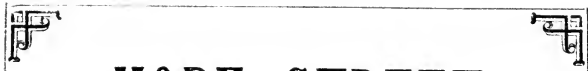




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THE CONGREGATIONAL LECTURE

FOR 1855.

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The Ages of Christendom.

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BY JOHN STOUGHTON.



A G E S  
OF  
CHRISTENDOM:

BEFORE

The Reformation.

By JOHN STOUGHTON.

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## P R E F A C E.

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**T**HE Congregational Lectures delivered by the Author in the month of November, 1855, were but eight in number. From their subsequent enlargement, and in order to bring the division of them into correspondence with the order of topics discussed, they have been broken up into a larger number, and into different lengths.

Most of the materials were collected, and all the leading views were formed many years ago, otherwise it would have been impossible for the Lecturer with the cares of an extensive pastorate, to undertake the office assigned him by the Committee. He is apprehensive that, even with this advantage, he may be charged with some temerity. But the deep interest he takes in ecclesiastical studies, and the conviction he cherishes of the importance of the conclusions he has attempted to expound and illustrate, may be pleaded as his excuse. While he is very sensible of the distinction intended for him, by the association of his name with those of his able and accomplished predecessors, he is ready to shrink from it under the fear that it will only provoke disparaging comparison.

It will be observed that these Lectures are not so much prelections for the learned, as Discourses for the public. This method of treatment has been adopted not only from

the writer's own preference, but in compliance with the wishes of the Committee.

It can scarcely be hoped that in observations upon so large a field of study, some mistakes have not been made, but the writer confidently asks credit for two things,—honesty and diligence.

He is under great obligations to his friend, the Rev. S. Newth, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in New College, for some valuable suggestions, and for considerable assistance in preparing the MS. for publication, as well as in correcting the press.

## ADVERTISEMENT

BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL  
LIBRARY.

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THE "CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY" was established with a view to the promotion of Ecclesiastical, Theological, and Biblical Literature, in that religious connexion with whose friends and supporters it originated. It was also designed to secure a convenient *locality* for such associations as had previously existed, or might hereafter exist, for the purpose of advancing the literary, civil, and religious interests of that section of the Christian Church to which it was appropriated. Without undervaluing the advantages of union, either with Evangelical Protestants or Protestant Nonconformists, on such grounds as admit of liberal co-operation, it was nevertheless deemed expedient to adopt measures for facilitating the concentration and efficiency of their own denomination. In connexion with these important objects, it was thought desirable to institute a LECTURE, partaking rather of the character of *Academic prelections* than of popular addresses, and embracing a *Series of Annual Courses of Lectures*, to be delivered at the Library, or, if necessary, in some contiguous place of worship. In the selection of *Lecturers*, it was judged proper to appoint such as, by their literary attainments and ministerial reputation, had rendered service to the cause of Divine truth in the consecration of their talents to the "defence and confirmation of the gospel." It was also supposed, that some might be found possessing a high order of intellectual competency and moral worth, imbued with an ardent love of biblical science, or eminently conversant with theological and ecclesiastical literature, who, from various causes, might never have attracted that degree of public attention to which they are entitled, and yet might be both

qualified and disposed to undertake courses of lectures on subjects of interesting importance, not included within the ordinary range of pulpit instruction. To illustrate the evidence and importance of the great doctrines of Revelation; to exhibit the true principles of philology in their application to such doctrines; to prove the accordance and identity of genuine philosophy with the records and discoveries of Scripture; and to trace the errors and corruptions which have existed in the Christian Church to their proper sources, and, by the connexion of sound reasoning with the honest interpretation of God's holy Word, to point out the methods of refutation and counteraction, are amongst the objects for which "the Congregational Lecture" has been established. The arrangements made with the Lecturers are designed to secure the publication of each separate course, without risk to the Authors; and, after remunerating them as liberally as the resources of the Institution will allow, to apply the profits of the respective publications in aid of *the Library*. It is hoped that the liberal, and especially the opulent, friends of Evangelical and Congregational Nonconformity, will evince, by their generous support, the sincerity of their attachment to the great principles of their Christian profession; and that some may be found to emulate the zeal which established the "Boyle," the "Warburton," and the "Bampton" Lectures in the National Church. These are legitimate operations of the "voluntary principle" in the support of religion, and in perfect harmony with the independency of our Churches, and the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ.

