
A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

P.M.
Reverendissimi et Sanctissimi Præsulis
JOHANNIS TILLOTSON,
Archiepiscopi Cantuarensis,
Concionatoris olim hâc in Ecclesiâ
Per annos xxx celeberrimi,
Qui obiit x° Kal Dec MDCLXXXXIV.
Ætatis suæ LXIIII.
Hoc posuit ELIZABETHA
Conjux illius mæstissima.

ART. IV.—MONTANISM AND THE EARLY CHURCH.

TO the student of ecclesiastical doctrines in their manifold inter-relations, and of the diversified currents of theological thought, the rise of Montanism in the second century of our era must always remain a most interesting phenomenon. On the one hand, it supplies him with an example, hardly paralleled for its suggestiveness elsewhere, of the half-imitative and yet half-antagonistic manner in which a heresy springs up beside the orthodox creed; and, on the other, it possesses, both in scope and source, so special an individuality that its relations with the Catholic Church become clothed with almost the fascination of a problem. For Montanus, unlike the Ebionite or the Gnostic, started, not from Judaism or heathenism, but from Christianity itself; and his doctrine, although in some respects it certainly outran the Catholic belief, was yet so closely allied with it in all its fundamental conceptions as scarcely to deserve the name of heresy, in spite of much that was exaggerated or morbid. And, in addition to all its other claims to careful study, it enjoys the unique advantage of having come down to us in the pages of an enthusiastic advocate—an advocate whose powers of pleading were but increased by the very impetuosity of character which robbed him of logical precision, of unbiassed discrimination, and of the deep repose of spirit that accompanies so often a persuasive voice. While other heresies are known to us only under the light, too frequently false or partial or misleading, of adverse criticism, our knowledge of the doctrines of Montanism is drawn from the writings of one who spent the latter part of his life in illustrating and defending them.

For a clear understanding of those doctrines in their relation to Catholic teaching, it will be necessary first to glance very briefly at the leading facts of their external history, and next, to compare them in their dogmatic and moral aspects with the doctrines accepted by the Church at large. In doing so, we

shall see at once that Montanism came much nearer to the contemporary Christian idea than any of the heresies of its time. It differed alike from the Gnostic heresies which preceded it and from the Trinitarian which followed it, in being rather a moral than a doctrinal movement; and it stood still further aloof from the former in its assertion of orthodoxy and its unhesitating acceptance of the canonical Scriptures. Its actual rise was no doubt encouraged by a spirit of reaction against the prevailing Gnosticism, as well as by a spirit of protest against the bitter severities of the reign of Aurelius. Thanks to the strange irony of fortune, Christianity suffered worse things at the hands of the most Christian of the Roman emperors than it had ever suffered before except from Nero. The character of the times gave acceptableness to any high enthusiasm; and we shall be taking quite a wrong view of Montanus and his teaching if we consider him to be anything more than a centre round which were gathered certain tendencies which outward rather than inward conditions had long been shaping in the development of Christian thought. His personality has the importance only of one who is the mouthpiece of a large movement. A Mysian by birth, slight in ability and weak in character, Montanus is said to have been, before conversion, a priest of Cybele, and, if so, may have been the subject of those savage emotions of which the "Attis" of Catullus has preserved so wild and striking a picture. The prophecies which he uttered, together with those of his companions Maximilla and Priscilla, found a ready hearing among a people already distinguished, as the Phrygians were, for a mystical and ascetic temperament. Persecution only increased the ardour of the new prophets, and the doctrine rapidly gathered strength both in organization and in numbers.

