

BOOK III.

THE INFLUENCE OF MONTANISM UPON THE CHURCH.

§ 1. Revelation and reaction

WE see clearly now that Montanism is not to be regarded as a sect, growing from within, though virtually without the Church, but as the exaggerated statement of fundamental and original principles¹, which, in a period of transition, would excite as much antagonism as the most violent novelty. To use an illustration, it would be quite inaccurate to compare it to such a phenomenon as Swedenborgianism, the founder of which system made no appeal to antiquity, and though not forming a sect, prepared his followers to dispense with all ecclesiastical forms. We shall trace in a later chapter the remarkable series of manifestations in the Church which almost each century produced; all starting from the Montanistic standpoint; all erring by the same exaggeration of good intentions; all, or nearly all, falling at times into the glaring logical inconsistencies which we have sufficiently noted in their model; but all, without doubt, leaving an influence for good by stirring up the life and activity of

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the Church. That at first the leading writers and thinkers were undecided what to say, fearful to approve extravagances of form, equally unwilling to censure principles which they cordially accepted, is clearly seen from the absolute silence of Justin, as well as the guarded utterances of Irenæus. I cannot myself agree with Schwegler (who is certainly wrong in quoting Neander on his side²), that the latter had any specially Montanistic leanings, other than as fighting the same battle against the Gnostics. Tertullian mentions him with praise, but does not add to his name, as with that of Proculus which follows, the significant “noster³.” There are two passages in his great work which seem to refer to the Montanists, although only one of them can be declared strongly probable in that application. This occurs in the fourth book (cap. XXXIII § 6) where he denounces “false prophets, who have not received from God the gift of prophecy nor fearing Him, but feigning for vain-glory’s sake, &c⁴.” Now no reasonable explanation of this passage can refer it to any other party than the Montanists, although we fully recognise that in many respects, as on the Consummation of all things, on Marriage, and above all, on the nature of Prophecy, Irenæus was in perfect agreement with the

¹ Arnold has the credit of pointing this out first, although not very clearly. Wernsdorf overshot the mark in his endeavour to depict the Montanists in the light of amiable “Aufglekärte” of the 18th century, transplanted back into the 2nd. Neander, in his *Church History* and *Antignostikus*, developed the theory with all his learning and moderation, e.g.: “Die Montanisten sagten nichts ganz Nenes, sondern sie stellten eine schon vorhandene Denkweise über religiöse und sittliche Gegeustände nur auf die Spitze.” (*K. G. I. 3.* 1134.)

² He refers to *K. C. I. 3.* 1143, (*Montanismus*, p. 223, note,) where the statement is indeed “etwas limitirter.”

³ “Justinus philosophus at martyr, Miltiades ecclesiarum sophista, *Irenæus omnium doctrinarum curiosissimus explorator*, Proculus *noster*, christianæ eloquentiæ dignitas.” (*Adv. Valent.* c. 5.)

⁴ “Judicabit enim pseudopphetas, qui non accepta a Deo prophetica gratis nec Deum timentes, sad aut propter vanam gloriam, ant ad quæstum aliquem ant aliter secundum operationem mali spiritus fingunt se prophetare, mentientes adversus Deum,” See on this passage, Lipsius, *Quellen*, p. 217.

sober element of Montanism⁵. But in another place, where he denounces certain persons who sought to

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diminish the *πρόσωπα* of the Deity, to reject the Gospel of St John, and above all, to “expel the gift of prophecy from the Church,” he cannot possibly refer to the Montanists, but rather to their virulent opponents the Alogi⁶. In fact, with the exception of Bretschneider, no scholar of eminence has attempted to explain the passage as referring to the Montanists.

For a time then, in fact until the Church had entered into the new consciousness of a visible and secular organic unity, no measures were taken, and none in any case could have prevailed against so important a manifesto in favour of the Prophets as the letter of the Gallic martyrs. From the later turning-point of Praxeas’ intervention at Rome, the course of separation was inevitable if slow. The gradual nature is well evidenced by an expression of Origen’s, in whose time the absolute separation does not seem to have been fully accomplished⁷.

§ 2. Points of cohesion.

It has been noted that one strange inconsistency pervaded the Montanistie system. While upon such subjects as prophecy, church-government, and the like, they adopted the Pauline liberty in its fullest extent; in matters of lesser moment, such as fasting, they seem to incline towards a Judaistic externalism, utterly foreign to their fundamental position. It is more easy to amass a number of examples of a similar intellectual “warp” in other times and parties, than to furnish any complete ex-

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planation of its cause. It is not sufficient to say that the separation of the Church into *Pneumatici* and *Psychici* involved an injunction (for the former) of a higher sanctity of life. Such an explanation is too obviously empirical, and is easily met by the fact that a precisely similar ethical differentiation followed in the Catholic Church from a totally opposite principle. The simpler solution, viz, that Montanists as well as Catholics succumbed to the same influence, the same tendency to “externalization” of religion, is at least in perfect harmony with the facts which we shall afterwards examine, and which certainly shew that the same Church which anathematized the form of Montanism, assimilated unconsciously no small portion of its substance. We may even assert that the principle of the later ascetic movements of monasticism, of the absurd over-estimation of virginity as found in Ambrose and

⁵ Take for example this passage:- “Discipulus spiritalis vere recipiens spiritum del, qui ab initio in universis dispositionibus dei adfuit hominibus, et futura annunciavit, et presentia ostendit et præterita enarrat, judicat quidem omnes, ipse autem a nemine judicatur.” (c. *Hær.* IV. 33. 1.)

⁶ (*Ibid.* III. 11. 9). Schwegler quotes it in *extenso*, p. 289.

⁷ “Requisierunt sane quidam, utrum hæresin an schisma oporteat vocari eos, qui Cataphrygæ nominantur, observantes falsos prophetas.” (*Pamphil. Apolog.* 2.) As to the original character of the opposition, it has been well remarked by Ritschl:- “Wenn also die nur anf wenige Punkte beschränkte Reaktion des Montanismus weder ein neues Princip anstellt, noch auch so ganz antitraditionell ist, als sie zuerst erschien, so leuchtet ein, dass der Unterschied des Montanismus von dem übrigen Gebiete der christlichen Kirche, so weit wir ihn bisher kennen geiernt haben, nur als ein quantitativer anansetzen ist... Nicht die neuen Propheten allein vertraten die strengere Grundsätze in der Kirche, u.s.w.” (*Entstehung der A.K.* pp. 508, 9.)

