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THE

CHURCHMAN

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ART. I. — HOW BEST TO CARRY OUT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION IN OUR MINISTERIAL WORK.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL CLERICAL MEETING, DUBLIN, APRIL 4, 1894.

THE question of this morning, like many another question, draws two more behind it. Clearly, we must ask, What are the principles of the Reformation? And no sooner do we look this previous question in the face than we are forced to go still further back, and for the sake of clearness ask, What do we mean by "principles" in any department of thought, politics, for instance, or physical science?

Now I suppose that a principle is one of those master-thoughts, august and dominating, though generally simple enough, which modify our whole system of thinking, and to which we bring other speculations — themselves perhaps of great importance also—to be judged, to be accepted or condemned as they harmonize or clash with the ruling convictions which have thus grasped our lives.

When Ireland was being mapped out by the trigonometrical survey, the vast triangles from which that great work is named were gradually stretched out from one initial base, on which the utmost care was lavished. But when a certain number of base lines had been laid down, the remainder of the map depended on these cardinal data, river and lake and road being ascertained by careful inference from the leading facts which dominated all the later work. So it is with the mind; and a man's greatness depends largely upon two issues—upon the acquisition of leading principles which truly command the lower country, and then upon the precision and facility with which further observations are taken, and the bearing of cardinal principles on the whole region is worked out.

One might carry the analogy further, and say that as all sorts of disturbing elements impeded those scientific workers, and not only the refraction of the atmosphere had to be remembered, but even the bulge of the world, the difference between flat and spherical triangles ; so the mind, even in what seem to be the operations of pure logic, must allow for passion and interest, prejudice, and hope and fear. But this is a sword with two edges. Luther, they tell us, was self-willed ; but did Charles and Leo see by a white light ?

Principles, then, are those convictions which rule the rest of our opinions. In politics various bills are voted on, by one statesman with a view to the full protection of all civic rights, even of minorities, and perhaps even of Churchmen ; by another in awful deference to the will of the majority, issuing Bulls more stringent than of the papacy, which he reveres under the name of mandates.

And there is little use in politicians wrangling about matters of detail while such conflicting principles possess them. If anyone here is of my belated opinion that most political discussions are vanity, let me tell him how to get amusement and instruction, even from these snatchings at the wind. Look out for the various and inconsistent convictions, around which crystallize the minor opinions of each, observing how one assumes as fundamental what his antagonist perhaps denies, certainly assigns to a lowly place among his mere "views," his "opinions," and reflect how their differences reach down miles deeper among the roots of things than their logic even attempts to follow.

It will be found before I close that I have another object in dwelling so long upon this point besides the first and obvious one, which is to make it clear that we are not now committing ourselves to every opinion of every reformer here or on the Continent. It is a curious example of the impossibility of such a policy that while the Reformed Church holds, of necessity, that no regenerate person can possibly commit the unpardonable sin, the Lutheran Church holds that none but a regenerate person can possibly do so.

But we turn back to the greatest movement which has uplifted and blessed mankind since the Apostles fell asleep; the movement which every nation and kingdom that blessed was blessed, and everyone that cursed it was cursed visibly ; the movement by virtue of which the family life of Germany is purer than that of France, and therefore her arm in battle has grown more puissant ; the movement which made England bold to snatch her imperial destinies from the relaxing grasp of Spain, and we ask, what are the central convictions which made this movement so august and so benignant ? For

even if its first teachers did sometimes press them to extremity, or sometimes fail to discern the fulness of their import, yet it must avail us much to know how best these ruling principles may be brought home to our Church, to our own people, to-day.

It is false to call it a sceptical movement, or to say that the reformers opened the door by which the philosophers—the folk whom Frenchmen call philosophers—invaded the Holy Place. So far was Luther from being a herald of Voltaire, that he stood alone among thousands of unbelieving priests and people by virtue of his firm grasp on the cardinal truths of his religion. What clashed with these was what he warred upon; what he even suspected of clashing, as for example the Epistle of James, he was too audaciously ready to pronounce "right strawy."