The Committee deem it proper to state that, whatever responsibility may attach either to the reasonings or opinions advanced in any Course of Lectures belongs exclusively to the Lecturer.

CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY,  
*Blomfield Street, Finsbury, August, 1836.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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**O**UR Lectures are historical.

In an eastern city, which Rome had subdued by her arms, which, in her imperial pride, she regarded with contempt, but which had been distinguished from the beginning, as the scene of mysteries and miracles, which had just witnessed within its walls the presence and personal ministration of the greatest and most glorious Being who ever trod the earth—in that city, Christendom had its birth. In an upper room, in one of the old streets of that Divine Metropolis, where about one hundred and twenty followers of the Crucified assembled with one accord for prayer and supplication, Christendom had its cradle. There is the starting point of our present investigations. Our object is, to treat of the ages of Christendom before the Reformation: attempting to exhibit some of the influences which affected ecclesiastical society and religious life during that period.

After the revelation of the Divine ideal of truth and order, there are four main classes into which the facts of history may be grouped:—first, theological processes and conclusions; secondly, ecclesiastical institutes and

proceedings; thirdly, spiritual life and experience; and fourthly, various complications of these with the political and secular world without. To point out some of the principal relations in which these classes of events stand to each other;—to give such a broad reading of Church history as to show that in its multifarious details there is the working out of a grand epic unity;—to indicate how, amidst changes in theology and polity, spiritual religion, though modified, has not perished;—and to trace some of the causes which have produced those changes, such is our task.

The magnitude of the subject is enough to alarm us. A wide range of vision is required to cover the field of inquiry. Our perplexities are unavoidable. They arise out of the conditions of the theme. The compass of observation could not be narrowed without sacrificing the object proposed.

To examine one age of the Church by itself, to group together the opinions, usages, events, and heroes of a single epoch, would leave what I am aiming at wholly unaccomplished. The same may be said of the selection of any single line of ecclesiastical investigation, whether referring to doctrine, polity, worship, or experience. One age is bound by inextricable ties to another. All the lines of ecclesiastical investigation are twined together. Our pathway is necessarily wide and crowded with objects, and will require much care to avoid indistinctness and confusion.

Different points of view have been adopted in looking at the history of Christendom. The selection has, of course, been guided mainly by the character and predictions of the historian. History, as to its forms, depends very much upon the mind engaged in collecting, arranging, and studying its facts. The subjective element must always be allowed for. Systematic views are demanded by the human intellect, but they have their temptations and perils, as well as advantages. Some, in looking at the past of Christendom, have been led by their exclusive point of view to see in it hardly anything but the history of a corporate Church. Others have discerned little besides the progress of theological inquiry and discussion. A third class have been absorbed with the secular relations into which Christianity has been brought, and its records have become to them little more than political annals. A fourth order of students, wiser than the rest, though still exclusive, have fixed their attention upon the character and writings of eminent Christian men, and have resolved the whole into a story of individual experience. Accordingly, the history of Christendom comes to be presented as the development of a society, or as the development of a creed, or as the development of humanity, or as the development of a divine spiritual life, and each to the exclusion of the rest. All exclusive views, because partial and incomplete, must be misleading. Something comprehensive, in breadth corresponding with the broad

region covered by the actual facts, is demanded by the student of open eyes, unsophisticated intellect, and catholic sympathies. Forsaking isolated stand-points, or rather going the round of them all, and then ascending a commanding elevation overlooking the whole prospect, we find that the history before us is the history of a creed as well as of a Church, the history of humanity as well as of a creed, and the history of the life of God in the soul of man as well as of humanity in its lower relations. It is time for us here, as in other branches of knowledge, to renounce one-sidedness, to be eclectic and universal. Yet must there be a graduated order of prominence; something must be central. With us it is that life of God in the soul of man, through the redemption which is by Christ, and his Holy Spirit's indwelling and agency. There is the kernel of Christendom. The rest is shell and husk, not, however, worthless. Would fruit have ripened and been preserved without any husk or shell?