Jerome, not to mention others, - all were developed out of the Montanistic germ, which itself was, in some part at least, a product of the Judaistic spirit.

§ 3. Reasons for rejection.

It was not the ascetic spirit of Montanism which the Church expelled, but it was the claim to spiritual insight⁸, and the consequent antagonism to the theory of finality

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[*quod semper, &c.*] which became the basis of the new ecclesiastical organization. Had Bishop Zephyrinus and his successors confined themselves to the simple exercise of authoritative separation employed against the Donatists, they would have been quite within their rights. No government is possible if the nominal sovereign is liable to the checks which the Montanistic prophecy would, if suffered to remain in the Church, have continually interposed. Accordingly one or other of the impulses had to succumb, and naturally the weaker. And we can hardly be surprised that, in order to account for the breach, it was deemed necessary to discredit the orthodoxy of the Montanists on other questions, where we now know that it was unimpeachable⁹. It does not involve any *mala fides* on the part of the accusers that they declared the prophets to be inspired by the evil spirit, and not by the Paraclete. Indeed, this is the ground for the final edict for their rebaptization as heretics, by the Synod of Constantinople¹⁰. Every phase of the prophetic claim became a mark for the hostility of the later generation. We have seen that, regardless of branding Justin and Athenagoras as heretics, the Church erected into a new dogma the assertion that a prophet must be conscious, and in command of his intellectual faculties¹¹. The next step was to throw overboard Irenæus by repressing the exercise of that prophetic function in the Church to which

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he had so clearly and consistently witnessed¹², and confining the acknowledged manifestations of the Holy Spirit to the miracles and visions wrought and seen by the

⁸ Thomasius, in his quaint *Höchstnöthige Cautelen*, puts the matter inversely, but he was most certainly wrong. [I quote from the Latin translation:] – “Quodsi igitur in veram causam inquiramus, cur Montanistæ in classe Hæreticorum sint, nulla alia restat, quàm quod Montanus, *observans corruptam vitans Christianorum tam docentium quàm discentium(!)*, in aiterum extremum prolapsus fuerit atque ax bona quidem intentione et excusabili pro moribus illorum temporum, ignorantia genuinæ doctrinæ de moribus et natura humana, putaverit, jejuniis austera severitate.... *Sed talis vita planè non erat ad palatum Patrum orthodoxorum in Sec. II et III. Hinc illæ lacrinæ. Hinc opus est Montanum et Montanistas in catalogo hæreticorum collocare.*”(!!) (*Cautelæ Hist. Eccl. XI. 37.*) This writer is, even more than Wernsdorf, a specimen of what may be called the “philhæretic” school of theology, which flourished in Germany in the 18th century, and later. Even Wernsdorf admits: “Sed tentatam morum correctionem fuisse causam odii erga Montanum, planè non Credo.” (P. 119.)

⁹ Eusebius’s authors are angry, but suggest no formal heresy; Hippolytus but doubtfully. Cyril begins.

¹⁰ The *Lay Gentleman* of 1709 puts this clearly enough. (P. 173 ff.) - “As the Spirit of the Montanists was not that of God, but another, therefore Exorcism was needed, which was given in the New Baptism,” etc. etc.

¹¹ Vide supra, p. 65 ff. Perhaps the most distinct expression of the new doctrine is the following in Epiphanius: “Ὅτε γὰρ ἦν χρεῖα, ἐν προφήταις, ἐν ἀληθινῷ πνεύματι, καὶ ἐρῶ ωμένη διανοίᾳ καὶ παρακολουθοῦντι νῶ, οἱ αὐτοῦ ἅγιοι τὰ πάντα προφήτευσαν. (*Hæres. II. 1. 3.*) Which Jerome expresses thus:- “Non enim loquitur Propheta in ἐκστάσει, ut Montanus et Prisca Maximilique delirant, sed quod prophetat, liber est visionis intelligentis universa quæ loquitur.” (*Prol. in Nahum proph.*)

¹² In addition to the passages already quoted, (vide supra, p. 36,) may be added the following: by Irenæus, (ap. Euseb. *H. E. V. 7.*) the famous evidence for post-Apostolic miracles, including the statement that “οἱ δὲ καὶ

orthodox. Cyprian, however, the pupil of Tertullian, does not seem to have departed from the ancient views of the Church. He repeatedly bears witness to the very facts which Montanists had asserted¹³, and, on a very critical occasion in his career, he accounted for his retirement from persecution by the statement that it had been enjoined in a vision¹⁴. That a good deal of incredulity began to prevail now with regard to the spiritual claims of those who did not always seem to correspond in their lives, could be reasonably conjectured, even if Cyprian did not expressly deplore it¹⁵. And even Jerome speaks of his visions, including that remarkable nocturnal scourging for reading secular authors, which was so unceremoniously criticised by Ruffinus. Now it was not to be expected that the Catholic bishops should accept Tertullian's reasonings on prescription, which now served to defend the really ancient doctrines, now to excuse the new. Any statement of a

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new doctrine after the Synod of Nicæa was heretical *ipso facto*, as Athanasius says concerning the Council of Ariminum:- "They do not say: 'so we believe,' but 'so is the Catholic Faith now established,' thus disclosing how recently their faith is dated. For whosoever says... that his private way of thinking is Catholic, is guilty of the folly of the Montanists. For these equally declare that the Christian Faith began with them, &c." [Ap. Socrat. *H. E.* II. 36.]

Finally, the Chiliastic views, not introduced by Montanism (since so many Fathers, and according to Justin, the most orthodox Christians embraced it), but decidedly adopted by them, and in the third century probably identified with them, became another source of rejection. Useful indeed as an incentive to repentance and piety, this mysterious doctrine was attended with difficulties and objections which were clearly seen by the Fathers of the Third Century, and the first attack, made by the Presbyter Caius, seems to have received the assent of what we may style the "official" world.

