



The Order of the Golden Age



IS FLESH EATING A **Violation of Apostolic Teaching,**

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(The Herald of the Golden Age – April 1896)

We much regret that we are compelled on account of limited space to publish this paper in an abridged form. As however we are issuing it as a Pamphlet, in its entirety, we trust that all our readers will send for copies and circulate them as widely as possible, and thus aid us in our efforts to lessen the volume of the torrent of blood which is being shed throughout Christendom, as the result of this transgression of the Divine Will,— *Ed*

IN order to *give* a satisfactory answer to the important question which forms the title of this pamphlet, and one which will commend itself to the minds of thoughtful persons, it is obviously necessary to direct the attention to those regulations in regard to food and daily conduct, which were laid down by the Apostles at the founding of the Church Catholic—when the Gentiles first became fellow-heirs of the Gospel, with the Jewish believers in Christ.

Origin of the Decrees or ‘Dogma.

The circumstances which led to the delivery of these memorable decrees are described in Book of Acts (xv. chapter), and are thus referred to in Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity,(Bk. iv. 4).

" The Christian Jews did think at the first, not only themselves but the Christian Gentiles also bound, and that necessarily, to keep the whole Law. There went forth certain of the sect of the Pharisees which did believe, and they coming unto Antioch, taught that it was necessary for the Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. Whereupon there grew dissension, Paul and Barnabas disputing against them. The determination of the Council held at Jerusalem, A.D. 48, concerning this matter, was finally this: 'Touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and determined that they observe no such thing.' Their protestation by letter is, 'Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which departed from us have troubled you with words, and cumbered your minds, saying ye must be circumcised and keep the Law ; know that we gave them no such commandment.' "

The Decrees.

"The words of the Council's decree concerning the Gentiles are, "*It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.*"

A Warning.

Now the Christian reader must be plainly warned, that if he honestly tries to estimate the value of these decrees, he must be willing to do what every juryman tries to do, viz.: to dismiss from his mind all prejudice. We, that is all Western Christendom— Protestants and Catholics, of whatsoever denomination we are called—are in agreement in one particular—we live in habitual disobedience to this decree, and our natural and spiritual fore-fathers have done the same for more than a thousand years.

Evasion by the Western Churches since the 4th Century.

Hence we find so judicious a mind as Hooker's, dismissing the whole question of whether it might possibly be well for us to keep the Dietary Rules with the sentence—"That the Apostles did not impose them, with bond of necessary and perpetual observation, as we all by doctrine and practice acknowledge, but only in respect of the conveniency and fitness for the present state of the Church as it then stood." Surely a curious evasion of the plain words—"no other burden than *these necessary things*." Hooker, if he lived now, might claim the same authority in favour of the practice of fornication, for it is well proved, though not openly confessed, that this horrible abuse of the body is as rampant now as it was in Heathenism at the beginning of our era. It is as *wide-spread as the eating of things strangled and blood* (and all flesh-meat contains blood in greater or lesser proportions), amongst all classes and ranks of all denominations of Christians. No one acquainted with social life in England or any part of Western Christendom will venture to deny this.

The authority Divine and Human.

"**It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.**" If this be indeed the voice of the Holy Ghost—then the duty of abstaining from things strangled and from blood and from fornication, are linked together by the same tie that holds Nature herself. The Creator Spirit knows that licentious feeding, leads to licentiousness in other appetites—and this unnatural food for man has been condemned by the wisdom of God in all ages.

The Human element in the Council.

"*The Apostles and Elders and Brethren.*" Can any Christian who regards Church Authority in any degree, think this a mean authority—Here was St. Peter ; here St. James presided; here was St. Paul; here was the Church assembled in the name of the Lord Christ. "I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church"—Where can greater or manifest Church Authority be found?

The Decrees not simply temporary.

The commentators of the evasion of these decrees—are in 'a difficulty to account for the apparent mixing up of a temporary positive rule, put in as they say, to please the Jews—"abstain from things strangled and from blood," with the eternal moral law of purity. Hooker's great and humbly-reverent mind, attempts to reconcile the difficulty by suggesting that the word translated "fornication" had a peculiar technical Jewish meaning, but he adds a practical withdrawal of his own surmise. "If any do rather think that the Christian Gentiles themselves, through the loose and corrupt custom of those times took simple fornication for no sin, and were in that respect offensive unto believing Jews, which by the Law had been better taught; our proposing of another conjecture is unto theirs no prejudice."

One modern commentator proposes to alter the word from *porneias* into *porkeias*, and turn it into a prohibition of pork ; while one of our popular novelist-commentators, refuses to see in the Apostolic Assembly anything fit to be called a "Council."

Obey, and you shall understand.