I am afraid that some Christians are wanting in sympathy with the piety and goodness of past ages. Do they not forfeit conscious relationship—the experience of sonship or brotherhood to the men of other days? To me that realization of “the Communion of Saints,” is one of my most blessed and precious privileges. I would not for the world resign the reverence and love I feel for a Bernard and an Anselm, an Augustine and a Chrysostom, a Cyprian and a Clement, a Polycarp and an

Ignatius, and the rest of the elder Saints in the great cloud of witnesses. None of them were so much disciples and advocates of a Church system (which thank God, we have been taught by His grace to see was a corruption of His own institute), as they were believers in a personal Divine redeeming Christ, and heirs through Him of the promise of life eternal. If I am a Christian, I cannot but cherish the memories of men with whom I hope to spend an Eternity in the service of their Holy Lord and mine.

In carrying out the scheme of these Lectures, chronological arrangement is of great importance. The time of Christendom is here divided into Ages, not according to outward circumstances or artificial dates, but according to the principles found to be chiefly at work in the heart of Christendom during successive periods. The formative Age of Christendom,—when the Divine ideal was presented by inspired men, and there began the realization of Christianity in human faith and affection, worship and association, order and discipline,—may be regarded as extending from the full inspiration of the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, to the death of the last of them at the end of the century. The exact date of that event being uncertain, we adopt A.D. 100 as the termination of the first Age. The next Age of Christendom, which will be found characterized by certain fundamental innovations, reaches a critical point, and passes over into another form, upon the secular esta-

blishment of Christianity, and the holding of the first ecumenical council for the authoritative declaration of orthodoxy. We therefore mark it off at A.D. 325.

The third Age, which develops what former ages had contained, runs on till the second general Council of Nicæa, when the principle of tradition was loudly proclaimed; about which time, also, theology grew into systematic form, and the Empire of Charlemagne presented the phenomena of mediæval Church and State. Out of development, there then arose a fixed, definite ecclesiastical system. The boundary line of the third Age therefore may be drawn in the year 787, the date of the second Nicene Council. The fourth Age, in which the principle of tradition is seen stereotyping the opinions and usages of the past, without reference to the Divine ideal, as the *only authoritative* standard of faith and conduct, is carried on to the fourth Lateran Council,—when as priests in conclave were putting the top-stone on the huge fabric of traditional error, a spirit was beginning to show itself, threatening the overthrow of the work of ages. The date of the Council is A.D. 1215. Thence till the time of the Reformation, Agitation and Reaction are conspicuously visible in European Christendom. Luther burnt the Pope's bull A.D. 1520.

No chronological arrangements of history can be more than an approximation to accurate truth. Proceeding upon the principle we have chosen, rigidly defined boundaries are impossible. Innovation, no doubt, began

before the second century; and continued later than the fourth. There was development before the first, and after the second Council of Nicæa. Traditionalism was not confined to the eighth and four following centuries. Nor was the Age of Agitation and Reaction free from the influence of principles predominant in earlier times, any more than those times were free from all agitation and reaction. We only speak of what was on the whole most characteristic of the Ages in question. Moreover, the character of an Age can be fairly judged only by looking at it from beginning to end. The Ages, too, must be all compared together.