So, one by one, the fundamental principles of Montanism, its links with the Apostolical Church, were regarded as heresies. How its less laudable elements were bequeathed to the victors, we have now to discover.

§ 4. Extent of Influence.

As the Catholic Church proceeded in the course of re-assimilating the elements of Judaism, it was forced to adopt, one by one, all the ascetic opinions of Montanism which its short-sighted champions had so bitterly anathematized. In the third century we find even Origen condemning the absolution of grievous offenders¹⁶, especially in the sins which Montanism so

πρόγνωσιν ἔχουσιν τῶν μελλόντεκ, καὶ ὀπτασίας, καὶ ἤσεις προφητικὰς." And again: (c. *Her.* v. 6.) "καθὼς καὶ πολλῶν ἀκούομεν ἀδελφῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ προφητικὰ χαρίσματα ἔχόντων καὶ παντοδαπαῖς λαλοῦντων διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος γλώσσαις, καὶ τὰ κρύφια τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰς φανερόν ἀγόντων ἐπὶ τῷ συμφέροντι καὶ τὰ μυστήρια τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκδιηγουμένων."

¹³ "Castigare nos itaque divine censura nec noctibus desinit nec diebus. Præter nocturnæ enim visiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu sancto puerorum innocens ætas, *quæ in ecstasi videt*, et audit, et loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus monere et instruere dignatur." (*Epist. ad Cler.* IX.)

¹⁴ Dionysius of Alexandria claimed like Cyprian to have received visions, and even swore to the fact. *Vise sanctissime ne jurato quidem credemus?* exclaims Dodwell. But much ponderous ridicule from Middleton.

¹⁵ "Quamquam sciam somnia ridicula, at visiones ineptas quibusdam viderem; sed utique illis, qui malunt contra sacerdotes credere, quam sacerdoti." (*Epist.* 68.)

¹⁶ "Οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἑαυτοῖς πορνείας ἀφιέναι." (*De Oratione*, § 17.)

inexorably punished. Cyprian, who had not learnt in vain from his master, held the same stringent views, which he opposed to the more lenient principles of Stephen¹⁷.

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In the matter of Fasting, the assimilation is even more startling, as Daillé proved in perhaps the most powerful and effective argument that the whole literature of controversy can boast. He failed to see, indeed, that, although Montanism was corrupt in its external rites, it was the type of true Protestantism in its fundamental theory, or he would not have claimed for his own friends the honour of being alone the true descendants of the "Psychici." He is perfectly right in asserting that the Church, from the fourth century onwards, out-Montanised Montanism in fasting; and, as Wernsdorf well put it, there was hardly a Council that met without adding some burthensome addition to the pile of ordinances¹⁸. The later phases of the question, the gradual introduction of luxury in reality, while preserving the outward form of maceration, have been sufficiently exposed to ridicule: it is probable, indeed, that the introduction of a fish-diet on fast-days was a relic of Manichæism, - a worthy addition to the mosaic of Judaism and Paganism¹⁹. Daillé, in the third chapter of the *De Jejuniis*, draws an effective parallel between the controversies of the second and sixteenth centuries, ending with the barbed arrow to which we alluded before²⁰.

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As to second marriages, we find the same inheritance as fully accepted. Jerome declaims against them far more bitterly than even Tertullian: he regards as "execrable" [*exsecrandam*] the act of a widow who had re-married; she is "*canem revertentem ad vomitum, aut suam lotam ad volutabrum luti*," and he declares the twice-married as universally to be regarded as "*scortati*"²¹. The Councils of Laodicea and Neo-Cæsarea subjected those who married a second time to public penance²², while that of Eliberis imposed a five-years' excommunication upon a widow who had attempted to condone fornication by marriage²³.

Such was the influence which Montanism exercised upon the Roman Church in later times, precisely the reverse of that which it aimed at, but that which alone the historic conditions admitted. Its nobler influence was not transmitted, but it did not expire. We have now to trace the occasions on which, in later ages, that influence was permitted to exert itself.

¹⁷ "Et quidem apud antecessores nostros quidam de episcopis istic in provincia nostra dandam pacem mæchis non putaverunt, et in totum pœnitentiæ locum contra adulteria clausurunt: non tamen a co-episcoporum suorum collegio recesserunt ant catholicæ ecclesiæ unitatem vel duritiæ vel censuræ suæ obstinatione ruperunt, ut quia apud alios adulteris pax dabatur, qui non dabat, de ecclesia separaretur." (*Epist. ad. Antonian.* No. 55, ed. Pearson.)

¹⁸ "Jam Seculo IV. cuncta quasi ox præscripto Montani aut Tertulliani penagebantur inter ipsos Catholicos: nullum fare coibat concilium, quo non nova jejunia ant novi jejuniorum modi definirentur ac toti ecclesiæ imponerentur. Ex uno solemnî annuo fiebant quatuor: quadraginta horæ antepæchales mutabantur in totidem dies; xerophagiæ infinitæ excogitabantur, cum superpositionibus multifariis." (*De Montanistis*, p. 75.)

¹⁹ Beaneobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, lib. IX. cap. 2. (II. 770.)

²⁰ "Ergo isti Montanistarum vera ac genuina proles: nisi, quod a parentibus, ut progenies origine deteriore ease solet, nonihil degenerârunt..... Nos vere istos Psychicos libenter amplectimur: neque nos do eorum sanguine prognatos esse pudet ac pœnitet. Nostri illi sunt, fatemur. Vos in tota hac oausa Tertulliani clientes! Nos hanc vobis gloriam non invidemus!" (*Dallæus de Jejuniis*, lib. II. caps. 2, 3.)

²¹ Hieron. *Epist. X. ad Furians*, and *Contra Jovinian.* I. 8.

²² *Conc. Laodic.* Can. I. Christophorus Justellus (Not. *ad codicem eccl. univ.* p. 84) tried to prove that this only referred to second marriages *after divorce*, but hardly with success.