Its entrance into Africa was facilitated by the gloom and severity of the Punic character. In Africa, as the historians have pointed out, Christianity had already acquired vehemence and depth; the very climate seemed to influence the manner of presentation of the Christian idea, and with stern, practical, impetuous natures "disputes maddened into feuds, and feuds grew into obstinate, implacable and irreconcilable factions." Tertullian, in particular, was from the first so nearly a Montanist in all but name, that much ingenuity has been expended on the task of deciding whether certain of his words were composed before or after his adhesion to the new school; and Jerome is undoubtedly mistaken in his judgment that Tertullian's lapse was due to the slights he had received from the clergy of Rome. A passionate moralist, with an ardent and defiant temper diversified by a vein of almost savage sarcasm,

Tertullian accepted at once the creed which harmonized so well with his own disposition and view of Christianity. It was chiefly through him that it assumed enough of philosophic importance to react, no less in Spain than in Africa, on the Catholic Church. He was the only theologian of the movement, for, strangely enough, his great disciple Cyprian makes no mention of Montanism. Nor, indeed, did the doctrine ever meet with more than a very partial and broken support. From its first rise it was assailed by criticism and objections. Charges of immorality, of worldliness, of avarice, are collected in the pages of Eusebius against Montanus and his companions. For the grosser of these accusations there appears to have been little or no foundation; and even Apollinarius (ap. Euseb. v. 16), while comparing Montanus and Maximilla to Judas, shows a wise scepticism about the story of their suicide. Eusebius himself, though he refrains in this instance from the use of his turgid rhetoric, is clearly in agreement with the writers whom he quotes; and the conception of Montanism given in his work — a very insufficient one, it must be confessed, and a very unphilosophical—is hostile throughout. By Epiphanius, misled by the fact that the new prophets used the first person as being the inspired organs of the Paraclete, Montanus was falsely charged with claiming to be himself the Paraclete and the Father.

The Montanist theory of inspiration certainly did not admit of any sharp partition between the human and the divine, but at the same time there can be little doubt that Montanus claimed to be no more than the medium for the wider fulfilment of the promise of the Comforter. Even this claim, however, was rejected by the Church. The Bishops of Asia Minor, with some exceptions, declared these πνευματικοί (as they styled themselves) to be inspired by devils. Supernatural their inspiration was, but it was that of a νόθον πνεῦμα (Apollinarius); and excommunication showed the mind of a large section of the Eastern Church. In the West, Montanism was at first well received. Victor, influenced by certain commendatory letters (Tertullian's "letters of peace") from the enthusiastic martyrs of Lyons, as well as by the colour of orthodoxy given to the doctrine by its condemnation in Asia (then at variance with the Roman Church on the Paschal question), was about to receive it with a formal acknowledgment, when, at this juncture, messengers arrived from Asia, and Praxeas, who, in Tertullian's words, did "a twofold service to the devil in driving away prophecy and in bringing in heresy," prevailed on the Bishop to excommunicate the Montanists. Thus, Montanism was excommunicated as a heresy both in the East and the West within a few years of its founder's appearance.

Its doctrine of individual inspiration was felt to be antagonistic to the unity and authority of the Church; and its wild proclamations of the downfall of the empire, springing from its millenarian principles, may have been felt dangerous to the welfare and progress of Christianity.

Nevertheless, the idealistic spirit and moral earnestness with which it confronted the rationalism and occasionally lax morality of Gnosticism won for it defenders at Rome for more than a century; and, in spite of the repeated decrees of the post-Constantine emperors, it continued to exist for about four hundred years, undoubtedly exercising some influence on the development of Christianity by infusing into the Church a portion of its own spirit. It may have encouraged the practice of priestly celibacy, the refusal of the Church to admit women to functions, the insistence, against new prophecies, on a closed canon of Scripture; it almost certainly helped to disarm Gnosticism (with which it had in common its distinction of a psychical and pneumatic Church, and its hostile attitude to the present world), by making Christianity consist in life and not in speculation, and by placing the consummation of God's kingdom in an earthly instead of an ideal sphere; and Dr. Newman goes so far as to see in it an anticipation of the medieval system. But, as a whole, Montanism was, and was felt to be, out of harmony with the general feeling of the Church. Had it been tolerated, it would have claimed the supremacy due to its advanced teaching; and had that supremacy been gained, Christian doctrine would unquestionably (as Dr. Salmon suggests) have developed under the superintendence of exaggerated enthusiasm rather than the guidance of quiet and sober thought.