It may be as well to observe, that the subject being the Ages of Christendom, and the treatment of them being historical, the plan of the work does not include either an exhibition of the life and death of our Divine Lord, or any discussion of a doctrinal kind beyond what is involved in the unfolding of ecclesiastical history. I regard the Divine Redeemer as the Subject of Christianity rather than its Teacher—as the foundation more than as the founder of the Church. He is the substance, the life and soul of the Divine ideal, the development of which by inspired apostles, and its application, perversion, or neglect in after ages, it is our business to examine. The facts recorded in the four Gospels are assumed at the outset. They are regarded as the basis of all apostolic teaching. The wonderful meaning of those facts—their character and result as the Divine

method of man's redemption—in other words the cardinal doctrines of the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Moral renewal of the soul through the agency of the Holy Spirit of Christ, are intended to be clearly recognised in the account given of the history of the Divine ideal, and have been borne in mind unceasingly throughout the inquiry into the realization of that ideal. I devoutly acknowledge them as the very essence of Christian truth, and as the everlasting ground of hope for myself and for mankind. And my prayer is, that in these days of division and rebuke, this humble Volume may serve to deepen abhorrence of the principles of error and evil which have so long been at work;—to inspire love to all Christlike souls, however they may differ from us in their theological system and ecclesiastical forms;—and to strengthen zeal even unto death, for those vital beliefs which are the only grounds of Christian Unity.



## LECTURE I.

THE FIRST AGE. — A.D. 31—100.

### THE IDEAL.

LOOKING at what may be called the formative age of Christendom, great confusion and many mistakes must arise from not distinguishing the divine ideal of Christianity from the human realization of it. By the divine ideal is meant Christianity as revealed to inspired men, and through them, under the guidance of inspiration, presented to others; and by the human realization, we understand Christianity as it was apprehended in the convictions, and represented in the life of believers in general. It would be fallacious to suppose that the whole teaching of apostles was understood and obeyed, and that nothing was believed or done in the primitive Church but what was in accordance with a divine warrant. The difference must be very great between thoughts and acts immediately produced by divine inspiration, and thoughts and acts arising only from the reflection of supernatural light,—that reflection itself being exposed to distorting influences. The realization cannot be exactly inferred from the ideal, nor the ideal fully from the realization.

To apply the distinction is not so difficult as might at first appear. Great indeed would be the difficulty, if we

had, as we are sometimes tempted to wish, a complete history of primitive Christendom. If we could know all the opinions, proceedings, and usages of the early believers—deeply interesting as would be the record—we should, no doubt, at times, be perplexed to determine, in reference to particular points, whether we had before us what was of divine authority, or what was only of human origin. Now we are spared that trial, for the only trustworthy account of the first age is very brief, and is contained in the books of the New Testament. In the omission of a great deal which curiosity might covet, we may recognise the wonderful wisdom which presided over the composition of Scripture. As to the *outline* of worship and government existing in the primitive age, so far as we discern it in the sacred records, we find it sketched in such a way as to show that the outline had the sanction of apostles, that sanction being, in the estimation of those who believe in their inspiration and authority, to all intents and purposes, a divine sanction. New Testament hints respecting early ecclesiastical usages are connected with indications of circumstances which leave no room to inquire, in a particular case, whether persons were acting without the apostles, or under their direction. No one, for example, can be at a loss in reading the Epistles to the Corinthians to distinguish between the divine ideal of certain things in Christian polity and worship, and what appears as the human observance or embodiment of that ideal. The line may be clearly drawn between the form apostolically set forth, and the spirit in which it was em-

braced and employed; while, at the same time, we can easily discriminate, in the proceedings noticed, between what was in accordance with the divine will, and what was a violation of that rule. Above all, it is matter of unspeakable thankfulness, that we are not in doubt as to what *doctrines* in primitive Christendom were divine, and what were human. We have not opinions reported in the New Testament in such a way that we are unable to tell whether those who expressed them had authority for so doing. We are never left to read discourses and letters, uncertain whether the speaker or writer is expressing merely his own views, or thoughts which he had been inspired to utter. Between the truth distinctly revealed and the errors incidentally noticed, between the infallibly divine and the humanly mistaken, there is a distinction broad and clear as the heavens. No man, for example, has any difficulty in separating Paul's own teaching in the Epistle to the Colossians from certain human speculations, the existence of which at the time is there discovered.

