christian principles which influenced an Ambrose or a Chrysostom. It is suggestive that at such a time the ecclesiastical polity and the individual clerical office are alike inflated. The one gravitates more and more to the principle of central autocracy, or Popery. The other has long substituted a *sacerdos* for the primitive *presbyter*, and his stereotyped system of pattered services and mechanical absolutions will oust in due course all true ideas of worship and of moral discipline. And so we have worked round again to medievalism and the climax of ecclesiastical inerrancy. Read how for justice we get the judicial murders of the sacred ordeal; for appeal to conscience the perfunctory pronounce-

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, the Nicene canons forbidding translations of clergy, and the practice of praying kneeling on Sundays.

<sup>2</sup> *Contr. Maximin. Arianum*, ii., 14.

<sup>3</sup> "Hist. Lat. Christianity," Book III., chap. ii.

ments of confessors, or later the traffic of the licensed *quæsterarii*, with their pardons, as Chaucer says, "come from Rome all hote." Read of the many thousands of godly persons who are burnt and tortured by the Church in its defence of this imaginary attribute. Study its accompaniments at headquarters. At one time it is the fifty years "pornocracy," or rule of the harlots, at the sacred centre; at another the forty years of warfare between two rival lines of Popes; at another it gives us the Pontificates of sensualist Borgias and agnostic Medicis. Study its social influences. It is an age of incessant protest against acknowledged moral evils; but saints and prophets and preachers only succeed in founding institutions that catch and spread the general corruption. It is the admission of the Romanist Bellarmine that for years before the Reformation there was "in morals no discipline, in sacred literature no erudition, in Divine things no reverence; religion was almost extinct."<sup>1</sup> And, in regard to "erudition," at least, we Gloucestershire clergy may clinch Bellarmine's general statement with the particular evidence of our own diocese, where Bishop Hooper finds "scores of clergy" who are unable to tell him who the author of their oft-repeated *Pater Noster* was, or where it was to be found in Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

Such is the *dossier* of ecclesiastical inerrancy.

That fatal conception was sapped and fell; and the world passed from impracticable theory to an ever-developing life of true Christian progress, led throughout the world by Reformed Christianity, followed limpingly, sometimes most unwillingly, where medievalism still has hold. Contrary to what we might have expected, perhaps, the more Christendom has freed itself from ecclesiastical dogma, whether Protestant or Catholic, the higher has been its moral aim; and socially our own century, with all its seeming indifferentism, has won for Christianity almost its greatest victories. Torture, judicial murder, slavery, duelling, drunkenness, cruelty to prisoners, to children, to animals—these terms speak of evils once accepted, or at all events vainly combated. To-day Reformed Christianity brands them with a verdict which, if not that of a Church, is that of true religion. One by one they become the barbarisms of the past. And here, at least, the verdict is so far "infallible" and "inerrant" that we never retrace our steps. It is, I say, the influence of Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Concio XXVIII., Opp., vi., 296.

<sup>2</sup> I quote from Archdeacon Sinclair's article on Tyndale, THE CHURCHMAN, January, 1896.

that wins these victories. It is the guidance of the Holy Spirit, albeit the old order has given place to new, and God fulfils Himself in many ways.

My paper has been a long one; but before I close, I venture on the suggestion that it is mainly in this province of Christian principle and advancing civilization that the Church might speak to purpose.

Did the clergy really show themselves as zealous in promoting whatsoever things "are true, are honest, are of good report," as they do in vindicating exploded superstitions, and in testing the infinite and many-sided truths of Christ by the six-inch gauge of their theological seminaries, we might hope for a revival of the regulative action of our national Church, in harmony with the best traditions of primitive Christianity. Substitute for our chimeras the ideal of a progressive, liberal-minded Church, which shall ever appropriate the best thought, the highest spiritual discernment of its day, and dedicate them to God's service, and for hypothetical "inerrancy" we get something like real guidance; for conflicting Roman infallibilities a truly progressive *civitas Dei*.

The spiritual life would not then be bid batten on the husks of canons and rubrics of some age of half-enlightenment, or worse.

Holy Orders would not then be the refuge of men intellectually disqualified for success in any other calling.

New scientific truths would not be first suspected and persecuted by the clergy, and then, as Mill complains, forced hypocritically into consistency with old dogma with the disingenuous cry, "Oh, the Church" (or "the Bible") "said so all along."

The world's mature years, and not its petulant youth, would then receive the respect due to age and wisdom. For our twentieth century, in short, we should claim as true workings of Christ's Spirit in the world as for any age since those exceptional gifts of the Apostolic time were in His Divine wisdom withdrawn.

Lastly under such conditions that panacea of the clerical busybody, and that clerical journalism which supplies him with ideas—the "corporate unity" of the different Christian bodies—will cease to attract, to tantalize, to pervert the faith of some, to irritate others to iconoclastic frenzy.

We are told that when Mr. W. Palmer, primed full with Tractarian dogma, paid a visit of investigation to the "Holy Orthodox" Church of Russia, he was shocked to hear from her dignitaries, not a doctrine of mechanical Apostolical succession, but a large conception of all Churches and sects moving like so many planets around one and the same centre,

and "without difference in kind."<sup>1</sup> The "orthodox" and "catholic" Church of the East was, of course, assumed to be the nearest planet to the central Sun. Substitute intelligence and spirituality and consciousness of our expressing the best life of our race for those stale contentious terms "orthodox" and "catholic," and the Russian dignitary's conception will satisfy our need. If there be still cavilling as to which Church is nearest the Divine centre, we shall have the Master's warrant for the test: "By their works shall ye know them." We shall not, indeed, so get to theories of "inerrancy"; but we shall get as near all necessary doctrinal truth, and all high ideals of godliness, as is possible for the Church militant as distinct from the Church triumphant.

ARTHUR C. JENNINGS.



#### ART. IV.—THE WITNESS OF THE BEAUTY OF NATURE.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. . . . Wherefore be not anxious."—*ST. MATT. vi. 28.*

AT a time when many have left the dusty towns (and the majority of the population of England is urban) for the fair sights and sounds of the country, I would like to give my readers a few hints from our Lord's own thoughts which may be useful to them as a guide in the interpretation of those beautiful things which they have gone out to see.

Any glimpses of the personal tastes and habits of our Blessed Lord in His human nature are extremely interesting to us His worshippers and followers who are called by His name. We count up these little things about Him. As the true Son of Man, He is intensely human. He went to the wedding-feasts, and helped the harmless enjoyments by making an enormous quantity of wine. He describes Himself as coming eating and drinking, so unlike John Baptist, that the Pharisees scornfully and slanderously call Him a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. He went to a Pharisee's entertainment on the Sabbath-day. Martha and Mary and Lazarus were His friends. When He saw the grief of the sisters at the death of their brother He wept. Twice He shed tears over the city of His fathers. He liked John, the son of Zebedee better than the other disciples. He was fond of

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<sup>1</sup> Palmer, "Visit to the Russian Church," p. 271.