

everything is called in question by the critical spirit of the age, people will begin to ask, What is the special function of a clergy and for what services the clergyman is paid? Apostolic ordinance, as has already been said, cannot be asserted in face of a body of adverse evidence, both positive and negative, the negative being even stronger than the positive. On the other hand the absence of Apostolic ordinance is not conclusive against this or any other Church institution, if there can be shown to have been a universal or general tendency, the index of an inherent need. On this point the reasoning of the "Ecclesiastical Polity" has always commended itself as conclusive to fair-minded men. That which experience proves to be necessary or good for the Church in her progress through the ages, and in her contact with different sets of circumstances and different civilizations, must be deemed to have been implicitly ordained by her founder when he sent her forth on her course. By the same reasoning we are precluded from laying down abstract propositions either with regard to polity or to ritual: different forms of Church government and of worship may suit different times and the temperaments of different races or classes. The Catholic clergy and the High Church Anglicans of course stand on a footing which, if their doctrines and their version of Church history are to be accepted, puts them far above any question as to the usefulness of their calling or the value received by the Christian people who contribute for their support. They are not a ministry, but a priesthood, the lineal representatives of the apostles, and, collectively, the inspired oracles of truth: in their hands are the keys of heaven; by them and by them alone is performed the sacramental miracle without which there can be no salvation. But the Protestant clergy of all denominations is the offspring of the Reformation which, instead of totally abolishing the priest reduced him to a minister, and assigned to him the duties of leading in worship, of ruling the congregation, and above all that of preaching, which, when the Gospel required to be re-published, was almost as important as at the time of the first publication. Since that epoch the intellectual difference between the pastor and the flock has been greatly diminished, the spirit of equality has everywhere prevailed, the knowledge of doctrine and knowledge of all kinds have been generally diffused. Nor can it be said that mere leadership in worship is so special a function as to require a salaried order for its performance. A new Reformation may, in this respect as in others, go farther than the first. It may revert to Congregationalism in the full sense of the term, and enact that, instead of pastor and flock, there shall be a society in the offices and ministrations of which all, according to their gifts, dispositions and opportunities shall take part. The problem of clerical functions will no doubt have in time to be considered; and for this, among other reasons, that if the clergy find their usefulness in their proper sphere declining and their position becoming insecure they will be naturally led to seek other sources of authority and popularity in heading social and perhaps political movements. Symptoms of that tendency are in fact already beginning to appear, and to threaten society with ill-advised crusades and a dominion of pulpit rhetoric. In the meantime Mr. Beaty would probably admit that, if the clergy are to be paid at all, many of them at present are underpaid. Nor is there much hope of improvement in this respect unless the Protestant churches, between which no vital difference of doctrine really exists, can agree to an economical union and combine to support one pastor in each village instead of starving three.

Fiction was invaded by Agnosticism in the person of George Eliot; it is now being invaded by Pessimism. French critics are taking arms against the invader. They treat Pessimism as hypochondria and exhort those who are afflicted with it to get themselves happily married, to try the douche bath or improve their cellars. There is some reason in this view of the case. Mathematics and pure science are independent of temperament and circumstance; systems of philosophy are largely influenced by both. It is evident that the philosophy of Socrates and Plato was a reaction against the moral scepticism and the political cynicism of their day; that the philosophy of Hobbes was a product of the panic bred in timorous and selfish souls by the Great Rebellion; that the philosophy of Locke was that of a Liberal of 1688; that the philosophy of Hume was the offspring of a lymphatic temperament and of the circumstances of the eighteenth century. The character of Schopenhauer and the history of his life account to a great extent for his Pessimism. He was, according to his biographers, a lonely, self-engrossed and thoroughly cynical man. His tastes, it appears, were grossly sensual; he was not married and seems never to have known what pure affection was. He behaved ill to his widowed mother, who on her side complained that his grumbling at the inevitable, his sulky looks, his eccentric opinions oracularly delivered, his mania for disputation, his jeremiads over the folly of the world and the misery of mankind, disquieted her and gave her the nightmare. He