There is, indeed, a question with reference to inspired men, whether, in certain cases, their *acts* were in agreement with the will of Heaven. Paul's circumcising Timothy and his own ceremonial purification are of this kind. They will be noticed hereafter; at present, it is sufficient to remark that nothing in the everlasting ideal of Christianity is implicated in the question. The question simply relates to what was right or wrong when Judaism was in a transition state, just passing over into Christianity. Whatever opinion may be formed on the

particular points referred to, permanent Christianity, of which certain Jewish practices were temporary adjuncts, will be the same.

In illustrating the divine ideal, we shall exhibit its historical development in relation to

1. The sphere Christianity was to occupy.
2. The merging of Judaism in the Gospel.
3. The doctrines of the Christian religion.
4. The institution of churches and the Church.

The first two particulars will prepare for the last two : and throughout we shall be occupied with the history of inspired men, their thoughts and acts, and with the progress of their knowledge and its applications.

1. As to the sphere Christianity was intended to occupy, our blessed Lord, in so many words, declared to the apostles,—that they were to disciple all nations—to preach the Gospel to every creature. This was an instance of divine revelation ;—but in what manner it was understood by the first hearers, and what was the conception they formed of the work before them, it is impossible to say. Thus much is certain—they did not immediately apprehend the breadth of the divine purpose. Their thoughts did not at once reflect the image of His,—an instance at the very outset of the difference between the divinely presented, and the humanly received. For it must be borne in mind, that the full inspiration of the apostles had not then taken place. The opening of their eyes by God's own hand to see the compass of the Christian economy had not begun. They were thus far—for a while, only for a while—like

their own hearers afterwards, in the presence of a divine oracle, without immediate inspiration for the understanding of it.

The day of Pentecost was the date of their grand inauguration to office. The flames of fire which sat upon each, betokened the light kindled within. The manifold tongues with which they were enabled to communicate "the wonderful works of God," indicated the wide range of their mission. Gradually, afterwards, the divine idea of the sphere of Christianity unfolded itself more and more clearly to their minds. Providence contributed to the unfolding. A year after Pentecost, some disciples—not apostles—were scattered by the persecution of Stephen through the regions of Judea and Samaria; and "they went everywhere preaching the word." One of the fugitives, Philip, was sent by an angel to meet a black eunuch from the South, a person belonging to a class forbidden by Jewish law to enter into the congregation of the Lord. Seven years afterwards, Peter, at Joppa, had a vision on the house-top. He was sent to Cesarea, to a devout Gentile—not a full proselyte, but one who, in reference to Judaism, might be said, without settling a vexed question of archæology, to stand at the gate.

Thus far, any hesitation or difficulty existing in the minds of apostles about the limits to which their commission was to be carried, would seem to have pertained, not so much, if at all, to the question of *preaching* to Gentiles, as to the *holding intercourse* with them—sacred, family-like intercourse. The subject of Christian com-

munion, as it has been ever since, so was it at first,—a controverted question. It was the earliest difficulty. It stands at the head of all ecclesiastical discussions. Peter, on the threshold of the house of Cornelius, did not say, “it is supposed I have no right to preach the Gospel to you, a Roman,” but “ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew *to keep company*, or to come unto one of another nation;” adding, “but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Peter’s divine vision so far removed the difficulty as to teach *him* that great lesson of brotherhood, fellowship, and charity; but others were slow to learn it, for afterwards we find it objected: “Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.”