And now we reach our main subject as we ask, What were these principles? is there a party in the Church untrue to them? Have we a good answer to those on the other side who think the whole Church false to them? The extremest Anglicans were once as ready to protest against the Papal claims as we. Folk who denounced them as crypto-Papists used, with a fine precision, the worst possible phrase, since the Papacy was the one thing which they denounced as loudly as if they would fain quiet their conscience for protesting against little else. These denunciations are perhaps waxing fainter. Aversion to Roman authority does naturally grow cold, as love for all which that authority upholds grows warm.

But revolt against Church order was far from being a first principle of the Reformation. Luther himself appealed to the Pope and said, "I shall recognise your voice as the voice of Christ, who rules in you and speaks by you" (Hagenbach, i. 104). Nor was he disillusionized by logic, but by a rude experience; and his subsequent defiance of the Papacy is a fine example of that ascendancy of principles over minor beliefs which we have noted. For when the Papal authority, which he unfeignedly held in such respect, clashed with his paramount convictions, it broke as promptly as the earthen vessel against the brazen one. Clearly it is not enough for loyalty to the principles of the Reformation that we repudiate the Bishop of Rome. Such repudiation was but an inference, a corollary.

Dissenters, on the other hand, who persuade themselves that episcopal government is a remnant of the Roman superstition, have to learn that not one of the great reformers was of that opinion. They protested that they dispensed with episcopal government reluctantly and by compulsion, and only because their Bishops persecuted the presbyters, who taught the truth (*Apol. Confess. Aug.*, vii. 14); and even the fiery Beza con-

gratulated the English Church on retaining a reformed episcopate, as upon a special gift of God, which he greatly wished might be continued to it. Churchmen, if only they remember that truth is the supreme necessity of all, may teach the principles of the Reformation without the slightest fear of encouraging anarchy or schism. Just because the priesthood belongs to the whole Church, said Luther, on that account must none usurp it without an orderly commission from the Church (*To the Christian Nobility, cf.* Dorner, *Hist. Prot. Theology*, pp. 99, 150).

What were these great beliefs, in which, as in a bud, the Reformation lay folded up?

I. The first in historical order, though not in logical sequence, was an intense conviction of the peril and guilt of sin. That was not, in theory, anti-Roman. A sense of sin drove Stylites to his column and inflicted the lash on the flagellants; it underlay pilgrimages, fastings, hair shirts and masses for the dead; it expressed itself with grotesque and frightful energy in the mediæval notions of hell, and it was seen in that eager welcome of indulgences which kindled the reforming zeal of Luther, who himself was a sincere Romanist while worn to a shadow by the austerities of his self-discipline.

Yes, but in him, and in the millions who understood him well, because their experience resembled his, these devices failed to meet the case; the fierce fire of his remorse withered up all belief in the sufficiency of penances, indulgences and absolutions (except as rescinding Church censures and as declaratory); to him the attempt to rid the vexed bosom of its perilous stuff by priestcraft or by self-torture was as hopeless as the pills of which Mr. Bright told us, which were very serviceable in an earthquake; and it was because the early Protestants felt sin so bitterly that they could be appeased by no contrivances whatever for healing the hurt of the daughter of the people slightly.

What would these agitated souls have made of the dilettante and kid-gloved austerities of our day, severities which sometimes, to attune themselves for the awful meditations of Passion Week, abstain from sugar in their coffee, and even sometimes, greatly daring, dispense with butter from their bread?

It is not by merely arguing against these "formalities and externalities" of religion that we shall conquer them. To denounce formality is well, but to set the soul on fire is better; for, just as mere etiquettes vanish in the stress of battle and in the agonies of shipwreck, so men who understand and feel that sin is equivalent with the curse and anger of an offended God, who is a consuming fire, a jealous God, will not easily be

reassured by substituting some delicate fish for meat on Friday, nor yet by any human absolution, while knowing what each man does know, the plague of his own heart.