²³ "Si qua vidua fuerit mæchata, et eundem postea maritum habuerit, post quinquennium tempus... placuit eam communioni reconciliari." (*Conc. Elib.* § 8. Ap. Harduin, I. 251.)

§ 5. Later manifestations.

It would need a review of the whole course of ecclesiastical history were we to attempt to notice every occasion upon which some isolated note of Montanism has been manifested. The Novatianists and the Donatists, for example, are clearly linked by their severity of moral tone, and their rejection of an unlimited power of the keys. And in later times, each mystical writer might in some sense be claimed as occupying a Montanistic standpoint, especially when (as was so often the case in the Middle Ages) the aspiration to immediate union with the Giver

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of all knowledge was coupled with an earnest desire to reform the crying abuses of the Roman church.

If the group of sects which are known by this generic title really claimed the Parachete as their Pope, if they asserted themselves to be a Church within the Church, and, above all, exaggerated the merit of martyrdom, fasting, and virginity, there can be no question but that they represent a revival of Montanism in its most striking aspect²⁴. But our records are not ample enough to justify any exact conclusions, and more than one eminent authority has inclined to ascribe their origin as much to Manichæan and Gnostic elements as to those of Montanism²⁵.

There are also considerable points of analogy with the Waldenses, more especially if the early date (and not the common derivation of their name from Pierre de Vaux) be admitted. It is true that most authorities, both Catholic and Protestant, now incline to the latter opinion, e.g. Hurter, Füsslin, Guericke, Neander, Gieseler, and therefore would not date the sect before the year 1160. Hahn holds to the other opinion, and quotes a not very convincing explanation of the name from Bernard²⁶. Be this

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as it may, there is no doubt but that the Waldenses held completely Montanistic views on the approaching end of the world, and against a plenary power of absolution. Of the former we quote an instance from the curious didactic poem, *La Nobla Leyczon*, published by Raynouard in his *Choix des poésies originales des troubadours* (Paris, 1817):-

²⁴ The materials, such as they are, will be found in Flathe's *Vorläufer der Reformation*, and summarized in Gieseler. Among the utterances of (obviously hostile) witnesses, may be quoted the following:- "Dicunt apud se tantum ecelesiam esse, sibi datum esse, nosse mysterium regnum Dei; ... veros sacerdotes nusquam inveniri, nisi inter se.... Dicunt quod omnis laicus bonus sit sacerdos, quod ornnis laicus et etiam fœmina debent prædicare." Bonacursus attributes to them:- "quod Mosaica lex sit ad litteram observanda, et quod sabbatum et circumcisio et aliæ legales observantiæ adhuc habere statum debeant; ... vetus testamentum observandum esse in ciborum peroeptione," &c. (Ap. Schwegler, *Montanismus*, p. 308.) Guibertus de Novigento (Flathe, I. 308) declared that the Cathari "damnant conjugia, at fructificare coitibus."

²⁵ Gieseler, Neander, and Hahn (*Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter*, I. 62 ff.) take this view, and support it with some evidence. Neander quotes the Abbot Ecbert of Schönau, who in his first sermon against the Cathari (*Bibl. patr. Lugd.* XXIII. 602) asserted that they celebrated the Manichæan festival Bema, and that they accused Augustin of having divulged their mysteries. (VIII. 370.)

²⁶ "Quidam autem, qui Vallanses se appellant, eo quod in Valle lachrymarum maneant..... Dicti sunt Valdenses, nimirum a Valle densa, eo quod profundis et densis errorum tenebris involvuntur." (Barnardus Abbas ap. Hahn.)

“Car nos veyen aquest mont de la fin apropiari,
Ben ha mu e cent anz compli entierament,
Que fo scripta l’ora car sen al fierier temp.”

(*Modernized.*)

Car nous voyons ce monde de la fin approcher,
Bien à mille et cent ans accomplis entièrement,
Que fut écrite l’heure que nous sommes an dernier temps.

The other passage differs from the utterance of Tertullian in the *De Pudicitia* only in language²⁷. The question as to the orthodoxy of the Waldenses on all points could not be satisfactorily discussed except in a special monograph.

The fourteenth century was a deeply important era for Christianity. A long series of spiritually-minded men, Tauler, Ekhart, Amalric of Bena, David of Dinant, Gerard Groot, and many others, raised their voices against the combined tyrannies of scholasticism and the mediæval Papacy. But from the Franciscan order in particular a party arose, known from their origin as the “Fratres Spirituales,” or Fraticelli, who proclaimed as a new revelation the approaching end of the world, and the conse-

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quent necessity of an ascetic life²⁸. Perhaps their most striking resemblance to the Montanists is in their adoption of the tri-periodic doctrine, i.e. that certain epochs in the world’s history had been directed by each of the Persons of the Trinity in turn. We find an exposition of their views in the *Liber Sententiarum* of Petrus Johannes Olivus, which, it may be added, was condemned as heretical by Pope Clement V. at the Council of Vienne. Not only does Olivus develop this theory of the three periods²⁹, but he applies to the Church of Rome the very title that, more than a thousand years before, Tertullian had bestowed upon it³⁰. We must admit, however, that no Montanist ever carried out the conclusions so far, the connection of the Papacy and “*Babylon magna meretrix*” being a far later discovery. As to ethical reform, it must be noted that some of those dangerous refinements of asceticism, certain to involve evil effects, are to be found in the same work³¹.

²⁷ “Ma el sore enganna en aital asolvament,
E aquel qua ho fay eueyre hi pecca nortalmont.
Ma yo ens o dire, car se troba en ver,
Quo tuit il cardinal, e tuit li vesque, e tuit ii aba,
Tuit aqni entemp non han tan de potesta
Que ilh poissan perdonar un sol pecca mortal:
Solament Dio perdona, que autre no ho po far.”

(RAYNOUARD, II. 73.)

²⁸ The analogy between the Franciscan Mystics and the Montanists was pointed out in D. F. Strauss’s *Dogmatik* (I. 257).

