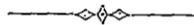


widely different means. Politics are eating the heart out of Nonconformity. Better Disestablishment a thousand times than that such result should befall the Church. It is always a misfortune for a church to be associated with a political party. Let there be the "priest in politics" only in questions of moral import. The Primate put it that the Church symbolizes the moral life of the nation. Let us strive to make this a reality and not a pretty saying, that clergy and laity with their unrivalled opportunities may really be in the van of every movement for religious and social welfare. The Parish Councils Act will put the clergy on their mettle. It will test their influence and real worth as national servants. Mixing with their fellow citizens, they can now prove that the Church is not a sect, but exists for the good of all, and that they, having no selfish purposes to serve, and not depending for their bread on the favour or the whims of a chance majority, without fear of giving offence, or temptation to show favour, are able to be "daysmen" between the "masses" and the "classes," witnessing for God and for Righteousness in every department of our many-sided life.

RICHARD W. SEAVER.



ART. V.—MR. GLADSTONE ON HERESY AND SCHISM.

"Non fumum ex fulgore sed ex fumo dare lucem."—HOR., *Ars Poet.*

NOTWITHSTANDING his great affection for Horace, as manifested by the new translation of the "Odes" and "Carmen Seculare" which he is said to have in hand, it is clear that Mr. Gladstone has not laid to heart the line with which we have headed this notice of his article in the *Nineteenth Century*. When one comes to consider in detail his speeches and writings, putting aside all the adornment of beautiful language and ingenuity in vocabulary of which he is master, one is generally left very much at a loss as to what he really means. Every paragraph bears traces of that "open mind" from which are evolved theories and assertions which are chiefly remarkable for their plastic nature. The article in which he undertakes to define heresy and schism, and to show how they should be dealt with, is no exception in this respect. This is not only the result of an oracular style in which long practice has made him an adept, but it appears equally due to a confusion of ideas on vital points, and to the free-and-easy use of terms and expressions which have extremely different meanings when used by different people.

Mr. Gladstone may be taken as typical of that school of Churchmen to which at present both the leading ecclesiastical authorities and superior clergy of our Church belong, as well as probably a majority of the aristocracy; so the article gains importance not only from the fact that it is the product of a man whose acknowledged scholarship, zeal and versatile genius have dazzled the civilized world for many a decade, and who now, with indomitable cheerfulness and resourcefulness, which under the circumstances, are almost pathetic, re-enters the arena of theological strife; but its significance is enhanced by the fact that it reveals how, slowly but surely, and with increasing velocity, the rapid change of thought, the facilities for observing and comparing the great movements of the day are acting upon the fossilized theories which have survived the darkness of the Middle Ages and during the present century been galvanized into an artificial vitality in our own country. It calls emphatic attention to the dominant line of thought observable throughout western Christendom especially. As men look upon the wrongs, the sins, the follies, the consequent misery prevailing so largely in the world and feel their impotence in confronting them; as they pause amid the rush and turmoil which prevails in every phase of life, and realize the nervous and mental exhaustion it induces, the deadening, chilling effect it has on spiritual life, like people surrounded by some sudden and pressing danger, they crave for mutual support and sympathy. The question of the reunion of Christendom has become one of the most fashionable and talked of questions of the day. Partly as the outcome of this craving, and partly through the efforts of those who have been seeking for reunion among the Episcopalians, and dreaming of a huge Uniat Church in which all individuality will be curtailed, the spiritual life cramped and stereotyped, the wind of the spirit cease to blow as and where it willeth, settling down into a fixed current like a trade-wind. To the mind of the sacerdotalists the problem presents itself in a twofold aspect. How can we modify the pretensions of the Eastern and Latin Churches so that moderate Anglicans will fraternize with them? How can we level up Nonconformity so that we can incorporate it with us? The study of this problem has had most unlooked-for results on the minds of the ecclesiastical party, who find themselves on the horns of a dilemma which Mr. Gladstone frankly admits, and from which, with that subtle ingenuity for which he is distinguished, he strives to escape.

These good men start with postulating certain theories as to the origin, constitution, and method of maintaining the continuity of the Church, none of which, as has been shown