The leading inquiry with regard to Montanism is: Was it a conservative movement? Was it a return—"a very natural return," as Renan calls it—to the teaching of the Apostolic Church? The facts which have been already given concerning the attitude and influence of Montanism, and concerning its treatment by the Church at large, lend a presumptive strength to the belief that its character was much more closely allied with the spirit of revolution than with that of conservatism. Such a belief seems to be confirmed by an examination of its dogmatic and moral teachings. Between these two it is always difficult to draw a parting line, so closely are theory and practice bound up together; but the remembrance of their intimate connection will render it at once an easier and a less dangerous task to treat them separately.

I. On its theoretic side, then, Montanism had for distinguishing features its doctrine of inspiration and of the Paraclete, its millenarianism, and its theory of the Church. Here, as after-

wards, we shall find our best guide in Tertullian, "the patron of Christianity." On all the cardinal facts of the faith there was an essential agreement between Church doctrine and Montanism. The books of the Old and New Testament were equally acknowledged by both; and the Christian belief in the Trinity was by the one, no less than by the other, held unimpaired. Tertullian, whose unquestioned orthodoxy saved him from the excommunication which overtook Montanus, even contributed to "the development of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity by asserting against Patripassianism a personal distinction in God" (Schaff). He was, in fact, the champion of a double cause: of the smaller circle of Montanism against what he conceived to be the less spiritual conception, and of the larger circle of the Church against the attacks of paganism or heresy. In her defence he exhibits an ardour, a zeal, a scornful enthusiasm, the remembrance of which cannot but make us feel that the "Ecclesiastical Polity" falls short of its habitual generosity of sentiment in calling Tertullian "an enemy unto the Church," and in emphasizing, in him, an "ulceration of mind" which "made him apt to take all occasions of contradiction." And yet, when we turn from the large basis of Christian thought to examine the hardly less fundamental doctrines of inspiration and revelation, we shall see that the lines which have been hitherto so parallel now begin to diverge. The primitive doctrine of inspiration in the Christian Church has been set forth at some length by Bishop Westcott, in an appendix to his "Introduction to the Gospels," in which he shows us that the theory prevalent in all the great writers of the early ages was a theory of *rational* inspiration. He points out how Justin's description of inspiration as the playing of the Divine Spirit on just men as the plectrum plays upon the harp—the exact metaphor afterwards employed by Montanus himself—was not, in him, inconsistent with the fact that the tone and quality of a note depend as much on the instrument as on the hand which plays it; how, while Athenagoras, who spoke of the inspired as being "deprived of their natural powers of reason," stood as the solitary predecessor of the Montanist doctrine, Apologists like Theophilus and Irenæus refused to rob the human agent of his individuality or to present him as a mere mechanical organ that cannot co-operate with the Divine influence; and how, finally, the Church of Rome, repeating, in the person of Hippolytus, the same metaphor of the lyre and plectrum, laid stress rather on the inward fitness of the man than on the outward exercise of an arbitrary power. To this universal doctrine of a rational and co-operating influence of the Spirit of God Montanism opposed the Greek theory of an irrational

frenzy in which the human element is wholly lost. On the passive mind the Spirit plays as a harpist on a dead instrument; the man is absorbed in his message; the reason is merged in a frantic enthusiasm, very unlike the quiet reasonableness which the Apostles learnt from their Master. Tertullian, in whom, significantly enough, the emotions were more developed than the intellect, referred to inspiration as an *amentia;* the prophet was said *excidere sensu*, just as Montanus had spoken of "the Lord putting the hearts of men out of themselves"; and the manner in which the African apologist describes the utterance of the new prophecies reminds the modern historian of the phenomena of magnetic clairvoyance (Schaff). Even before his conversion Tertullian had approached the Montanist view of inspiration in speaking of the baptism and inspiration of John; and his distinction between what is human and what is immediately divine in the apostolic writings implies a refusal to acknowledge the co-operation of God and man. After his lapse, he fully adopted the new theory; and though, from a psychological point of view, his assertion of a self-determining principle in human volition is perhaps inconsistent with his position as a representative of the doctrine of irresistible grace, yet on the whole he accepted without qualification both the matter and the manner of the Montanist prophecies, and attached to their new revelations the same authority as to the canonical Scriptures. This theory of inspiration, so alien to the primitive conception, brought Montanism at once into antagonism with the Catholic Church. And after an offer had been unsuccessfully made to exorcise the Montanist prophetesses, the new spirit was pronounced, in Tertullian's bitter phrase, to be a spirit of the Devil.