²⁹ “Tria tempora erant ecclesiae, scilicet ab Adam usque ad Christum, quod tempus appropriatur Patri, quia fuit tempus potentiae. Secundum tempus incepit a Christo, et durabit usque ad Antichristum, vol usque ad persecutionem vitae evangelicae, quod tempus est appropriatum Filio. Et tertium tempus erit usque ad finem mundi, quod erit tempus benignitatis, et est appropriatum ad Spiritum Sanctum.” (Petri Joh. Olivi *Liber Sententiarum*, 308.)

³⁰ “Ecclesia Romana est pro nunc *ECCLESIA CARNALIS*.....Propter hoc ipsa reprobabitur et condemnabitur et destruetur per x cornua bestiae, quae etiam ecclesia carnalis est Babylon meretrix magna.” (*Ibid.* fol. 302.)

³¹ Cf. particularly *Lib. Sentent.* 382 ff.

Another section, almost at the same period, called at times Adamites, “Brothers of the Free Spirit,” but more commonly “Homines Intelligentiæ,” also adopted the Chiliastic and tri-periodic views of the Fraticelli, with an equally ascetic bent. [“*Ebenso sagten sie, die Zeit des alten Gesetzes sey die Zeit des Vaters gewesen, die Zeit des neuen Gesetzes die des Sohnes,*” u. s.w.³²] But a

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special antinomian doctrine, leading often to painful excesses, is also to be noted among their views: also an anticipation of the Swedenborgian theory that the Resurrection is not future but past, having taken place in Christ’s person.

Passing over, with a bare mention, the singular manifestation of the Flagellants, the next Montanistic phenomenon is undoubtedly that of the Maid of Orleans, in the beginning of the fifteenth century³³. No one with any pretension to historic perception thinks now of doubting the perfect (subjective) accuracy of her statements, which would alone be established by the singular consistency of her utterances during the course of the long interrogations³⁴.

In the following Reformation-century, the claims to prophetic insight were many arid striking. Savonarola, although his martyrdom took place in 1498, may fitly be deemed to inaugurate the grand period, Perhaps no character in modern history deserves so thoroughly to be placed in juxtaposition with Tertullian, although it was not permitted to the latter to seal with his blood his witness to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit. It is often forgotten that Savonarola, besides being the founder of the most remarkable of theocratic governments, and an orator

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of unparalleled eloquence, left writings of considerable importance, more especially on the subject of the prophetic gift³⁵.

It was rather Möhler’s controversial than his historical instinct which induced him to describe the Anabaptist Sects of the Reformation as the logical development of Montanism, regardless of the fact that, in every instance, some phase of antinomianism, from the mild theories of Schwenkfeld to the outrageous acts of the Zwickau and Münster prophets, predominated. Now we have sufficiently seen, in the former investigation, that the very opposite principle

³² Hahn, *Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter*. His authority is the *Errores sectæ Hominum Intelligentiæ*,” in the *Miscellanea* of Baluze (II. 277-297), which I have not been able to meet with.

³³ There is an admirable sketch of the Maid of Orleans in the late Karl Hase’s *Neue Propheten*, worked out with all that lamented writer’s learning and acumen. (2^{te} Aufl. Leipz. 1861.)

³⁴ Even the partially drawn articles of indictment display this: (§ 1) “Primo quædam femina dicit et affirmat... ipsa suis oculis corporalibus vidit S. Michaelem, et quandoque Gabrielem, in effigie corporali apparentes..... (§ 3) Propter quæ de S. Michaele sibi apparente credit, quod ipso est S. Michael, et dicta ejus M. et facta Vera et bona æque firmiter, sicut ipsa credit quod Dominus noster Jesus passus fuit et mortuus pro nostra redemptione.... Et frequenter dicit (§ 6) quod nihil fecit nisi per revelationem et mandatum Dei.” And her confessor deposed: “quod semper, usque ad finem vitæ suæ manutenuit et asseruit, quod voces, quas habuerat, *erant a Deo.*” (See a full survey of the materials in Hase’s *Anhang*, pp. 106-164.)

³⁵ For whole list see Quetif’s collection of materials, The three works to which I especially refer are (1) *Conspendio di rivelazioni*. (Fir. 1495.) (2) *Tractatus de veritate sprophetica*. (Flor. 1498.) (3) *Opera singolare contra l’astrologia*. (Fir. 1497. Yen. 1513.) This last-mentioned, which was published between the two others, completes them by exposing the pretensions of the false prophecies of astrologers, still in vogue at many European courts.

was the note of Montanism, often carried to an almost as dangerous extreme³⁶. In modern times we have to note with shame and abhorrence not a few instances (such as the Münster prophets, Eva von Buttlar, the sect of Brüggler, the Königsberg “Mücker,” &c.) where a pretended claim to inspiration has merely been the cloak for the most revolting vice. This, indeed, is the Proof of the Spirits, whether they be of God; and this is our safeguard in distinguishing between the vulgar imposture of Müntzer and Bockelsohn, and the scriptural claims and teaching of Tertullian³⁷.

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My knowledge of Boehme’s theories only enables me to feel a strong impression that, although his general standpoint is similar to that of Montanism³⁸, and although he is in many senses the progenitor of thinkers who were representatives of a completely renovated Montanism, still, taken as a whole, he must be included rather among the number of theosophical enquirers, apart from any ecclesiastical system, than as the leader of a spiritual or moral reaction in any such body. One of his pupils, Petersen, will be found to have united all these deficient elements within the pale of German Protestantism, and to his work, as well as that of his English fellow-labourers, a special appendix is devoted³⁹.

Earlier than these, indeed, the labours of George Fox are almost in the same degree marked by the special notes of Montanism, as also those of Labadie (1610-1674), one of the most remarkable characters even in the seventeenth century. Passing from the Jesuits to their foes the Oratorians, then to the Jansenists, finally to the Reformed Evangelicals⁴⁰. Nourished on the Bible and St Bernard,

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³⁶ “Nichts babe mehr Aehnlichkeit mit den Montanisten, ale die zur Zeit der Reformation hervorgetretenen protestantischen Secten,” (*Symbolik*, p. 465.) And cf. Schwegler, p. 311. Möhler rested his case upon detached passages in Luther’s writings, such as – “Christianus intus a Deo solo docetur. Christianum puto esse cum, qui Spiritum sanctum habet, qui ut Christus ait, docebit eum omnia.” (*De Inst. ministr. Eccl. Opp. II.* 584. Quoted by Schwegler, p. 311.) As if Luther could be fairly judged by such a method!