was an abject coward, would never trust himself under the razor of a barber, and fled with precipitation from the mere mention of an infectious disease. As a lecturer he had been a failure and of course he charged his disappointment upon the folly and wickedness of his kind. In politics he was an absolutist; he spoke of patriotism as the passion of fools, regarded the people as little better than swine, viewed with ignoble hatred the great Liberal uprising of 1848, and bequeathed his whole fortune to the janissaries whose bayonets had put down liberty. When such a man took to philosophy, Pessimism was the natural outcome of his speculations. Yet this alone, or even combined with the fascination of Buddhism, is not the whole account of the matter. Had Pessimism been a mere idiosyncrasy it would have been buried in its author's grave, whereas it has taken a strong hold upon a large class of minds and is even rapidly gaining ground. Schopenhauer's teaching indeed fell dead during his lifetime, and acquired a sudden vogue after his death, a clear proof that the seed thus darkly sown by him had a soil ready prepared for it. He was the natural exponent of a gloomy philosophy of man's estate and of the universe; but the materials for the gloomy philosophy were there, and had only waited for an exponent. He has raised a veil and forced us to see that there are evidences around us of something very different from beneficent design, and that if this world is the work of Benevolence it must be the work of a Benevolence the supreme object of which is to be attained through a process of moral probation and lies beyond the present scene. Optimism such as that of Paley is possible no more.

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AN individual possessed of the supreme political power of the State and ambitious to retain it may possibly persuade himself that the safety of the country is incompatible with any guidance but his own. Authority is the most self-illusive of all human possessions, inducing men to forget the nature of their office, and to regard in the character of a right that which is merely a trust with responsibilities attached. The aim of contemporary ambition is to obtain for itself a fair title from the popular suffrage now acknowledged to be the source of power. But the force called popular will being uncertain and variable, it would be a difficult undertaking at almost any given time to pronounce with even approximate accuracy upon its precise character and direction. It would be safe to affirm that the popular tide hardly ever possesses a definite character and fixed direction. We endeavour to ascertain the nation's will—or the nearest practicable approach to it, the will of the majority—by its recorded suffrage; yet we must not forget that a nation is but an aggregation of human passions, impulses, sympathies and weaknesses, and as liable to be uncertain about its own choice as an individual might be under like circumstances. Representation, in its very nature, must always be imperfect, for the inadequately expressed and fluctuating will of a body or of a unit cannot possibly be reflected by the sympathies of a representative. Nations do not choose their rulers, not even nations enjoying the largest measure of political freedom and electoral control. Their rulers are chosen for them by a political law which they are quite powerless to alter or evade, and the function of the nation is merely to accept that which is so presented to it.

Of course there is the privilege of rejection; but the principle remains the same, for the rejection of one candidate implies the acceptance of another. The candidate is put forward, not called. Hence it is that few men in authority can always with accuracy affirm that they govern by the will of the majority. It would generally be nearer to the truth to say that they retain the reins of power by the acquiescence of the majority, who are often content to accept without criticism authority which performs the prime duty of preserving order and maintaining peace and prosperity.

When Walpole attained to the supreme power in the State under the First George, a power which enabled him to crush his enemies and rule with all the authority of a parliamentary autocrat, neither his royal master nor himself would, in all probability, have held their places for an hour by the suffrages of a plebiscite. Another minister and another king would have taken their places. Yet England was to all appearance content with Walpole's government although it was upheld by the most notorious and widespread corruption, and England prospered too. Sir Robert Walpole, although England enjoyed nominal representation in Parliament, was far indeed from being the people's choice; they accepted him, and submitted to his administration for the peace and prosperity which it brought to them and not for the sake of the man who brought the blessings referred to. So also, in every country having representative government, it frequently happens that the majority in the Legislature