Closely linked with the Montanist doctrine of inspiration was the doctrine of the Paraclete. There had been, according to Montanus, a regular development of religion, analogous to the growth of the individual life, from Judaism to the new dispensation of the Paraclete, which thus stood to Christ's own teaching in the relation of maturity to youth. Christ, it was thought, had laid down only an incomplete and imperfect rule as a concession to human weakness. Through Montanus had come the full and final revelation of the Paraclete promised by Christ; and after this there was to be "no more prophecy but only the end of the world." Such was the declaration of Maximilla herself. So was the old traditional faith to be kept and confirmed, while discipline alone was to be reformed and purified in the search for a higher perfection. The New Testament was still identified with the sources of Christian doctrine; but, for the practical morality of the Church, an appeal was made to fresh outpourings of the Spirit, thus

offered, "as an abiding criterion of truth," to guide the elect in the dark days of gathering controversy. Tertullian's own view of true religion, strengthened by, if not adopted from, the Montanist doctrine, was that of gradual development through four stages. From the seed of natural religion had sprung the plant of legal religion as set forth in the Old Testament; and this, blossoming in the Gospel preached and heard during the life of Christ, had come to its maturity in the perfect teaching of the Paraclete. Tertullian, therefore, not only declined to separate the apostolic from the succeeding ages, but even maintained that those who rejected the new doctrine were incapable of rightly understanding the old. So great is the importance of this theory of progressiveness in religion—the first which had passed beyond the teaching of the New Testament and the Apostles—that it will call for further consideration shortly, and, on examination, will be found to furnish a strong argument against the conservative character of Montanism. For the present, it is enough to notice that the whole doctrine of the Paraclete, if not felt to be "a manifest perversion" (Liddon) of St. John's treatise on the subject, was at least recognised as an unauthorized addition to the contents of the Catholic faith; and as such the Church rejected it. One only of the new prophecies she showed herself willing to accept—the prophecy of Maximilla: "Do not hear me, but hear Christ!"

The Montanist theory of the Church was the natural outcome of its doctrines of revelation and inspiration. If individual inspiration is to be received on the same footing as the faith of the Gospel, then the barriers of authority are thrown down. To Tertullian the Church means not the whole body of true believers, but those alone who accept the teaching of the Paraclete: its mark is rather the spiritual fact than the outward organization. His idea that baptism may be administered not only by the bishop (*summus sacerdos*), but also by all Christians, shows how fully he admitted the conception of a universal priesthood. *Non ecclesia numerus episcoporum* is the watchword of a revolutionary reaction against the fixity and exclusiveness of an ordained hierarchy. The seal of ordination is no longer the outward imposition of hands: it is the possession of certain inward characteristics. Hence, religion being resolved into emotion, even women, if duly qualified, shared the universal priesthood; and the episcopal order, shorn of much of its dignity and power, was placed third among the orders of the Montanist Church. Insisting on the continuance of miraculous gifts, and, in particular, of prophecy, the Montanist appealed, in his own defence, to scriptural examples—to Agabus or Miriam or the

four daughters of Philip. According to Renan, who thinks that Montanism arose out of the concessions made by the Church to the world owing to the delay of the Second Advent, it was this theory of a universal priesthood which induced the Church to become more Catholic by placing Christianity in obedience to ecclesiastical authority much more than in spiritual gifts. One could now, he observes, be a Christian without being a saint; schism was held to be the worst of crimes; and in rejecting Montanism the Church rejected the refinements of holiness. The conflict is thus, to Renan, the conflict of poetry with prose, of common-sense with a dream of perfection. How much of unfairness there is in such a view is shown by the fact, on the one hand, that at this very time the Church, far from allowing that mere outward observances could constitute the essence of religion, was demanding a more and more careful preparation and training from all candidates for baptism; and, on the other, that the Montanists, by claiming "for their prophets what they denied to Christian bishops" (Schaff), were themselves only establishing a new kind of aristocracy, and indulging in a spiritual pride which is significantly revealed by their distinction of a carnal and pneumatic Church. Their lofty contempt for those who were not like themselves is akin to a pharisaical egotism than which nothing can be more truly un-Christian.