³⁷ Vide supra, p. 60. Much as we may detest the conduct of the *leaders* of the movement, it is impossible not to feel a wondering awe at the records of the cruel persecutions, so marvellously endured, inflicted on those who were persuaded that Christ ordered his followers to *teach*, and *then* baptize, There is something infinitely pathetic in the song of the martyr-maidens of Beckum (modernized by Hase):-

“Die Tyrannen thäten sie fragen	Wie klärlich steht geschrieben
Ob sic wiedergetauft wär’n?	Marci am aeohzehnteu Ort,
‘Wir aind einmal getaufet	<i>Den Gläubigen</i> soll man’s geben,
Und has naeh Christi Lehr’.	So lehrt una Christi Wort.”

And this out of a hundred similar:- “In Salzburg wurden die W. T. gleich mit ihrem Versammlungsbause verbrannt. Em sechzebnjähriges hübsches Mädchen wollte man verschonen, sie war nicht zun Widerrufe an bewegen. Die hat der Naehrichter auf den Arm genommen, und in der Rosstränke getragen, und sie unter das Wasser gedrückt bis sie ertrunken ist und nachmals den Körper verbrannt.” (Ap. Hase, *Neue Propheten*, p. 34.)

³⁸ “Ich habe gesehrieben, nicht von Menschenlehre, oder Wissenschaft aus Bücherlernen, sondern aus meinem eignen Buche, das in mir eröffnet ward.” (*Theosoph. Sendschr. XII.* 14.)

³⁹ Vide infra, Appendix C, pp. 161 ff.

⁴⁰ At the town of Herford, his preaching was attended by the manifestations known technically as “Resurrectiones.” (See Goebel, *Gesch. des christl. Lebens in der Rhein. Westph. evang. Kirche*, II. 181 ff.)

he passed through these stages of natural sequence, and finally, in the intimacy of such choice spirits as Anna von Schurmann, he ended his career in the utterance of ascetic views worthy of the pen of Tertullian⁴¹.

Perhaps the most deeply interesting page in the religious history of the seventeenth century is the Quietistic movement, passing from Spain to Italy, and thence to France. The phenomenon was in many points a repetition of far earlier manifestations in mediæval mysticism, but it attained a far higher degree of historical importance, as much on account of the personages implicated in the movement as of being one of the main currents of reaction against the great Augustinian revival under Jansen and the Arnaulds. Madame Guyon derived the bulk of her opinions from Molinos, through her faithful but unfortunate friend the Abbé La Combe. In later life she enjoyed the intimacy of Poiret; but it is now proved upon good evidence that she obtained her first spiritual education from the learned mystic Bertôt. Her own doctrine of revelation added to that of the Montanists something of a theory of clairvoyance, which a quotation given below proves⁴². Her history is a strange one, - first patronised, then deserted by Archbishop Noailles and Mme de Maintenon; chivalrously defended by Fénelon at the risk of losing (as he did lose) the brightest prospects of political influence in the reformation of France; imprisoned, cruelly slandered, deprived of all spiritual privileges but those of which her gaolers could not deprive her, - at last, dismissed to lead a peaceful contemplative life, forgiving all her foes, and rejoicing in the society of her friends. Bossuet was

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not wrong when he compared her to that Priscilla whom Tertullian called “the holy prophetess⁴³.”

Lastly, we conclude our summary of the seventeenth century by the mention of one whose claims were neither those of faith and purity, nor of immorality and imposture, but of sheer simple madness⁴⁴. Quirinus Kühlmann

⁴¹ Goebel declares that he went so far as to condemn even the first marriage of unbelievers as sin.

⁴² “Mes véritables enfants ont une tendance à demeurer en silence auprès de moi. Je découvre leurs besoins, et leur communique en Dieu ce qui leur manque.” (Quoted by Bossuet in the *Rel. sur le Quiétisme*, §2.)

⁴³ “Si cetta Priscille n’a pas trouvé son Montan (i.e. Fénelon) pour la défendre.” (*Ibid.*) Fénelon bitterly resented this allusion, and hardly one of his pamphlets in the long controversy does not include a reproach on this score, Bossuet defended himself thus:- “Priscilla était une fanse prophétesse: Montan l’appuyait. On n’a jamais soupçonné entre eux qu’un commerce d’illusions d’esprit. (? Isidor.) M. de Cambrai demeura d’accord que son commerce avec M^{me} Guyon était connu, et roulait sur sa spiritualité, que tout le monde a jugée mauvaise, ainsi ja n’ai rien dit que do juste.” (*Remarques sur la Réponse à la Rel. sur le Quiétisme*, XI. § 5.) Fénelon by no means was satisfied with this explanation.

⁴⁴ The assertion in the text need only be supported by very limited evidence. He describes his early life thus in the (now very rare) *Quinary of Sling-stones* (London, 1683):- “When yet a child the Holy Spirit sported with me in dreams: when I was 15 years of age, my glorious king Jesus revealed Himself twice visibly to me, in the company of so many prophets, patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, and saints; and poured forth into my heart His most secret treasures..... In my 23rd year, I was very powerfully stirred up, driven, and compelled, until all of a sudden, the Paradisaic Light-World visibly in the Inward surrounded me with thousand thousand thousands of Powers, Colours, and Splendours, Glances, Changes, Wonders, and Aspects, being all inexpressibly surrounded with Light from the most Holy Triangle of the Lightest-Lightest-Light-Light-Light [sic]; and was now with my spiritual body in another element, wherein for these 5 years I have continued.” “When now the Divine Light of the Eternal Wisdom had enlightened me, I pierced into the very inward heart of all Arts and Faculties, and apprehended a thousandfold more in all writers than they had apprehended themselves. In my person all hoped and expected another Opitz or new Homer and Virgil (!), Claudian and Statius, the very princes of poets; another Gryphius or new Sophocles, Seneca, Terence; another Taubmannus or *new Apollo*; another Thucydides, another Scaliger, &c.&c.&c.” (P. 11.) Kühlmann’s poetry is even more ambitious than his prose. He published (Amsterdam, 1684) a so-called *Kühlpsalter*, from which I detach one specimen:-

wandered about Europe in the second half of the century, publishing works in German and English, each transcending the other in extravagance, but none the less (or, perhaps, on that account) attaching to himself a number of followers. The unfortunate man ended his career in Russia with a very unwilling martyrdom⁴⁵.