Are *we*, then, doing our part to give our people deep and penetrating views of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; or are we teaching a religion, I say not too gracious (which is impossible), but too easily and cheaply gracious? Are we failing to search the consciences of men and to assert the righteousness of the final judgment? Are we exhibiting pardon as a gratuity tossed to us in answer to our first vague and half-careless wish, as some wealthy men toss coins to beggars, coins which they give without self-denial, and which therefore prove nothing as to the severity of the suffering to which they minister? Is the complaint of Luther as true to-day, that the teachers of his time had often exhibited Christ, patiently suffering anguish, as an example, but were silent about the motives why He suffered. The martyrs also suffered, and their blood was acceptable to God, yet none of them redeemed his own soul or any other. Only Christ saves us by His death (Held., "*De Opere J. C. apud Lutherus*," p. 74).

If we thus err, what wonder that sin, so easily condoned, appears a little thing; so that if the conscience is still troubled, some trifling palliative seems to meet the case. For a scratch we accept an ointment which would never content us for a fracture.

II. This bitter and crushing weight of sin was removed by a joyous and hearty sense of the reality of pardon, the genuineness of fatherly reconciliation, bought for us by the Cross; and received through living faith in a living God, manifested in Christ. This is the second of those vital principles which we are seeking.

We all understand that justification by faith was the mainspring of the Reformation. We ought to understand and teach how utterly unlike it is to that easy and slipshod notion of a cheap forgiveness, which we have just reproached as dwarfing our sense of sin, and thus beguiling us into contentment with the paltry anodynes of Rome.

It makes forgiveness quite as free and large and prompt, but it also knows it to be the most costly of all the gifts of God.

III. It was a logical consequence—but more than that, it was an experience, a practical discovery, following close on this belief in a real pardon, received from a living God, in direct and loving response to the appeal of human penitence, that *God continued to be a vivid reality*, no theory at all, but personal, accessible, and beloved, through the remainder of the Christian experience, as truly as at the outset.

Now, the true principles of the Reformation are not assailed

from one side only. And when depressed by the flabby and vague pettiness of certain modern teachers, when ill-content with being bidden to cultivate an emotion or to venture upon a phrase, to "say you believe"—one is not told exactly what—when disheartened by the mean and hollow catchwords, which fail to commend themselves to the conscience, or even to stimulate, not to speak of nourishing, the ethical forces, it is like passing from a drug-shop with its labels and its odours to some fragrant slope where the pines are swaying in the mountain-wind, to go back and commune with the spiritual giants who wrestled for the doctrine of faith amid agonies of inner conflict, with passionate appeals to God.

Read, for instance, in Luther (than whom, in spite of his obvious demerits, there is no more bracing and wholesome reading anywhere), his bold and direct announcements of trust in the sacrifice of Christ, and in His revelation of the Father, and in the free forgiveness of sins. "It is told of St. Martin that when he absolved many grievous sinners, Satan demanded why he did so. But Martin answered, 'Yes, and I would absolve you, too, if you would say from your heart: It grieves me to have sinned against the Son of God, and I ask pardon.' But the devil does not so, he persists in defending his sin" (*On Genesis* iv. 9).

"I expect more goodness from Kate, my wife, from Philip Melancthon and other friends, than from my sweet and blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ; and yet I know for certain that neither she, nor any other person on earth, will or can suffer for me what He has suffered; why, then, should I be afraid of Him? *This my foolish weakness grieves me very much*" ("*Table Talk*," Bohn, p. 102).

I put it to my brethren here whether much of the recoil of our people from the Lord's table, and also from any bold and open profession of faith, and much of the attraction of more formal systems, is not due to some vague notion that what they are asked to avow is their own experience, their conversion, and their attainments—whether we have any more pressing duty than to thrust into the forefront the objective truths, outside and beyond myself—which, and which only, we must profess, and uphold, and trust. Not my gladness, but what ought to gladden me. These principles carry with them an atmosphere fatal to the Plymouth heresy, and they were also fatal to the Roman. Saint-worship, masses, works of supererogation, and all the vast, lucrative and splendid system of priestcraft, went down once, not so much before exposure and refutation in detail, as before the instincts of trustful hearts, who had God Himself to call upon, accessible, all-kindly, and well-beloved. They will do the same again. Let us fill our sermons, our

teaching and our lives with these grand and free doctrines; let us not lose in any controversies or social problems of the hour, the glory of the Gospel of the grace of God; and, as of old, men will be convinced and judged, and will confess that God is with us of a truth.