repeatedly by the most thoughtful and learned High Churchmen, will bear investigation. Mr. Gladstone summarizes these postulates in his opening paragraph. Practically, he says, let it be granted that our Lord founded the Church as a visible and organized society, that He clothed the Apostles with special powers which were to be passed on by them and continue in succession throughout the whole dispensation, so that the Church, as represented by her clergy, and especially the Bishops, is clothed with authority and endowed with special gifts, in fact inspired, "to carry forward the grand work of the Incarnation." In consequence of this authority and power, she may, nay must, develop the organization and teaching initiated by the Apostles. She may alter not only ceremonies and points of discipline, but, if we understand aright, she may modify the original or ordain new doctrines. Only churches which can trace direct descent by unbroken succession of the Episcopate from the Apostles are, properly speaking, branches of this Holy Catholic Church, and "all who rebel against the jurisdiction then solemnly constituted, should sever themselves in doctrine or in communion from His servants"—by which we suppose is meant those possessing Apostolic Succession—are deliberate rebels and guilty of heresy and schism. Heresy and schism are denounced in Scripture as works of the flesh, excluding from salvation. Ergo, those who separate themselves from this Catholic Church, that is, the ecclesiastical body possessing the "Historic Episcopate," are excluded from salvation, and are not members of the body of Christ. The investigation, however, of the teaching, practices and work of non-Episcopal bodies, undertaken with a view to seeing how far they can be brought into the Episcopal fold, has revealed to many sacerdotalists the astonishing fact that among Nonconformist divines are numbers of men of great intellectual power, ripe scholarship, and earnest devotion to Christ, and that they deliberately, and from strong conviction, remain in so-called schism. Still more astonishing, in purity of life, in the manifestation of grace, in unselfish zeal for the conversion of souls, the relief of suffering, the maintenance of justice, the redress of wrong, these heretics and schismatics are far more abundant in the fruits of the Spirit than any Episcopal Church save the Anglican; and, curiously enough, that section of the Anglican Church which is most prolific in its missionary and philanthropic efforts, while loyal to the threefold orders as the natural development of the Apostolic Church, care very little about the question of Apostolic Succession—in fact, in the majority of cases disbelieve it in the sense in which it is accepted by the ardent advocates of the "CATHOLIC" theory. Most astonishing of all, none but the most intensely bigoted,

who absolutely refuse to see and acknowledge patent facts, can deny that the seal of God's approval has rested upon the labours of those who, according to Mr. Gladstone's postulates, are living in deliberate rebellion against the constituted authorities which Christ ordained for the welfare of His Church.

One is amazed that these facts, which Mr. Gladstone frankly admits, have not led to the reconsideration of the assumptions upon which the whole sacerdotal theory of the Church rests, and to the discovery, made long ago for us by the Reformers, that the holy Catholic Church is not a visible and mechanically organized society into which you can be initiated by a certain rite, and of which you continue a full benefiting member so long as you conform to certain by-laws of the particular branch to which you belong, as well as the general constitutions formulated by the Founder, but that it is an invisible body; that the muster-roll is the Lamb's Book of Life, which no creature can read, and from which no roll-call will be made until the number of the elect is complete; that our Lord did not designate the Apostles His successors in "carrying on the great work of the incarnation"; an oracular assertion, by the way, which is difficult to interpret. Surely the incarnation was a complete work; Christ's life was a complete life; Christ's sacrifice was a complete sacrifice, and when He Himself announced "It is finished," He meant it; and the Apostles' office was not to share, much less to complete, the redemption wrought through the eternal Son, but to preach the glad tidings far and wide of a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Had Mr. Gladstone carried his researches further he might have discovered that the ecclesiastical meaning attached to heresy and schism, especially in the Middle Ages, and by those who would turn back the hands of the clock some three or four centuries in our own Church at present, differs materially from the sense in which it was used in the New Testament, and that it is far from certain that rigid uniformity existed in the earliest days of the Church, in that it is scarcely to be questioned that the greatest liberty prevailed as to the conduct of Christian worship, discipline, and other similar matters so long as there was a strict adherence to the doctrines and morality inculcated by the Gospel; and that unity was considered to consist in the fact that every Christian, by virtue of the new life granted through Christ, by the operation of the indwelling Holy Spirit, was made a member of Christ, and all, therefore, members one of another, and that the highest spiritual power was to be attained, not merely by rigid observance of orthodoxy, but by an immediate, close, personal fellowship with Christ. However, Mr. Gladstone, like so many others of

this school of thought, having adopted an *a priori* theory of the Church, was unable to see this, and therefore he sets himself to work to find a way out of the difficulties of the seeming paradox everywhere confronting him in the evident spiritual vitality and God-honoured activity of non-Episcopalians. His proposed solution of the problem is as remote from the teaching of the Word of God as his views of the foundation and commission of the Church. Building on the theory that the Church is commissioned to develop doctrine and practice, he calmly proposes that it should be declared, we presume by the Church, that God has revoked His decree as to the assumed nature of heresy and schism. He applies to these solemn matters the same method of argument that he used to convert himself to Home Rule. The Irish, he argued, have persistently broken the law, and a majority of them declare that they never will obey that law. It is true that the leaders of the Land League were utterly wrong, and I meant all I said when I denounced them in years gone by; but as they did not care much for my denunciations, the best way out of the difficulty is to modify the law to suit them. In precisely the same way he deals with these grave questions, if we rightly understand him. He says that heresy and schism are sins excluding from salvation, but that millions of good people are heretics and schismatics; the Church has prayed for their conversion and still prays for it; the Episcopate has for centuries denounced their folly, and striven by force and by coaxing to save them from their position; but they have resisted the force, and they have smiled at the blandishments; the Church must therefore fall back upon her inherent powers, and enunciate some fresh definition of heresy and schism which will bring these outsiders within the pale of the true Church. As an aside, he glances at the somewhat awkward point that it is impossible to prove that the succession has been maintained, at any rate in the Roman Church, and passed on to the Anglican without a breach.