In subject-matter, the Montanist prophecies were chiefly concerned with statements about the millennium and the approach of wars and persecutions, and with new teaching about penance, fasting and the general conduct of the moral life. Millenarianism, founded on the Apocalypse, was a very prominent feature of Montanist teaching. The Montanist, looking forward to the immediate return of Christ, was so filled with the sense of the impending judgment that he despised the world and devoted all his energies to spiritual exercise. While Gnosticism looked towards the beginning of things, Montanism was absorbed in their end (Baur); and thus the belief in the manner of the Second Advent (long since regarded by the Catholic Church as a misdrawn inference) forms for the student the best point of transition from the doctrinal to the ethical teaching of the movement, just as in actual fact it was the most instrumental of the combined causes from which the new morality took its rise.

II. The form of words "new morality" is something more than a mere turn of expression. Of the extreme, and even fanatical, asceticism introduced by Montanism we shall find no trace either in the Gospel teaching or in the simple, human life of Christ. Inspired by the idea of the speedy establishment on earth of the kingdom of God, the Montanists

demanded a severer system than had ever been maintained, in theory or practice, by the Catholic Church. They instituted new and rigorous fasts. They denounced second marriages as almost adulterous. They proscribed secularity of every kind. They declaimed against dress, amusements, art. Virgins were ordered to be veiled. Flight in persecution was condemned as a denial of Christ; and martyrdom was encouraged and sought for with the blind eagerness of those who are reckless of life. To the sombre enthusiasm of Tertullian, darkly brooding over Hell and Judgment, such asceticism could not fail to be acceptable; it did but deepen in him the shadows already existing. A comparison of the *Ad Uxorem* with the *De Monogamia* shows that his objection to second marriages was almost as strong before his conversion as after it; and, as soon as the new impulse was given, his ethical code grew so rigid and narrow as almost to justify Hooker in calling him "a sponge steeped in wormwood and gall," a "merciless" man, "neither able to endure nor to be endured of any." A second marriage appeared to Tertullian nothing less than bigamy, and meant hopeless exclusion from the Church. Married though he was, matrimony itself became displeasing to him, as it had been to Montanus (ὁ διδάξας λύσεις γάμων); and though he dared not forbid it altogether, he did not hesitate to remark that children are "a most bitter pleasure." Military services and attendance at public games were alike condemned by him for their close connection with heathen observances. A natural death aroused his contempt. Martyrdom alone satisfied him. Martyrdom, he thought, was not only to be cheerfully accepted, but even to be provoked. With regard to fasting we find Tertullian reiterating with unqualified emphasis the teaching of Montanism. The opposition which he met on this point drove him, in his "Treatise on Fasting," into such open defiance that, to adopt the words of the great theologian just quoted, he occupied himself "in making invective declamations with a pale and withered countenance against the Church"; and, if we are to believe the statement of the early historians, the Montanists were in the habit of fasting on Sundays and feasting before Easter out of a mere spirit of contrariety. Certain it is that Tertullian goes so far as to call the Church a den of robbers and adulterers. Its remissness in the matter of fasts is, in his view, only equalled by its laxity in granting absolution; and he turns round with unhesitating courage to attack his own former arguments on penance and sin. The Church, according to the Montanist doctrine, cannot remit "deadly sins" after baptism—a main reason why Tertullian objects to the baptizing of infants

Shrinking from the license which follows the abandonment of fear, the Montanists declared that, while for grave faults a second repentance is impossible, the greater transgressions are altogether beyond the reach of human forgiveness: the sinner, though he may be pardoned hereafter, is for ever excluded in this world from communion with the Church. If the Prophets and Apostles remitted such sins, it was only, Tertullian explains, by the exercise of an extraordinary power and not in the ordinary course of discipline. St. Peter himself did not remit the grosser offences if committed after baptism, and would have contemplated with no approving eye the growing indulgences of Rome.

