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the Church Missionary Society regards Japan as "trembling on the brink of a mighty regeneration" is that "it has recently created two new bishoprics in Japan"! Might it not have occurred to Mr. Curzon that other reasons for this step were possible? When is it that two additional generals are despatched to the seat of war? Is it when victory is just complete? Or is it not rather when the campaign looks like being prolonged and arduous? The simple fact is that the plans for the new bishoprics had no connection whatever with the questionable anticipations of five or six years ago. Yet there stands that conspicuous footnote in an important and widely-read book by one of our leading authorities on Asiatic affairs! Really, there is nothing more left to be said.

EUGENE STOCK.



ART. V.—DR. KARL HIRSCHÉ AND THE "IMITATIO CHRISTI."

DR. KARL HIRSCHÉ, after spending over thirty years of his life in trying to establish the claims of Thomas à Kempis to the authorship of the "Imitatio Christi," died in July, 1892, without having been able to complete his labours, although we hope he has written enough to establish the truth of his thesis to the satisfaction of any unprejudiced reader. The results are now before us in three octavo volumes, the first of which was published in 1875, the second in 1883, while the third has only just been issued.¹

In the first two volumes he printed a chrestomathy of the undisputed works of Thomas, with a criticism thereon in order to show the similarity to the "Imitatio," both in thought and arrangement of sentences as well as in style. He also laid great stress on a discovery which he made in the little MS. volume written by Thomas himself, a volume which is in the Burgundian Library at Brussels. This discovery was a system of punctuation and of accentuation of considerable intricacy, which brings out a rhythm, and occasionally rhymes of a great value to the reader. Dr. Hirsche did not wish to assert that such punctuation does not exist in other works of the middle ages, but that in this volume it is of such an intricate nature as is rare in MSS., and could only have been done by one who read over the works with the greatest care; and the fact of its only existing in such MSS. as are contemporaneous with Thomas,

¹ Hirsche (Karl), "Prolegomena zu einer neuen Ausgabe d. *Imitatio Christi* nach dem Autograph des Thomas von Kempen," Bd. iii., 8vo. Berlin, C. Habel, 1894.

and in houses of Brethren of his order, would go to prove that the accentuation Thomas had given to his works was valued and copied by his intimate friends, but passed over as non-essential by others. Dr. Hirsche published an edition of the "Imitatio" printed in accordance with this system, and notwithstanding the affection of his eyes, which hindered his work, he was enabled by the help of friends to bring out a second edition before his death.

In the present volume of the "Prolegomena" there has been added a German translation of the first book, which he was able to dictate to his wife; it is based on the punctuation of the Brussels MS.

The second title of the volume just issued is "Proof of Thomas's Authorship of the 'Imitation' from its Contents and from the MSS." From its contents Dr. Hirsche has no difficulty in proving that the author was a German, from the numerous Germanisms, or as Canon Spitzen calls them "Hollandisms,"¹ in it. The so-called Gallicisms or Italianisms pointed out by the opponents of Thomas are shown to be words in common use in works that are often quoted.

The next point advanced is that the author was a monk, as he expressly states that fact, which of course precludes the claims of Chancellor Gerson, as he was not one.

After this Dr. Hirsche dwells on the form and style of the work, which are such as we should expect from Thomas's own statement in the prologue to the "Soliloquy," in which he compares himself to a "gardener, who, by planting trees and flowers, makes a meadow into a pleasant park." There is no system or development of doctrine; there is, so to speak, "pictorial grouping;" ideas are set down and then sentences are added to throw an illuminating light upon them, and sentences are found repeated not only in the various books or treatises forming the "Imitatio," but often in the same book. This is a strong peculiarity of Thomas, as we find in his other works quotations from one another and also from the "Imitatio," so that his opponents have called him a plagiarist. This he certainly is not, for the passages are not as exotics, but are woven into the text as clear ideas of the author's own. The "Imitatio," like his other writings, was for edification; he uses doctrine merely as the groundwork of good living; "his interest as a writer does not turn on the doctrine, but on the life; he does not think it worth his while to attack "false doctrine, he attacks false ways of living." "On church government, hierarchical orders, the relations of councils to popes, of church to emperor

¹ Thomas à Kempis was born in Germany, though he lived in Holland. The fact of the words being Germanisms or Flemicisms is immaterial.

