

another two millions sterling, besides the two millions paid to the Representative Body, is very much within bounds. And it thus appears that during the period which we are accused of having wasted in fruitless wrangling four millions of money have passed through the hands of our Church, for the cause of religion and of charity, without reckoning the immense time and skilled labour given to her, at great personal cost, by the ablest of her sons.

Now let it be considered that our ranks include all the poorest Protestants of Ireland, that the raising of money is a new art among us, that we have passed through a long period of severe privation, in which no class of the community has suffered more than the landlords, to whom we naturally look for help in supporting the Church upon their own estates, and it will appear that four millions of money, given by six hundred and eighty thousand men, women, and children, who are neither driven (like the Romanist) by dread of purgatory, nor (like some others among us) by the threat of excommunication if "the stipend" be unpaid, is a free-will offering of which we need not be ashamed.

Beyond doubt there are dark shadows upon the picture; but it is highly unjust to fix the attention upon these without observing, first of all, the gallant effort which Irish Churchmen have made for the maintenance of the faith among them.

G. A. CHADWICK.



## ART. II.—THE RULE OF FAITH.

IT has been subject of remark by one of our Bishops,<sup>1</sup> when alluding to the question of the preparation of candidates for Holy Orders,<sup>1</sup> that there exists no work, from an English pen, on systematic dogmatical theology, which could be recommended as an introduction to that study. The criticism is just. Our theology is singularly deficient in that particular branch, copious and valuable as it is in others. We possess excellent treatises on isolated topics, but hardly any work corresponding to those of the great foreign theologians, whether Romish or Protestant, which professes to occupy the whole field, and give a connected view of the subject. It is obvious that mere commentaries on the Thirty-Nine Articles, of which we have several of varying value, by no means meet the want. No attempt is made in them to *group* the Articles under the heads to which they belong; which, since several of them really present but different sides of the same subject, is the first step towards gaining a clear view of the system which forms their basis. Hence

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Charge, 1867.

translations of such works as those of Martensen and Van Oosterzee have been largely used by our students ; and no doubt with profit. But, independently of some graver defects, a translation seldom succeeds in conveying the sense of the original ; and, moreover, the original itself is commonly too racy of the soil whence it sprang to fall in readily with English habits of thought and expression. Prolivity repels many readers, though this fault cannot be laid to the charge of Martensen's able work. On the whole, there seems room for an attempt in this direction, even if it should not succeed in supplying the particular want above alluded to. Manuals for candidates belong rather to the class of compilations than of treatises ; and are likely to be the more useful in proportion as they exhibit no distinctive views. But dogmatic theology has a higher aim, though it may fail to attain it. As a specimen of this branch of study it is proposed, in some consecutive numbers of this magazine, to furnish a few Papers on one important topic, the Rule of Faith, as held by the Protestant churches—that is, as stated in their public confessions of faith, and maintained by their great divines with a tolerably uniform tradition of teaching.

To obviate misunderstanding, a few remarks must be premised on the position which the writer assumes. The true idea of dogmatic theology is to be an exhibition of the faith which either the Catholic Church holds as against unbelievers and heretical sects, or which particular churches, such as the Anglican, profess as against other Christian churches, with which, unfortunately, they cannot agree. It is identical neither with the department of Christian evidences nor with Biblical theology, which aims at reproducing the Christian faith as it was expressed by the inspired writers before controversy arose on certain points : its purpose is to expound the system of belief which is actually professed by the Church universal, or a particular church, as the case may be ; to translate into language, with the necessary explanations, what is often held as a sentiment rather than a dogma, in solution as it were, by the Christian community to which the writer belongs. But here a difficulty at once occurs. How is the peculiar aspect of the Christian faith, which, in each church, is the foundation of its distinctive dogmatic theology, to be ascertained ? Most churches, especially if national, such as the Anglican, exhibit such a variety of teaching, whether in the pulpit or by the press, that it may seem a hopeless task to attempt to mould it into a consistent whole. The same may be said of the Protestant foreign churches, and even, to some extent, of the Church of Rome. And, indeed, it would be impossible to obtain from this source any basis of a definite dogmatical structure. We must, therefore, look beyond the surface, and

