

**RELIGIO MODESTA;
OR, A SIGH
FOR PEACE**

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Religio modesta; or, A sigh for peace by Jam Senior

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JAM SENIOR

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS little pamphlet is confessedly and designedly superficial, if considered from the side of doctrine. The writer assumes Anglo-Catholic doctrines as amply proven for his purpose; i.e., as tenable and tolerable. Of course he feels that much more might be claimed for them, but he is contented to know that many abler and more learned men have demonstrated their truth. He does not attack *doctrine* in others of quite opposite views. Two large schools of thought in England are unhappily almost at open war; really about the doctrine of the Eucharist, but ostensibly, as before the law courts, about the ceremonies to be used in its celebration. His words then are not of learning, but of love and gentleness; he pleads for fairness and candour, for remembrance "that we are brethren." His aim is to point out some few considerations which zeal is too apt to overlook, and to note some of the chief factors in what he considers popular blindness of conception. "*Periculose plenum opus aleæ tractat;*" to remove notes from the eyes of better men than himself; to appeal to such on religious and moral grounds, how presumptuous! Some one should do it, and a priest far advanced in years, and hiding whatever shame he may feel under an incognito, has thus far ventured, as to remind all whom it may concern that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," and to ask them to unite with him in the prayer which was so unmistakably answered in the calm sweet life of Isaac Williams, who composed it:—

" From both love and hate,
" Affections vile, low cares, and envy's blight,
" And controversial leanings and debate,
" Save me! from earthly film my mental sight
" Purge Thou, make my whole body full of light!
" So may my eyes from all things Truth convey,
" My ears in all Thy lessons read aright,
" My dull heart understand, and I obey,
" Following where'er the Church hath marked the ancient way."

The Feast of St. Peter, 1874.

RELIGIO MODESTA.

CHAPTER I.

[*ANGLIA*] "VÆ MISERÆ NIMIUM VICINA" [*GENEVÆ*].

VIRG. ECLOG. IX. 28.

THE religious atmosphere of England is charged with tempestuous threatenings; and the strife of tongues; and it may seem quite useless to suggest old-fashioned counsels of moderation and peace. Yet would one grieve to think that modern theology in England would long continue to exclude that shy but noble quality of moderation which poets have extolled in golden verse, and philosophers in as memorable prose; that virtue which flows out naturally from humility, and is the basis of good taste and good manners. True theology cannot do without it, for its divine rule is "Thou shalt not add unto—nor diminish from;" while as regards the temper and the heart, its golden rule is, "Follow after charity, which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." When shall times of peace and candour return? At present all seems animosity and invective both without and within the Church, and too many Christians are reading S. Paul backwards, and are "letting their" *want of* "moderation be known unto all men."

While considering the elements of discord which so harass the times in which we live, we must not omit to notice the external foes of the Church and their general effect upon English thought, and through that, upon a great section of professed members of the English Church.

In other countries of the West of Europe the division of Religion is more simple; in fact, only two-fold—Catholics and Protestants are the divisions; but in Great Britain we find The Church of England, Catholic but reformed, occupying the old territorial area, and continuing the old Apostolical Succession. We find also a subsequently introduced body of Roman Catholics, and the Presbyterian sects of many names and shades of difference, but all drawing their inspiration from one founder, John Calvin. All these, as well as the now Roman Catholic community, went out from us in the persons of their fathers. And in various ways, and from contrary sides, their having done so has left a mist and haziness over many Church questions which would else be clear enough. Of the Roman Catholics amongst us in England we need say little, as they interfere so little with our domestic quarrels. Yet the fact of their being amongst us, with Ireland for their base of operations, and their necessary obedience to a power in Rome which has never relinquished a claim over us which it declares to be Divine—this is, I say, an element of fear to certain minds, as reminding them of Rome's former history amongst us. It keeps up the feeling of

hostility and even hatred, which is sure to result from vague and unexamined apprehensions.

