

ARTICLE VII.

CRITICAL NOTE.

FURTHER READINGS FROM THE CODEX HUNTINGTONIANUS.

[The Editor has received the following criticism of a New York correspondent, who withholds his name.]

MR. BUCHANAN'S line is an absolutely hopeless one. Hort may possibly be too sure of the infallibility of Codex B. That is quite a fair question for debate. But there can be no question at all that Buchanan's main test of antiquity and authenticity in various Readings — namely the greater or less fulness with which the Doctrine of the Trinity is asserted in them — the value of the Reading varying with the Athanasian Orthodoxy — is the completest possible inversion of a true test. The most convinced Trinitarian in the world if he happens to know anything at all of Apostolic and Sub-Apostolic literature will admit that it took that Doctrine a considerable time to develop, and that if it is present at all in the New Testament, in Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius and the others, it is so in a very implicit form. He will admit that the constant introduction of the Holy Spirit — even in Isaiah for instance¹ — is scarcely a mark of genuineness and antiquity in any version where it occurs, that on the contrary it is proof positive of a comparatively late date and of an egregious naivete in the pious interpolator who cannot imagine that the truth as known to him could not have been at least equally present to the minds of the holy men who wrote the Scriptures to the dictation of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Buchanan quite shares

¹St. John xv. 25 reads in the newly-discovered Western Text: *Ut sermo impleatur ysaye prophete: quia hodie runt spiritum sanctum gratis* ("That the saying of the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled, They hated the Holy Spirit without a cause").—ED.

that point of view, and I fear that until he has got over it, all the diligence and knowledge which he does not seem to lack, will be a serious obstruction to his usefulness even as a textual critic. The "Rich Yield of Readings" in the Codex Hunting-tonianus is likely to prove only a not very indispensable addition to our already large collection of specimens (e.g. the Pseudo-Ignatian letters) of psychological curiosities from the workshop of the pious forger.

[Mr. Buchanan's Reply.]

Your correspondent is obsessed by Loisy's theory that the mind of men evolved the Doctrine of the Trinity from some obscure hints let fall by Jesus and His Apostles. We owe the Holy Spirit then to the generative power possessed by the human intellect, the same intellect that we see today piling up arms to destroy men's lives. Love, the love of the Holy Spirit (which the text of the new MS. says is to save men's spirits from evil spirits), is then the production of the mind that produced Spanish Inquisitors and invented Hell-fire and the rack. Some of us have not so learned nature and human nature—"red in tooth and claw." The new MS. has no hell-fire. Perhaps your correspondent will conclude that the existence of hell in the texts of the East is a "positive proof" of their genuineness just as the mention of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Holy Spirit in Western texts is a "positive proof" of their "lateness" and spuriousness. The existence of the furnace of fire in the texts he upholds is to me something akin to "positive proof" that they have been interpolated by forgers and fear-mongers.

After twenty years *first-hand* study of both Eastern and Western texts, the searcher for truth is led to form a series of inductions *from documentary evidence*, which no one who has not studied documents for at least half that time, ten years, is capable of forming. Of the Orthodoxy I am suspected of moving heaven and earth to maintain, I have none, nor do I wish to have—documents having long ago shat-

tered and destroyed both my ecclesiastical and anti-ecclesiastical prepossessions. God, if He is to be worshiped, must be consistent both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, and must be love; and this MS., as far as it goes, makes Him both.

If the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis, why not in Isaiah, which your correspondent will admit is of later date than Genesis? Is every discovery, I ask, that conflicts with materialism (ancient and modern) to be at once "ruled out" by the pseudo-scientific theories that enchain men's minds today? If Trinity is an eternal attribute of Godhead, why should it be declared by your correspondent to have first arisen in sub-Apostolic times, and that by projection from the human mind?

If matter is all the world contains, both the MS. and the human race stand in a "hopeless" position. But if there are such entities as the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit, then "Mr. Buchanan's line" is not so "absolutely hopeless" as your correspondent dogmatically asserts, nor is the MS. a mere "psychological curiosity from the workshop of a pious forger." The story in St. John ix. has still its application:

Can a forger open the eyes of the blind?

[If Mr. Buchanan's critic has anything further to say he should come out under his own name.—EDITOR.]