The eighteenth century once more affords a mirror of almost the same phenomena. While Zinzendorf and the Brethren of Herrnhut developed the simple primitive views and life of the first century, Eva von Buttlar and her friends revived the excesses of the Anabaptists; and, on the opposite side, Swedenborg, after exhausting the world of science as then known, proceeded to evolve an enormous scheme of theosophy upon the foundations of Origen, Richard of St Victor, and Boehme. How far Swedenborg really unites in himself and his system all or any of the notes of Montanism, we shall attempt briefly to examine in an appendix⁴⁶.

What have we to say of the present century? The claims to supernatural revelation are frequent, - were their "proofs" in righteousness and truth? Surely not in Germany, where the exposure of certain painful episodes at Königsberg caused the profession of the truly pious to be viewed for a long time with a not unnatural suspicion⁴⁷.

As discreditable, both from original imposture, and from the moral (or rather immoral) tendency which so soon became the leading principle, is the history of Mormonism. Perhaps there is no page of history which offers more capital to the pessimist than the narrative of Joseph Smith's career, utterly wanting even in the brute force and enthusiasm which made the Anabaptist Matthiessen rush alone upon the besiegers of Münster, to be immediately "hewn in pieces." Every feature is mean, vulgar, calculated to allure the basest of human passions, under the blasphemous guise of revealed authority. The so-called *Book of Mormon* is indeed a worthy "symbolical book," in its mixture of fustian, bad grammar, profanity and nonsense⁴⁸.

"Triumpf! O Kühl-Trinmf! Triumft zum Kühlprophaten;
Triumfftriumfftriumfft, ihr Himmel und ihr Erden!
In unserm Gott-Gott-Gott, den Götter ein'gem Gott:
Sein ist allein der Sieg: sein ist allein die Ehre,
Die Ehren-ehrenehr in Zeit und Ewigkeit!"

(*Triumflied ad fin.*)

⁴⁵ The history of Quirinus Kühlmann is very obscure, although one would have thought that so strange a career would have attracted somebody to write a monograph, as materials surely could be found.

⁴⁶ Vide infra, Appendix D, pp 173-176.

⁴⁷ It is necessary to distinguish between the respective shares of Schönherr and Ebel, the former being in no way implicated in the practices which led to the judicial investigation of 1835-1841. Schönherr was an honest, pureminded, if not very acute, enthusiast. [As a youth he visited Kant, who dismissed him as an "unklarer Kopf."] At last he formed a small community at Königsberg, which met for prayer and meditation. Among these associates was Ebel, who from being a pupil became a rival, and finally seceded. (Cf. Art. *Schönherr* in Herzog.) Schönherr died in the year 1826; while the sect of "Ebelianer" (or Mückers) did not come into existence until the years 1828-9.

⁴⁸ The ms. of the *Book of Mormon* was written as a romance by Solomon Spaulding, but failed to find a publisher. Joseph Smith secured it, and in the year 1830 he brought it before the world, asserting that "it was a translation from hieroglyphics on golden plates, delivered to him by angels." Here are a few specimens, taken from a copy of the first edition [Palmyra, U.S. 1830]:-

Happily the last chapter of the shameful history seems to have begun. The conviction of the “bishop” Lee on the charge of murder removed the last shreds of character that hung round Mormonism, while the death of Brigham Young (reported lately) deprives them of an able and unscrupulous leader. It would be almost a mockery to discuss the so-called “doctrines” of the party: but it may be noted that the belief in an approaching Millennium, and the rite of baptizing for the dead, were prevalent⁴⁹. Happily we are

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enabled to conclude this brief sketch by the mention of two still existing forms of “repristinized” Montanism, in neither of which are to be noted the elements of imposture and immorality, although neither, on the other hand, can display among its ranks a Tertullian or a Fénelon. Some perhaps will deem this verdict unjust to the memory of Edward Irving. It may be so, and it would be wrong to demand of the orator the same lasting monuments as the writer: but still the eloquence which astounded Canning and drew all Mayfair to Hatton Garden does not seem to us of quite the same standard as the passionate denunciations of the Carthaginian presbyter, and the incomparable grace and pathos of the Archbishop of Cambrai.

Irving suffered the misfortune of being driven to defend deep opinions without the aid of a thorough theological education; and thus one who held and revered the Absolute Divinity of the Son, in the highest and fullest sense, was made to appear a heretic under the skilful cross-examinations of his inquisitors. If Neander’s motto, “*Pectus facit theologum,*” were as true as it is suggestive, Irving would be the first of theologians, for none had a heart so true, so warmly-beating, and so sympathetic. None surpassed his humility when, in those last gloomy years, he became the mere subordinate in the system which his own individuality had called into existence. But when, in 1834, that noble soul was called away, it left nothing but a frigid eclecticism of ritual without rule, prophecy without inspiration, and a title (“*Catholic and Apostolic Church*”) without a meaning! Still, if the visitor to an Irvingite Chapel finds some difficulty in reconciling the assumption of medheval decoration and the claim of primitive doctrine, it must not be denied that the

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professed doctrines are very similar to those of Montanism. There is the strong belief in the Millennium, previous to which there is to be the reign of Antichrist, and the resurrection of the just. There is the claim to a continued revelation from the Holy Spirit, but limited by the nature of the hierarchy, as if in an attempt to harmonize Tertullian and Cyprian.