endeavour to discover wherein, notwithstanding the eccentricities of individuals, the substance and core of the doctrinal teaching of each church are to be found; what it is that imparts a definite character and historical continuity to each church. And this can be nothing but its authorized confessions of faith, supposed to be assented to, if not by all the members of the communion, by those in it who exercise the function of public teaching. As long as these confessions are not repudiated or altered by the society in its corporate capacity, they must be taken to decide what is the position which, in the controversies which agitate Christendom, that particular church occupies. And this, although from time to time individual teachers, or a considerable body of them, may, in the opinion of impartial judges, maintain sentiments inconsistent with such confessions.

The dogmatic theology, therefore, of the Anglican Church must, like that of any other, be sought in its authorized public symbols, and primarily in nothing else; but here, in our communion at least, a fresh difficulty arises. Is it possible from her formularies, taken as a whole, to construct a scientific theology "of the Church of England?" The question thus stated hardly admits of a direct answer. It may in fact be doubted whether, *as a whole*, the formularies of the Anglican Church are susceptible of such treatment. They are derived not only from different sources, but from different modes of Christian thought and sentiment: as indeed might be expected when mediæval forms are found side by side with doctrinal expositions identical with, if not actually founded upon, the confessions of faith of the foreign Protestant churches. The theology "of the Church of England," taken as a whole, must be confessed to be of the composite order; in which symmetry of system was sacrificed, probably designedly, to the practical aims of the compilers. Some may think this a defect, others admire in it the wisdom which so framed the symbols of a great National Church that, within certain limits, different schools of religious thought may find in them what suits their taste. There is much to be said in favour of this latter view as long as it is a question of practical unity and brotherly recognition. It is possible for those who differ seriously on certain points of doctrine, while agreeing on fundamentals, to be equally loyal members or ministers of our Church; forbearing one another in love, and conceding each party to the other a liberty which it claims for itself. With men of high religious sentiment doctrinal differences are often found happily merged in a common aim to promote the cause of practical piety at home and abroad.

It seems otherwise when we come to treat theology as a system. Heterogeneous elements which, in the practice of a holy life, may coexist without jarring, are apt to make them-

selves felt when religion becomes, as it does in dogmatical theology, an object of the speculative faculty; when the connection of doctrines and their legitimate consequences come to be examined and traced out. A defect of substantial unity on certain leading points soon makes itself felt; compromises are sought for which generally prove unsatisfactory; at some point or other the inquirer finds himself in presence of a difficulty which will not allow itself to be set aside, or passed by; and then he is tempted to take refuge in unreal distinctions, and a mere semblance of consistency. It may illustrate what is meant if we refer briefly to the history of what has been called the *via media* theology. Many years ago a body of men in one of our Universities, eminent for learning and ability, proposed to themselves to construct a system which should neither be Romish nor Protestant; suitable, as it was argued, to the position of our Church, Reformed and yet Catholic, protesting against Rome, and yet, as distinguished from foreign Protestant churches, retaining the ancient polity, and, as far as possible, the ancient devotional forms. It was hoped that an Anglican theology, holding a middle position between the two extremes, might issue from their united labours. A leading principle, of course, was to insist neither on the Thirty-Nine Articles alone, nor on the Liturgy alone, but to let each speak for itself;<sup>1</sup> a true and valuable principle if it had *been only a question of Church comprehension*; but more difficult of application, as the event proved, when the problem was to frame a consistent system of theology. In short, the attempt proved a failure. The *via media*, instead of hitting on the happy medium, was constantly oscillating between the rival claimants; recoiling from each in succession accordingly as premises were argued out to their legitimate conclusions, but never finding rest for the sole of its foot. As time went on, the hollowness of the system became more and more apparent, and it was seen how difficult it is to weld the Anglican formularies, taken collectively and in their plain literal meaning, into a consistent whole; and the desperate expedient had at length to be resorted to of sacrificing the undoubted sense of the Thirty-Nine Articles to the exigencies of the situation. With this attempt the whole system exploded. It did not deserve a better fate. It was, in every sense of the word, an *insular* production; and not untinged with arrogance. It aimed at exhibiting the English Church as the one body in Christendom that had preserved the