and to empire, nothing is contained in his writings." Dr. Hirsche gives a valuable *résumé* of the "Imitatio" and of its system of teaching. And having thus given all the internal evidence in favour of Thomas, he passes on to a consideration of the MSS., especially of those whose date is undisputed, and which are contemporary with Thomas. The Kirchheim Codex is generally pointed to as the oldest, and it has an inscription giving the authorship to Thomas; Dr. Hirsche, however, passes it by, as the inscription is of a different ink from the rest of the MS. The oldest he mentions is the Codex de Monte Hierosolymi (now at Wolfenbüttel); it contains the first book, and is dated 1424; it contains "De Tribus Tabernaculis," a work of Thomas. The next is the Codex Bethlehelmi, dated 1427, that is when Thomas was in his forty-seventh year; it contains the four books and is carefully written, and has the punctuation as in the Brussels MS. This MS. is also called the Gaesdonck Codex; it came from one of the houses of the Canons Regular. The others examined are the Codex Noviomagensis, 1427; Osnabrugensis, 1429 (this has only Book I.); Roolf, 1431 (in this is a different system of accentuation); Wiblingensis (Books I. and II.), 1433; Weingarten (Books I-III.), 1433; Millicensis II. (the books are here treated as parts of one work), 1433; Paduanus (4 books), 1436; Augustanus, 1437; Lunaclacensis 1438; Magdalensis (Oxford), 1438; Rothensis, 1439; Augsburg (first book), 1440; and lastly the celebrated Brussels MS., 1441. This volume has always had a peculiar importance in the controversy, on account of its having been indisputably written by Thomas himself. Is he the mere scribe, as his opponents say? Or is he not rather the author, as he makes no distinction between the four treatises forming the "Imitatio" and those which follow, concerning which no dispute as to authorship has occurred? Dr. Hirsche, in common with most modern examiners of the MS., speaks of it as neat and correct as such a document could be. Quite the opposite was the opinion of the French commissioners appointed by the Archbishop of Paris to examine the MS. when it was sent to Paris in 1671. Their examination was in one way superficial, as they call it a parchment codex, while it is partly on parchment and partly on paper. They found, first, that the third and fourth books of the "Imitatio" were transposed; second, there were omissions of words; third, solecisms; fourth, erasures and alterations, presumably by a later writer, in agreement with better texts. Dr. Hirsche points out that these objections are not so damaging as they seem, for anyone who examines MSS. must know that errors always occur. The transposition of the third and fourth books is no error, and as to the solecisms the author was not writing in classical Latin, and such words

abound in mediæval literature ; besides, out of the thirty-three solecisms thirty are also in a MS. which they approve of. This was the Codex Gerardimontensis, which Gence, a follower of Gerson, takes as the text of his edition, and which agrees in almost everything with the Brussels MS. even to its contents. Gence claims it as the prototype from which the other is taken. Dr. Hirsche, however, points to the greater probability of its being the other way, as the majority of the works in both are indisputably those of Thomas à Kempis. As to the erasures and corrections, they are made by Thomas himself, and almost certainly such alterations as an author might make. Of course all this evidence would be of no avail if, as is asserted by the Gersonists, MSS. exist before the time of Thomas ; but as to this Dr. Hirsche has paid great attention, and points to the uncertainty of palæography in deciding the question, and these apparently older MSS. have been shown to have been of later date from including works undoubtedly written in the fifteenth century. Dr. Hirsche was unable to enter into the question of contemporary evidence, on which point we have the proofs advanced by Kettlewell and Cruise ; he has, however, done his best to prove to the unprejudiced reader that Thomas à Kempis is certainly the author of the "*Imitatio Christi*."

L. A. WHEATLEY.



ART. VI.—UNITY AND SCHISM.

IN the May number of the CHURCHMAN Chancellor Smith, writing on "*The National Church and Unity*," has criticised an article in the February number on "*The Catholic Church—Schism*." I think the Chancellor has somewhat misapprehended the article, and has sometimes expressed himself with ambiguity. I have not suggested that the external unity of the Church militant was a matter of indifference. On the contrary, I earnestly desire the mutual recognition and communion of all the visible Churches of Christ, their union, and the incorporation in one visible body of all members of the Mystical Body. For this object I pray and labour. I refer to "*The Three Churches*" in the CHURCHMAN, January, 1894. But I am unable to concur when the Chancellor, after stating that "*polychurchism*" is in the abstract unlawful, goes on to say, "*This reflection clearly imposes upon us the duty to eradicate all the causes which lead to its existence and promote its growth.*" What! are we Anglicans to give up Episcopacy, which is the main cause of visible disunion with