Dating far back as to their origin (for their founder, Menno Simonis, belongs to the period of the Reformation), the Mennonites accomplished but four years ago an important step in their history, viz, their settlement in the territories of British North America. They do not claim

2nd Book of Nephi, ch. XII. “Thou fool, that shalt say, - ‘A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible.’ Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Wherefore murmur ye because ye shall receive more of my word? And because that I have spoken one word, ye need not suppose (sic) that I cannot speak another: for my work is not yet finished, &c.” (P. 115.)

Book of Moroni, ch. X. “All these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall endure, only according to the unbelief of the children of men.”

⁴⁹ The original articles of faith were modified in 1846 by the promulgation of the *Doctrines and Covenants*, [apparently the Trinity modified into a Duality, cf. p. 47,] the simple presbyterian government now develops into a hierarchy. Baptism for the Dead enjoined §1 105, 106, with allusion to 1 Cor. XV. 29. (Cf. Gunnison’s *History of the Mormons*, Philadelphia, 1852.)

prophetic revelations, but they profess to live after the model of the Gospel in refusing to take part in war, in declining all judicial oaths, and in practising a simple ecclesiastical discipline by banishing all committers of immorality from their societies. The first-named tenet caused them to leave their first settlements in Northern Germany, and to migrate to Russia under a pledge of exemption from military service. Notwithstanding their great services in civilising the vast plains north of the Black Sea, this pledge was broken by the Russian Government; and once more these primitive Christians have girded up their loins, have journeyed thousands of miles, and have settled in lands which can only profit by their presence. With this synopsis (which it would be only too easily possible to extend) we turn to the last and chiefest consideration which our work demands.

§ 6 Conclusion

What, then, shall we say upon the main question? What is to be the verdict justified by the impartial hearing of so vast a mass of evidence, and so numerous a body of counsellors? Are we to dismiss the Montanists to keep company with the dismal shadows of forgotten heresies, the inventions of foolish minds, the depravation of Scriptural truth? In one word, was the “Spirit” which

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Tertullian preached, and for which Perpetua died, the Father of Lies, or was it the Spirit of God?

Some would tell us to answer the question by a simple reference to the “voice of the Church,” always the same in every place and time. But we have already seen that, to unlearned and unskilful minds, this voice is only to be found in its discord, or (at best) unanimous when the event has been long decided. Surely in a question in which issues of fact as well as of doctrine were concerned, the defenders of the “*Quod semper, quod ubique*” cannot blame us for appealing to that voice as it spoke at or near the very time; and what have we found? Epiphanius declares that the Montanists “held concerning the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, the views of the Catholic Church.” Cyril accuses Montanus of claiming to be the Holy Ghost *in propriâ personâ*. All the immorality that the contemporary Hippolytus can attest is “the eating of dry things and radishes, the introduction of new fasts and festivals:” but John of Damascus, in the eighth century, knows that they “made bread with the blood of murdered infants.” Perhaps it will be said that these are the mere *obiter dicta*, and not the official utterances, of the Fathers. I appeal then to the facts, that one successor of St Peter (viz. Soter) wrote against the Montanists, while another (be it Eleutherus or Victor) was prepared to acknowledge the prophets, and had formally so acknowledged them, but was persuaded into retraction by Praxeas the Patripassianist! Perhaps, like the monks in the “*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*,” the opponents on failing with the popes turn to Councils⁵⁰ they must then have the goodness to instruct us which we are to select: for that of Iconium which commanded the rebaptization of

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⁵⁰ I have not the reference at hand, but recollect some orthodox friend of Ortuinus Gratius saying (if I do not misrepresent his Latinity):- “*Si Papa erit contra nos, tunc dicemus quod Causilium est supra Papan,*” and the converse also held good, in case of need. This excellent principle was often put in practice in the history of the Papacy.

Montanists is followed by that of Nicæa which imposed no such stigma.

Renouncing, then, our attempt to solve the problem in this way, let us adopt the test which Jeremy Taylor gave: "Whatsoever is either opposite to an article of creed, or teaches ill life, that is heresy: but all those propositions which are extrinsical to these two considerations, be they true or be they false, make not heresy, nor the man a heretic⁵¹. What, in the detached oracular utterances of the prophetesses, brought to us through a hostile witness, can be alleged as contrary to the *Regula Fidei*, as entertained by Justin, by Athenagoras, by Irenæus? Is it heretical for Maximilla to declare that "the end of the world was approaching," or that her followers were "to hear Christ, and not me"? Even in Tertullian's Montanistic writings, is there a sentiment, is there a statement about the Trinity, which is not to be found in almost the same form in other writers? And even if rash reasonings on mysterious subjects be found in the works, are we to stop here? Shall we not proclaim the heresy of Arnobius, Lactantius, and many others? In one word, have we not shewn, fairly and fully, that all the views of the Montanists on the work of the Spirit, the end of the world, the Millennium, are identical with those of Fathers whose orthodoxy no one questions? Our conclusion is that there was nothing opposite to an article of creed.

And now for Jeremy Taylor's second test:- "Or teaches ill life." The Montanists introduced some fasts, "deferring (says Tertullian) what we do not reject;" they condemned second marriages; they recommended the endurance of martyrdom rather than flight in persecution; they declared that only God should give absolution for certain awful sins. Is this "teaching ill life"? And which side do the charges of Infanticide discredit? Is there any need once more to refute them by their statement? We answer, that there was no "ill life" taught.

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If, indeed, other evidence shall in the future time be discovered, proving that any article of Creed was controverted by even an obscure follower of the Montanist Prophets, if any writer shall succeed in shewing that these Prophets taught immorality under the guise of asceticism, as some have done, we shall accept such a conclusion then as freely as we reject it now. But without it, there is but one guide, which tells us: "there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.... All these worketh that One and the Self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." And again:- "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;" it is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." And where this Spirit shews itself in these fruits, though Popes and Councils may anathematize, the Great Judge will one day reverse their judgment.

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⁵¹ *Liberty of Prophesying*, cap. 3.