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<sup>1</sup> "In giving the Articles a Catholic interpretation, we bring them into harmony with the Book of Common Prayer, an object of the most serious moment to those who have given their assent to both formularies."—Tract 90, Conclusion.

Apostolic deposit in its primitive exactness : to which, therefore all other churches were to gravitate as a common centre of unity : Canterbury was to take the place of mediæval Rome. The vision dissolved the moment logical tests came to be applied. The golden mean, in its actual application, was found to involve difficulties as great as either extreme. To take one instance—the question of the interpretation of Scripture. The Romish doctrine of an infallible living expositor, in the person of the Pope, has the merit of simplicity, is quite intelligible, and, *if only the fact could be proved*, removes numberless perplexities ; equally satisfactory in its way, when properly understood, is the genuine Protestant doctrine of the right and duty of private judgment. The *via media* adopted neither the one nor the other in its integrity. It admitted in some sense the right of private judgment ; it denied the infallibility of the Pope ; but its right of private judgment was accompanied with the proviso that the interpretations should always be in accordance with “the voice of Catholic antiquity.”<sup>1</sup> How, or where, the voice of Catholic antiquity, ruling disputed points of interpretation, was to be ascertained, could never be satisfactorily explained. In point of fact, can there be a *via media* between truth and error ? Can truth be truth if shorn of its proportions, or error become less innocuous by losing its grossness ? There may be, and probably always is, in *individual minds* a mixture of truth and error, which is nothing but saying that the most sincere inquirer is yet fallible : such a juxtaposition, if not harmless, may and must be tolerated. It is different when a *system* of theological eclecticism is put forward as an ideal ; like its predecessor in the schools of philosophy, it can only issue in an emasculated bantling, which, after a short period of sickly existence, deservedly sinks into oblivion. The great writer, then in Anglican orders, who was the intellectual leader of the movement, has left on record how the *via media* broke down in his hands as a dogmatical edifice. “By the great words of St. Augustine (*securus judicat orbis terrarum*), the theory of the *via media* was absolutely pulverized” (“Apologia” of Cardinal Newman, p. 212). “My new historical fact had to a certain point a logical force. Down had come the *via media* as a definite theory or scheme under the blows of St. Leo” (*ibid.*,

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<sup>1</sup> On the subject of our proposed Papers, the issue of an examination of Arts VI. and XX. was, that “Not a word is said, on the one hand, in favour of Scripture having no rule or method to fix interpretation by” (in other words, in favour of the sufficiency of Scripture to interpret itself), “or, as it is commonly expressed, being the *sole rule of faith* ; nor, on the other, of the private judgment of the individual being the ultimate standard of interpretation” (in other words, whether an infallible *judge* is necessary or not to make an interpretation valid).—Tract 90, § 1.

p. 216). "The *via media* was an impossible idea; it was what I had called standing on one leg; and it was necessary, if my old issue of the controversy was to be retained, to go further one way or the other" (*ibid.*, p. 260). "The *via media* had disappeared for ever, and a new theory, made expressly for the occasion, took its place" (*ibid.*, p. 269). So it must ever be, if the controversy falls into the hands of consecutive thinkers.