Simply to preach the Gospel to all the world might seem an easy thing; but what was involved in *the discipling* all nations? Did that mean that all nations were to be brought into brotherly spiritual fellowship? “Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you;”—did that signify that they were to sit at the same table to celebrate the Lord’s Supper? How was this to be reconciled with the position and privilege of Israel as the peculiar people of God, and with the laws they had received from Moses? It might not be mere national prejudice which kept the Christian Jew, at first, aloof from other men. Their old divine religion required them to dwell alone, and not be numbered among the nations. Their laws, with respect to food, were minute and complicated. They were com-

pelled to sit at tables of their own. Was the Mosaic wall of partition to be broken down? Were Levitical ordinances to be abrogated? Could there be full fellowship between Jew and Gentile in Christian acts, without a repeal of the divine law? Was that law repealed? The vision at Joppa enigmatically conveyed an answer; but was it easy for Jewish minds, imperfectly instructed in the Gospel, to learn the lesson which that answer contained?

Shackles of prejudice, as well as bonds of conscience, confined the first preachers of the faith. The latter loosened, they were not quite set free from the former. Some among them were reluctant to advance. Yet men there were in infant Christendom who, as it regarded preaching, caught, perhaps, even before the time of Peter's vision, in a remarkable degree, the Catholic spirit of our Lord's missionary command. They were Hellenistic Jews of Cyprus and Cyrene, probably educated by Providence, in wider sympathies than many of their brethren. They went unto Antioch and spake to the *Greeks*.\* Their effort, if not prompted by a special impulse, was sanctioned by a special blessing. "The hand of the Lord was with them." The gates of Paganism were thrown back on their rusty hinges. Captives were let loose. The Lord of the new kingdom of salvation and life admitted them as his freedmen. Antioch became a new centre in Christendom. There we find, soon afterwards, together with other honoured names, Saul and Barnabas.

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\* "Ἑλλήνας is in all probability the true reading in Acts xi. 20.

The first of these had been specially trained for his work, through early Hellenic culture, which in Cilicia, in his father's house—that father a Roman citizen—had served to expand the horizon of his thoughts, and to freshen and swell the flow of his sympathies. But far more directly had he been prepared for it by his miraculous conversion, which roused in his large heart a love for Christ mocking all bounds—ever pushing on and on the line of his toilsome, yet in such a service, joyful enterprise. Most specific was his designation from the first, for said the Lord respecting him to Ananias, "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles." Ten years had passed since the great Pentecost, when these two men, Saul and Barnabas, were sent forth on a Gentile mission, the divine idea of the scope of Christianity thus coming more conspicuously than ever into view. Yet at Antioch, in Pisidia, we find them, on entering the city, first sitting down in the synagogue, preaching, with patriotic zeal, to their kinsmen according to the flesh. Then repulsed themselves, nay, worse, the name of their Lord being blasphemed, they, in anguish, departed from their rejectors, and with love and hope turned to Gentiles. He who sent them forth crowned what they did. There had been a special effusion of the Holy Ghost when Peter preached to Cornelius. There was another when Paul preached to the idolators of Pisidian Antioch.\*

Syrian Antioch, on the frontiers of heathendom, re-

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\* Acts xiii. 52.



tained its character of a missionary depot. A pharos it was, lifting up its lamps into the dark night—a lighthouse for moral mariners out upon stormy waters. A dwelling might be found inside that ancient city, on whose flat roof, as the sun threw his slanting beams at eventide on tower and temple, many a turbaned head was seen, full of large missionary thoughts, and many a broad mantled breast beating with warm missionary love.

At present only in the Asiatic world had the Gospel been preached by missionaries from Antioch. There lay another world beyond the Ægean, the home of conquerors, who had carried their arts, their literature, and their civilization, as well as their arms, to people of the East. There was Greece, farther West, Rome—the world's mistress. Paul—after he had gone throughout Phrygia and Galatia, and was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Western Asia—was sent into Europe by express revelation. It was at Troas that the apostle received this most memorable call, only second to his ordination at Antioch, and in some respects pregnant with still more important results. As the page lies open before us on which it is written, that “a vision appeared to Paul in the night; and there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, ‘Come over into Macedonia and help us,’” and as we observe him obedient to that vision, we picture to ourselves the famous city of granite, as it crowned the gentle-hilled shores of the region, watered from the “many-fountained” cliffs of Ida,—we visit the neighbourhood, and think of Xerxes, who hither came on his way to Greece, and of Alexander, who