But, we must ask, are we to believe that God's solemn decrees, by which He founded His Church and defined her doctrines and discipline, have utterly failed, and that He has so manifestly blessed those that have refused to accept them, that it is necessary for the Church to step in and rescind or modify those decrees? No wonder that the propagation of such views results in the rapid spread of infidelity, which follows (as truly as darkness follows the sunset) the extended spread of sacerdotalism. If we have not the mind of Christ in the New Testament, where shall we find it? Can we hear it in the voice of the Church? A moment's reflection will show that the voice of the Church is nowhere to be heard. Assuming

that all Episcopal Churches are branches of the Holy Catholic Church, and that it were possible to have them fairly represented in a great œcumenical council, would there be any harmony, to say nothing of unity of sound? Would not the voice of the Church thus represented be a Dutch concert, where each performer plays his own tune? According to these theories, no Church by herself can claim to be the Catholic Church; and since it is impossible to get all the branches to unite, is it not absurd to talk about the voice of the Church, the faith of the Church, meaning the universal Church of Christ as authoritatively declared, except we take the Word of God as the ultimate court of appeal to decide what that faith is? Such theories as we are considering do more than all the propaganda of the avowed Secularist to disparage and obscure the Divine revelation and to spread agnosticism, if not downright atheism. True, Mr. Gladstone appeals to Scripture, but only to try to prove that "the Church" has power to adapt God's law to the varying moods of different ages.

In conclusion, we will consider his Scripture references. The first paragraph is supposed to be a summary of Bible teaching, but no direct reference to the Bible is made, for the very sufficient reason that the theories advanced are not to be found in the New Testament in any shape or form. However, in the next paragraph he tells us that Christ dealt in anticipation with those who frustrate His work by severing themselves from His Church, when He said, "If he neglect to hear the Church let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. xviii. 17). But this text has absolutely nothing to do with heresy. Our Lord was speaking of a cantankerous fellow who had done you a personal injury, and obstinately refused to admit the wrong and give some satisfactory evidence that he had no intention of repeating or continuing it. You are to do your best to bring such a one to his senses, but failing in your efforts you must simply let him alone. What has all this to do with heresy and schism, which are offences against *the Church*, not against *individuals*? Only by detaching them from their context can these words be made to appear to have the remotest connection with the subject.

It is more difficult to deal with Mr. Gladstone's assertion—"With this stringent law the language of the Apostles coincides"—for he does not attempt to support this groundless assumption by quotations. The only definite allusion is to "the language of St. John," and I imagine he refers to 2 John x.—"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house." But the crucial question is, What is the test doctrine referred to here? The context is conclusive on the point. It is the doctrine of Christ

as opposed to Antichrist. What has this to do with breaking from a visible society and resisting the authority of a certain order of men? Throughout the whole article the Bible takes a very secondary place, and clearly Mr. Gladstone thinks the Church has authority to reverse or modify the decrees of God, and that the principle of ruling by the majority holds good in theology, for he declares the second commandment has been repealed, because "by far the largest portion of the Christian Church gives a sanction to the use for religious purposes either of images or pictures." I thought fierce wrath fell upon Israel in the wilderness when they made an image, though the majority in favour of it was eleven to one, only the tribe of Levi turning Protestant.

When Mr. Gladstone turns to the question of proselytizing he is equally unfortunate in his appeal to Scripture. He says: "Our Saviour made a reference to it (proselytism) which cannot be encouraging to its reckless votaries." Our Lord was denouncing the hypocrisy and trifling with God's law which then, as now, marked the party which render God's word of none effect by their traditions, and in scathing language He exposes their transparent hollowness in eight important matters. Among them is this: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. xxiii. 15).

This is surely a most inappropriate text to apply to sincere Christians, who go, Bible in hand, to those whom they believe to be in error and lovingly entreat them to hear what the Word of God says.

The next reference to Scripture is simply unique as an illustration of the confusion into which the writer's mind has fallen in the attempt to harmonize sacerdotal theories with Scripture and patent facts. He declares: "Holy Scripture provides us with instances of *the danger of substituting the witness of another person's spirit for our own*" (1 Kings xiii.)—the italics are mine—and apparently draws from this the moral that "the hot proselytizer ought to learn to pay some of that respect to *the convictions of his neighbours* which he pays so largely to his own." Comment is superfluous. I can only touch upon one more of the strange perversions of Scripture with which this article bristles. He draws a sharp distinction between the founder of a heresy and his followers, and illustrates it by the history of Jeroboam, declaring that the idolatrous kingdom of Israel was not "cast out from the elder covenant and its provisions for Divine guidance," and he sees in the race of prophets God's provision for these "schismatics." Could anything be wider of the truth? The prophets were

sent to call upon them to give up their "heresy and schism," and as they were persistent in their alienation from God, He finally made void the land, "as a man wipeth a dish turning it upside down," and to this day the ten-tribed kingdom is broken and scattered.

ANTIQUUS.

Short Notices.

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