Neither in theory nor in practice did the Catholic Church demand such a standard of asceticism. While allowing reconciliation once only to the baptized after the gravest errors, it never shut the door against the soul that was sorry for a first sin. While discountenancing attendance at theatres and games because of the frequent indecencies of the stage, the waste of time involved, and the connection of the drama with pagan religion, it neither laid down a rigid law of conduct nor attached to asceticism more than a relative value. Virginity might be deemed the best and purest state; but there was no disparagement of the holiness of marriage. For the clergy celibacy had long been thought desirable; but no obligation was laid upon them to lead single lives. That many of them were even twice married is proved by the violence of Tertullian's denunciations. And thus we see that the moral system of Montanism was a reaction, not to the early spirit of Christianity, but to the legalism of the Jew. The Ebionite is the real forerunner of Montanus. Tertullian tells us that the teaching of the new Paraclete tends especially to the establishment or (as he afterwards corrects himself) the restitution of a severe discipline; but he does not notice the twofold error which that teaching involves. In the first place, it attempts, in defiance of the evangelical freedom of the Church, to lay down precise formulæ where the Gospel was content with a general rule. Blind to the alienation of all legal asceticism from the spirit of Christ and regardless of the truth that development, to use the language of philosophy, ought to be in the subject and not in the object, it wished to establish as law things which were considered open: it insisted, for example, on fixing and extending, by express rules, the fasts, hitherto held voluntary, on the *dies stationum*. The extreme asceticism which the Church permitted as an exception, Montanism tried (and necessarily without success) to force upon all; thus presenting, in opposition to the width of Catholicism, the exclusiveness of a narrow sect. The claims

of the Church on the individual life were great without being impossible: the claims of Montanus were impossible because unnatural. For—and in this lies their second error—the Montanists made a perpetual opposition between the supernatural and the natural. They did not aim, like the Church, at harmonising them. To Tertullian the earth was "a prison." The sharp irony of the *De Spectaculis* lends its sting to the lamentation that "Satan and his angels have filled the whole world." Though he would not, even as a Montanist, renounce all pleasures, because he felt that "all substances are pure as creatures of God," yet he demanded that they should be put only to a "natural" use; and his definition of natural is most arbitrary. Flowers, he remarks, are only meant for sight and smell: to make them into festive garlands appears to him a perversion of nature. It is here, as in his contempt for natural death, that we perceive, with Neander, "the contraction of the ethical temper which would narrow Christian freedom by arbitrary maxims." He could not recognise that Christianity is intended, not to effect any violent revolutions in the external conditions of society, but to sanctify, from within, all forms of human life by the transfiguring touch of a new spirit. He had never learned the great lesson that Christianity is always turning the water into wine.

Thus are we obliged to judge that Montanism was an aberration from, rather than a return to, the teaching of the primitive Church. Nor, in conclusion, will a general view of the movement, especially in relation to its doctrine of development, dispose us to a reversal of our verdict. It might appear, from Tertullian's comparison of the progressiveness of religion with the growth of man, that Montanism was at any rate conservative in the sense that it was only the development, in the slow unfolding of the kingdom of God, of something already given. Such a description, however, would hardly express the full characteristics of the movement. On the one hand, Tertullian is constantly inclining to the theory of a continuous *succession* of revelations rather than to that of a progressive enlargement; and, on the other, Montanism certainly assumes, to an impartial observer, the tone and quality of a new doctrine. The Montanists themselves recognised "the novel character of their gifts," and that in spite of Tertullian's earnest struggle to impart to his teaching an orthodox and conservative colour. He tells us, indeed, that the outpouring of the Spirit was made only to illustrate, define, purify, and not to alter or remove ("*Nihil novi Paracletus inducit*"); and yet we read (pseud. T., *de Præs.*, 52) that "the Paraclete has introduced greater things by Montanus