IV. I had wished to exhibit, side by side, two other cardinal convictions of the Reformation: one, that the voice of God the Spirit was in our hearts, making each man responsible for his own soul, and abolishing by His inward enlightenment all claim of ecclesiastics to control our faith; the other, by which this was nobly redeemed from fanaticism, that the authority of Scripture was decisive and supreme. It is easy to complain of the overboldness of some of Luther's pronouncements about the Canon, but yet he had a profound conviction that the Spirit in the Church was always one with the Spirit in the written word, never superseding, nor even, strictly speaking, supplementing, but rather applying and explaining Scripture; and he pointed out, with a profound insight, that Roman claims to propagate new doctrines without the Word were at the core identical with those fanatical and enthusiastic movements then called Anabaptist, formerly Montanist, and subsequently Plymouthite. *Papatus simpliciter est merus enthusiasmus.*

And I have always admired, more than his nerve when he flung his inkbottle at the phantom Satan (which, said one, he had been doing all his life), his treatment of another vision, "a bright vision of our Saviour Christ with the five wounds. At first sight I thought it had been a celestial revelation, but presently I bethought me, that Christ revealed Himself to us in His Word, and in a lowlier fashion, wherefore I spoke thus: 'Avoid me, confounded devil; I know no other Christ than He who was crucified, and is pictured and presented to me in His Word.' Whereupon the vision vanished, clearly proving of whom it came" ("*Table Talk*," Bohn, p. 104).

And now I am almost done. It dismays me to reflect how (like the Irish landlords) I have lost my opportunity, what visions of epigram and impertinence dawned like a sunrise on my fancy as I surveyed this subject first, what novel (and, for that matter, impossible) suggestions which would have made you stare, what little points about the wickedness of a cross, or perhaps the wickedness of thinking it wicked, what serene platitudes about the blessing of peace or about the duty of a fearless testimony—and all the more fearless, as is natural, when the public is on one's side—or about the folly of crying "Wolf." To these altitudes I have not aspired; I have not been high-minded, and had no proud looks.

Something I did wish seriously to urge which is constantly forgotten, and yet seems plain enough, namely, that you

cannot say that anything is as bad as Rome without teaching your hearers that Rome is no worse than that.

But the very wording of your subject threw me back on the great principles which lie deeper down. Would that I could express the intensity of my conviction that our truest need is teaching saturated through and through with those grand truths which are at once elementary and elemental! Controversial? Yes, certainly; but edifying first of all—teaching which not only accepts these principles, but lives for the sake of them, and breathes their spirit; which is eloquent, not with the paltry catchwords of the mere orthodoxy of any school, but with the vital heat, the passionate conviction of hearts which know what God and Christ and pardon mean.

Let me close with the words of that master of masters, whom I have so often quoted, and to whom, in these days of rebuke and blasphemy, all my heart does homage: "We only fail in belief. If I had faith according to the requirements of Scripture, I alone would drive the Turk out of Constantinople, and the Pope out of Rome. But we come far short of this" ("*Table Talk*," Bohn, p. 98). GEO. A. CHADWICK.

ART. II.—WE HAVE AN ALTAR.

AN EXPOSITION OF HEB. XIII. 10-12.

PART II.

TO complete our consideration of the subject, we must now examine our Communion Office to see what is its teaching. In the first Prayer-Book of Edward the title of the service is, "The Supper of the Lord, and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass." In accordance with the Mass, we have Altar in the Rubrics. But when the Church advanced in the true conception of the Lord's Supper, all idea of a propitiatory sacrifice offered on the Lord's table was abandoned, and the terms *Mass* and *Altar* disappeared, and have not since been restored. In the second Prayer-Book of Edward the title is, as at present, "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion."

In a preliminary rubric it is enacted that "the table at the Communion time having a fair white linen cloth upon it, shall stand in the body of the church, or in the chancel, where Morning and Evening Prayer are appointed to be said."[1] There

[1] I quote this rubric as it was before our Irish revision, and as it is still in the Prayer-Book of the Church of England. We omit the words after chancel.