braced on his armour in the temple of Athene, and anointed the column over the grave of Achilles, and of Julius Cæsar, who visited the place after the fight at Pharsalia had delivered him from his great rival; and then we contrast the Jewish tent-maker with these heroes of classical antiquity—they struggling to realise the vain and false idea of human ambition, that of building up a secular empire, universal and everlasting; and he, inspired to grasp, as even *he* had never done before, the grand idea of covering the whole earth and all time with the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and then going forth humbly, with faith in God, to realise *that*. Afterwards he was ready to labour at Rome, and even to visit Spain. Thus the gradual illustration of the divine purpose as to the sphere of the Gospel showed it to be the world, the whole world.

2. We turn to notice the position of Christianity in reference to Judaism. Our Lord, in his ministry, had not explicitly decreed the repeal of Judaism; on the contrary, as a man he had maintained the religion of a Jew. He sanctioned his infant circumcision by the acts of his adult life. He attended the Temple. He kept the feasts. He honoured Moses. It is true that many of his acts contravened the common law of the Rabbis, yet those acts were only the wise and liberal interpretation of the written law of God. His predictions of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple implied the approaching abrogation of the Levitical code. But was this then quite clear? or if so, might it not still be supposed that the ritual was to last as long as the build-

ing to which it was attached? Certainly the apostles did not renounce Judaism on the day of Pentecost; nor did the first converts cease to be Jews in religion any more than in race. During the earliest blush of gospel-spring, all that believed continued daily with one accord in the Temple. A religion, till then the only divine religion in the world, one of which the history had been full of miracles, and which had produced a succession of prophets and saints to be ever honoured, was not a thing which conscientious and spiritual men could give up without a warrant plain as its own first revelation. Christianity was an outgrowth of Judaism—a rod coming forth out of its stem, a branch out of its roots. Might not the fresh fruitage be gathered, and yet the old stock remain? So the men of Pentecost first thought. They were Christians, but Jews also. When the question arose in their minds, “what is meant by discipling all nations?” it was but plausible to suppose that all nations should become Jews first and Christians afterwards; that circumcision should go before baptism.

But we see from the story of Cornelius that the true answer was different. The maxim that no man should be called common or unclean had a meaning which went to obliterate all ceremonial distinctions; but the full extent to which that maxim was to be applied, it does not appear that even Peter himself was at once inspired to see. He was behind his brother Paul in this respect, who from the first more clearly received and comprehended the divine idea of the fellowship of Jews and Gentiles in the kingdom of Christ. Though a

persecutor of the Christians, Paul had probably never indulged any blind antipathies to other nations; and after his conversion, like Stephen the Hellenist, with whose character, as well as death, his name is linked, he took strong anti-Judaic views, and while he foresaw that the continuance of Judaism, even in a modified form and in perfect subordination to the new and nobler faith, could be but short, he earnestly believed that it imposed no like obligation, even for a time, upon men of Gentile blood. He remained himself in practice a Jew, more or less; but he ever contended boldly for the freedom of the Gentile believer.

The divine idea, which dawns in the vision of Peter, becomes bright and clear in the inspired decree at Jerusalem.\* That decree places beyond doubt the principle that it was perfectly unnecessary to be circumcised in order to being saved; in other words, that it was not needful to become a Jew first, in order afterwards to become a Christian. Yet while that decree preserved the Gentiles from the yoke of circumcision, it enacted a continued abstinence from four things. Three of these were articles of food in common use among heathens, but forbidden to Jews; and also given up by those who were proselytes to the religion of the latter, even in the least degree. Probably many of those from among the Greeks at that time, who were Christian believers, had likewise become Jewish proselytes, so far as these ceremonial usages were concerned; therefore,