To such melancholy straits are they driven, who disobey a divine command, and then cast about for reasons to justify the evasion! but the promise is given to those "who will to do God's will." that they shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. Let any Christian man or woman faithfully obey those decrees, abstain from all eating of blood, and avoid all things strangled, and *he shall know*.

I need not speak in these countries of idol offerings, in a literal sense. St. Paul himself pointed to this, the only one of the decrees which he commented on expressly when he said, "we know that an idol is nothing in the world;" therefore to those who really know this, idol offerings do not exist, but if the idol does exist in any imagination,—either your own or your weak brother's—then you must eat no flesh at all rather than touch an idol offering and so lead your brother to transgress the decree of the Holy Ghost and the Church (which is the equivalent of a command of the Lord Jesus) —"Abstain from idol-offerings." We now obey this in the spirit by avoiding the shambles altogether, for they are truly altars erected to **the modern idol of depraved appetite**.

In such obedience let any one try for himself these decrees, and in keeping of them he will find great reward. The best reward will be that he shall know that this doctrine is of God. It was no sop to Cerberus—no attempt to satisfy Jewish prejudices—no vain Eirenicon to patch up a peace between contending factions—but **a declaration of God's Eternal law, of the highway of holiness for man**. These necessary things — *supremely necessary things**—total abstinence from blood and from things strangled and from fornication ;

thus is the flesh subdued to the spirit that we may obey all " Godly motions in righteousness and true holiness."

* *Literal rendering of the original*

"The Decrees" kept after the Apostles time.

There can be no question that during the whole time of the Apostle's own ministry, and for at least the first three centuries after their departure, these dogmata were the rule of all Christian living, the *unalterable requirement* of every assembly in the Communion of the Church of Christ. Silence proves consent, and it is this very uniformity of unquestioning observance which has left us so little of historical notice. Much smaller matters, about which any controversy arose amongst Christians would obtain mention in history. The very completeness of the submission "to the Holy Ghost and the Church in her first great deliberative assembly of Apostles, Elders and people," creating a silence like that which obtains,— "Where beyond these voices there is peace."

Re-publication not needed until 7th Century.

It is as late as the close of the seventh century before it became necessary to republish the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem.

In Mosheim's account of the Trullan Council held A.D. 692, we read :

" A new assembly of Bishops was held by order of Justinian II, in the year 692, at Constantinople in the tower of the palace, which was called Trullus. This council, from the place of meeting was called Concilium Trullanum, and from another circumstance *Quinisextum*, because the Greeks considered its decrees as necessary to the perfection of the fifth and sixth council.

A slight sketch of this Council is requisite for my purpose. The Eastern patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Justiniana with more than two hundred Bishops, attended this Council. The Roman Pontiff had no proper legate there, yet his ordinary representatives at the Imperial Court sat in the Council and subscribed its decisions ; and Basil the Archbishop of Crete, says in his subscription, that he represented the patriarch of Rome and all the Bishops under him. The Emperor (Justinian II.) attended the Council in person and subscribed its decrees.

What the Trullan Council demonstrates.

We appeal to the Trullan Council not for its authority, but as *an absolutely unassailable evidence of the wide-spread reception of the Apostolic dogmata*. It is impossible to explain the fact that the Emperor Justinian the Second, all the Imperial councillors and two hundred Bishops could, at a time when there was bitter hatred of the Jews, have drawn up and subscribed their names to the Canon, the original of which we now proceed to place before the reader, upon any other hypothesis than that it had been the familiar custom of the Church from the first.

The fact, that five of the Canons of this Trullan Council — including our No, 67 were rejected by the Romans—does not invalidate but rather strengthens the argument. It only emphasizes the fact for which we have been contending all along, that *disregard of these dogmata has been the bane of Western Christianity*.

The following is a literal translation of

Canon 67.

" If anyone from this present time shall attempt to eat the blood of an animal in any manner whatsoever, if he may be a Cleric let him be deposed, and if a layman let him be excommunicated."

Sharp and severe was the penalty for eating blood—the cleric was to lose all his sacred privileges, the layman was to be cast out of the communion of the Church—a punishment worse than death. Is it conceivable that such a rule should be subscribed by Emperor and Rulers of Church and State if it were not a rule of Christian life, known to be Apostolic, and of the very essence of Christian conduct,—that blood was to be abhorred of all Christian people. Unless we concede to the Roman Pontiff the power to change, and contradict the Voice of the Holy Ghost and the Apostles, we must concede to Eastern Christianity the high merit of being at least the conservators of the ancient practice of the Church of God, *for they to this hour hold by the "dogmata" of the first Council in regard to food*.

Tiger food makes Tiger God.