It also weakens the Church of England by the suspicion engendered of her claim to Catholicity. Her children, many of them, even to this day, dislike that claim as seeming to imply some complicity with *Roman* Catholicism, little realizing the truth, that it is only by being really Catholic that we have had, or can retain, any permanent power to withstand Rome. Our real relations to Rome and to the unreformed Churches of her obedience, will have to come before us again. Enough to say here—that in relation to the present so-called anti-ritual movement—that Roman Catholic sect is more sinned against than sinning. But the Calvinistic sects who have from time to time gone out from us act harmfully against the peace of Christian England in two ways, politically and doctrinally,

Politically—they condone their mutual differences among themselves, that they may combine with more effect against the Church as established in England.

Not content with obtaining, what no one would grudge them, toleration, liberty, social rights, they have wantonly attacked the Church as if its very establishment and well-being was a misfortune and a loss to them. Hence have arisen all sorts of obstructions to religious and educational improvement. The Church was in no wise to be assisted, as it was unfair to their several competitive institutions. Church rates must be done away with, and Church-

yards open to dissenters—and all those several oppositions made by them to Church and State co-operation called “the Religious difficulty” come under this head—but more especially their late alliance with infidels and irreligious, and the attempt to force education without religion, because the great and till lately the sole religious educator, the Church, would feel this blow most. How this confusion of claims, made by a score or two of sects, must tell upon a shallow age like this is obvious. This religious difficulty is the greatest trouble to the politician, perhaps his greatest temptation to a cold and indifferent treatment of his own Church, which he has not yet abjured. “Where,” he is apt to say, “can a man escape this odium theologicum but in cool indifference?” Hence modern politics become avowedly irreligious. The fallacy taints the very spirit of the age, which so many seem to invoke and even worship. It is commonly taught that “the State must have no religion,” must favour no religion (all compacts, trusts, and past benefits notwithstanding), because, it is supposed, that “any religion must be sectarian and so must annoy somebody.” Such fallacies are sown broadcast in modern England, under such *perverted terms*, considering from what quarter they come, as “Unsectarianism,” “Undenominationalism,” “National Education,” and such like. While the truth is that the Church is still national, and for years has called her education national on that very account, and she alone claims no denomination; the fallacy takes effect by turning

the tables unexpectedly on the Church, after a long and successful mystifying of politics, and trying to make her out to be the only sect, and the great obstruction to the new project of education. Alas for the politician who hopes to evade religious responsibilities under any of the aforesaid excuses. As a representative he *must* take his side. Some of the noisiest and least scrupulous politicians of the day are so far from unsectarian that they are fighting hard to raise their own religious school upon the ruin of the old national religion—all the while they can ally themselves with sceptics and infidels, and talk smoothly of "sectarian prejudice now only lingering in the Church." I am not now concerned to defend the Establishment—ready as indeed I should be if it lay in the path at present before me. I want to show how dissent acts harmfully on the great political conscience of England, and as politicians must have great influence on English thought, it tends to harden people against exact justice towards the Church of their fathers. Dissent has already obtained by its persistence and most clever organization more than it ought, on religious principle, to have exacted. One thing remains for it to fight for and one only, and till that is gained nothing is gained—the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England—and it has gained all this for itself, and done all this deep injury to the Established Church by its action on Parliament. The member of Parliament must be ready to declare, therefore, how he

will vote on questions very nearly touching religion. On him will be thrown the odium which he fain would shun. He must either agree to the levelling down of the Church or to defending it; and thus, as the political outcome of dissent, indifference and infidelity are the ever-increasing fruit of our unhappy divisions.

But if Dissent acts harmfully on the English character *politically*, still worse is its more diffused and general influence for erroneous doctrine. In part of Great Britain Presbyterianism is endowed as the State religion, and this affords a sort of base for the operations of the whole Calvinistic heresy, and to minds of a certain constitution may give it a claim to respectability. Indeed, all dissent from Catholic truth and principle in England and Scotland is from the same Genevan root, and we might roughly divide the English religion into Romanism, Anglicanism, and Calvinism—and hence arose that common saying of the Church of England being a *Via Media* between extremes. But of that I hope to speak in its proper place further on. Now when we remember how ready most people are to confound the things of Cæsar with those of God—the establishment with the Church, we can better understand the influence of presbyterian Scotland on the minds of the uninquiring and half-educated Churchmen of England, and how it interpenetrates and stains the average English mind with erroneous views of the English Church. It misleads public opinion, and carries on and encourages the fierce anti-Catholic antipathies