There are, in fact, only two systems of theology coherent in themselves and capable of scientific exposition, the Romish and the Protestant; these words being used not to designate the popular forms of creed as they practically exist, but the principles of the respective systems as they are found stated in the symbolical books and elaborated in the works of the chief doctrinal writers on either side since the Reformation, a Bellarmin and a Möhler on the one, a Chemnitz, a J. Gerhard, a Quenstedt, on the other; worthy successors, all of them, of the great scholastic divines of the Middle Ages. A writer, therefore, on dogmatic theology, who wishes to produce anything of real value, must make his choice between these two; stating each fairly, but not attempting to fuse them into a *tertium quid*. This does not imply that within the main lines of each system subordinate differences of opinion may not exist; a Protestant church would not be what it professes to be if it discountenanced all such; and even in the Romish communion a considerable latitude of private opinion is allowed. But an attempt to combine the fundamental *principles* of the two systems can hardly succeed.

In our Church, one formulary, at any rate, furnishes the requisite consistency of structure—viz., the Thirty-Nine Articles. No one who compares them with the confessions of the Reformed churches abroad can for a moment be in doubt as to their parentage. Like these confessions, they are Catholic as regards the great doctrines contained in the three Creeds, and Protestant as against Rome; and of the two families of foreign confessions they lean rather to the Reformed than to the Lutheran type. On the Thirty-Nine Articles, at any rate, as a basis, a body of genuine Protestant doctrine may be constructed. On these, therefore, the present writer takes his stand; and of course on any other formularies of our Church so far as they point to the same parentage: but he advances no claim to represent "the theology of the Church of England," even if such a thing exists. This might be possible were the assumption sometimes made well founded, that the Articles, not the Liturgical services, express dogma; though this may be true in a qualified sense it cannot be maintained absolutely. On the subject of Church comprehension we have no more right to insist upon the one than upon the other. A writer who is convinced of the truth of Protestantism as against Romanism has a right to avail himself of

the principal dogmatical symbol of our Church, under a belief that it expresses his opinions; but hardly so to abridge the liberty of others who, in other formularies of the same church, may profess to find what better suits their spiritual taste. In short, the further we remove ourselves from the invidious question, What constitutes a loyal member or minister of our Church? to the open ground of scientific controversy, the better for the interests of truth, though the more difficult for zealots on either side. For nothing is easier than mutual recriminations of this kind, while a properly conducted controversial discussion is the fruit of research and patient thought. There are limits, of course, to this mutual toleration, and there is no more difficult problem than to draw the line between what is compatible and what is not with honest subscription to the formularies of our Church. Happily the present writer, as will be seen, is in no way called upon to entertain this problem. His aim is nothing but to expound *genuine* Protestantism on the basis of that particular Anglican formulary which is called the Thirty-Nine Articles.

As regards the particular subject of the following Papers (and the same may be said of some others) there is the less need of the disclaimer just mentioned, inasmuch, as on the question of the Rule of Faith, the Articles (those that are concerned with it are the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Twentieth, and Twenty-first) are in complete accordance with the other symbolical statements of our Church; on this point, at any rate, she is unmistakably Protestant, and speaks with no uncertain voice. And a church which is Protestant on the Rule of Faith possesses in herself, by virtue of that one decisive principle, both the right and the means of further reformation, should a deeper knowledge of Scripture, or the lessons of experience, suggest such a step; an inestimable advantage which none but a Protestant church can enjoy, and which the Romish Church, in her rejection of Scripture as the sole Rule of Faith, has precluded herself from sharing.

E. A. LITTON.

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### ART. III.—MEMOIRS OF MADAME DE RÉMUSAT.

*Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat*, 1802-1808. Trois tomes. Paris. 1880.

THESE memoirs, the third volume of which, though untranslated, has now appeared, throw a light upon the character and Court life of the First Empire, which leaves little to be divulged or imagined. Madame de Rémusat was one of the ladies-in-waiting to the consort of the great Napoleon, and thus had ample opportunities for the exercise of her observant