It is the same Highway that leads from Heaven to Hell, *and* from Hell to Heaven. Hence the blood-eating as well as the fornicating Christian is not only inadequate and imperfect in his obedience—that belongs to all our mortal-life, "in many things we all offend"—but he is setting his body into retrograde evolution. He is not like one who does not know the Path of Life, but rather having found it, he uses it to move the wrong way. He keeps to the King's Highway, but travels from Jerusalem to Jericho. Intended to be the Glory of God—*the Giver of Life*—the bodily presentment of that Redeeming Love, who poured out His soul for the life of the world, *lie yields himself to the Destroyer, as one who brings death into the world.*

As the man is, so is his God. The God of the blood-eating Christian is a far more cruel and debased idol than one "who eats bulls flesh and delights in the blood of goats." Night-mare notions are engendered by neglect of the Holy Ghost's and the Church's decrees. And let none imagine that mankind can live on the tiger's diet and escape the tiger's cruel delight in pain.

Listen to the way one of the holiest and best of blood-eating Christendom praises his God. I might take any Roman or Puritan Divine, for Western Orthodoxy is unanimous.

"As the loss of the saint's rest will be aggravated by losing the enjoyments of time, it will be much more so by suffering the torments of hell; the exceeding greatness of such torments may appear by considering the principal author of them, who is God himself; that these torments are the fruit of Divine vengeance, that the Almighty takes pleasure in them. The principal author of hell-torments is God himself. As it was no less than God whom sinners had offended, so it is no less than God who will punish them for their offences. He hath prepared those torments for his enemies. His continued anger will still be devouring them. The everlasting flames of hell will not be thought too hot for the rebellious, and when they have been burning millions of ages, He will not repent Him of the evil which has befallen them."

This is a portion of the "*Saint's Everlasting Rest*,"—by the Rev. Richard Baxter. We can match it in all the teaching of Latin Christianity, Hic et ubique. #

The Dogmata in their fullness the privilege of all Christians.

Is not my contention awfully borne out? When the Temple of the Holy Ghost—the Body of a Christian man or woman—is denied with the blood of slain beasts, the creative spirit in the man becomes imbued with the spirit of cruelty—hence nothing short of the conjuring up of infinite and endless torment can satiate the imagination. The passing momentary delight of a tiger in tormenting, is translated into a fiendish gloating over the thought of suffering—and the man to whom the Holy Ghost was given, to renew him into the image of the God of infinite mercy, whose very Being is Love, finds Satan in the place of Jesus, and worships Hell's grim tyrant under the name of God.

Remember that Baxter read of Jesus, and had access to all our New Testament, *and thus learn how our spirits are contaminated by the body's dishonour.*

I have argued that the dogmata were not intended only as a peace-offering to Jewish prejudices--but most assuredly it was a wonderful means of cementing the unity of the Church. "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." and when men walk in the light of the teaching of God and Nature, friendship is spontaneous, and we are taught of God to love one another.

But let us grant that the secondary purpose of that decision was to soothe Jewish prejudices--what an argument we have here for a much wider Food Reform! What St. James and the Elders said to St. Paul: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe,"—comes with ten-fold force as a plea to the modern Missionary and the whole Christian Church; not to offend the moral sense of the millions of Buddhists and Hindoos, by flesh eating. If it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and the Church to require the giving up of the food where any is offended or made weak—how can the flesh-eater justify the horrors of the flesh traffic—the training of thousands of butchers, and all the cruelty and slaughter and destruction that every "member of Christ and child of God and inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven," entails upon God's creatures, by supporting and taking part in this practice. The personal sufferings of Christ's mortal body are a very small item in comparison to the awful total of bodily pain which our modern Christianity inflicts on sensitive creatures—with bodies in all capacities of pain or enjoyment, "like unto His mortal body" and our own bodies.

An open shame.

By our indiscriminate eating of flesh and blood we bring disease upon our bodies. Our Missionaries attempt to reproduce in tropic countries the flesh-eating of England, and fall as victims to what is euphemistically called "*the climate*," or else return—especially if they are Bishops—return to England with the empty title, which says to a justly scoffing world, "*Know all men by these presents that we who confess the faith of Christ crucified, cannot accommodate ourselves even for health's sake to hygienic rules, but even compel our converts to live as do the blood eaters.*" My Brethren these things ought not so to be.

Grow in Grace and Knowledge.

Let us then receive the decrees of God's Church of old, keep them faithfully, and guided by that same Holy Spirit, let us take, as a token of the lapse of years since A.D.50, one little step further in the same path of Christian love and liberty. Let us abstain so completely, that even the search of our modern science, *cannot detect upon us the guilty stain of a fellow-creature's blood*. For, through the microscope, that great gift of the all-seeing Father to teach His children to understand how His hands have made and fashioned our frames, **we now know that it is only by total abstinence from all flesh that we can obey the command, "abstain from blood."**