than Christ by the Gospel." He speaks of a growing illumination from within, and yet, by making the development depend on the authority of a new order of prophets, he adds a fresh revelation from without. He requires the close correspondence of Christian doctrine with the traditional *regula fidei* ("*immobilis et irreformabilis*"), and yet he gives the Montanist prophecies an importance which interferes with the sufficiency of the New Testament, besides over-passing the limits of Scriptural teaching by holding that the Paraclete carries forward the life of the Church beyond its first foundations. He claims for Montanism an intimate "agreement with the rule of orthodoxy," and yet he does not really succeed in harmonizing it with the idea of Christ. On questions of conduct he is less careful about appearing orthodox. Charged with making arbitrary innovations in the appointment of fasts, his defence is not a denial but a justification—a justification strengthened by perverted passages of Scripture, and based on the false theory that acts of self-renunciation are connected with fear, not with love, in the religious consciousness. If only the rule of faith (of the essential articles of which he gives a list) be preserved, he will welcome, rather than disallow, any fresh code of morals. "Only let this law of faith remain," he says, "and other things relating to discipline and Christian conduct will permit the novelty of correction, the grace of God continuing to work even to the end. For what would this be, if, while Satan works continually and adds daily to the inventions of evil, the grace of God were to cease or leave off to advance? On this account the Lord has sent the Paraclete, that, since human mediocrity cannot receive all things at once, it may little by little be directed and led to perfection, by that substitute of the Lord, the Holy Spirit."

In matters of discipline we may almost say that "*novitas* was his watchword" (Gore). Montanism may have been to him a *restitutio*, but it was a *restitutio* only of the Divine intention, and therefore not the less "an advance on apostolic Christianity." That it was felt to be so by the Church has already been shown. Didymus thought it his duty to prove that Montanus could not be greater than the Apostles; and Tertullian is obliged to defend the new laws against the repeated objection that they can be deduced neither from Holy Writ nor from Church tradition. Indeed, every fresh study of Tertullian reveals more and more clearly his essentially liberal disposition, his strongly individualistic temper. His very writing itself—its strange phraseology, its new style, its acceptance of Latin as an ecclesiastical language—is significant of his feeling for originality. He was a man who could stand alone. Even in matters of faith he was never satsified

with simple tradition. Hooker remarks that he objected to "a perverse following of antiquity." Maurice goes so far as to say that "what he craved for all along was a new religion." Always, together with a tradition, he demanded also the *ratio* of it; and if a fresh revelation gave a rational account of itself, it was to him equally acceptable with the old; for no rule, he thought, could be valid against what was right or good, and the purity and perfection of a theory were amply justified by its inward meaning, and proved by its agreement with the original scheme of doctrine. Thus did Tertullian and Montanism, within the limits of an authoritative creed, establish subjective opinion as the ultimate test of truth.

HISTORICUS.

ART. V.—THE SUFFERINGS OF THE CLERGY.

A PLEA FOR THE QUEEN VICTORIA CLERGY SUSTENTATION FUND (LONDON BRANCH).

ST. PAUL asks the question whether the Christian ministry have not the power to eat and to drink. At home, the answer must certainly be, No; a large part of the clergy of the Church of England are improperly fed, and almost on the verge of starvation. It is no exaggeration to say so. "It's not my turn for dinner to-day!" was the confession of a growing boy, one of the family of the vicar in an agricultural East Anglican parish. His father had sent him to the Hall with a message immediately after the morning service, and the Squire had kindly told him to run home quick, or he would be late for dinner. But, alas! it was not his turn for dinner that Sunday. In every agricultural labourer's cottage the whole family would be gathered round their substantial mid-day meal; but the parson could only afford to give his children a dinner on alternate Sundays.[1]

This is, unhappily, an illustration of an enormous number of cases. Tithes, as we know, have been sinking in value for years, and now only bring in £66 a year instead of £100. Ordinary agricultural land has been growing more and more difficult to cultivate profitably, and on this many of the country clergy depended. Some of it has gone out of cultivation altogether. There were always about 2,600 benefices in the Church of England with an income below £200 a year;

[1] The story is given by Mr. P. Vernon Smith.