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\* Acts xv. 23—29.

upon them there was nothing fresh imposed; and as to others, they would deem it no hardship to put up with such privations. Thus, to abstain could violate no conscientious scruples: peace and fellowship with the Jewish brethren would be cheaply purchased on these terms. Nor does it appear from the decree, that it was binding upon any beside those who are mentioned in the preamble,—the Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. The majority of the prohibitions, indeed, all but the one respecting fornication (which seems introduced on account of its connexion with idolatry, in common with the kinds of food there specified),\* have a bearing on social intercourse, on the fellowship of Christians as a family. Jews and Gentiles had not been

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\* Mr. Stanley observes:—"The identification of a sacrifice (to idols) and a feast was carried to the highest pitch among the Greeks; 'sacrifices' being enumerated by Aristotle (Eth. 8—9) and Thucydides (2—38) amongst the chief means of social enjoyment." He instances the feasts which take place among the lower orders in Spain on the carcasses of the bulls killed in that great national bullfight (Fiesta dos Toros), as affording a good illustration of the practice. "At Corinth, the conquerors at the Isthmian games gave banquets in the Temple to the people immediately after the sacrifices."—STANLEY *on the Corinthians*, i. 150.

Fornication was blended with the worship of Venus at Corinth, whence the proverb respecting Corinthian sensuality, 1 Cor. x. 8, derives illustration from this fact; perhaps the connexion between impurity and heathen feasts might be in the apostle's mind when he was writing. 1 Cor. vi. 13.

It may be added that impurity was connected with heathen rites; that among the Gentiles fornication was not regarded as a vice unless practised to excess, though other moral offences were reprobated. "It is a coincidence worthy of notice, that the denial of a moral obligation in this particular has formed a prominent feature in the ethical systems of the most celebrated modern infidels—Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Helvetius."—HIND'S *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, i. 272.

wont to meet at a table in common. They were to do so now. As brothers they were to eat and drink together in Christ's kingdom. Still, however, this decree was something of a concession to Judaism. It was a compromise divinely sanctioned. It was an Israelitish pendant to pure Christianity. It indicated a transition stage. The old ceremonial system was ere long to be shaken to pieces; what was now done, served to break the fall of those who were clinging to it. Nor can we help seeing that this arrangement left for the present two classes in eastern Christendom, one composed of circumcised believers, the other of those who were half proselytised. The middle wall of partition had not yet fallen; but the divine teaching showed Paul at least, that its entire removal was at hand. Yet he continued to sanction the observance of Jewish rites by Jewish people. He circumcised Timothy, an Israelite on the mother's side, because of the Jews. About the same time, however, he refused that rite to Titus, who was a pure Greek, because he would resist the dogmatism of the Jews. We also meet the apostle sojourning under Gentile roofs, first in the house of Justus, then in the house of Gaius or Caius, both Corinthians. From the dwelling of the latter he wrote his Epistle to the Romans;\* and if so, then while daily eating at a Gentile table, he laid down the liberal and true law about meats and drinks; having just previously insisted upon the non-necessity of circumcision, and the anti-Christian ten-

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\* Romans xvi, 23; compare with 1 Cor. i.14.

dency of its enforcement. The divine ideal of Christianity, as meant to supersede Judaism, now became more luminous in the writings of this apostle; notwithstanding which, we yet observe him practising the customs of a Jew. Some years before, he had shaved his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow; and shortly after his writing to Rome he purified himself, with four men, in the Temple at Jerusalem, a ceremony which involved the presentation of a sacrifice; and this purification was performed expressly to contradict the report that he had forsaken the law of Moses. It should, however, be noticed in connexion with that remarkable incident, that James and the elders at Jerusalem carefully guarded against holding up Paul's example for the imitation of Gentiles, and re-asserted the maxim that Gentiles were not bound to do what Jews, as such, might see fit to practise.\*

The question arises,—Were these Jewish acts in conformity with the divine will? In reply I observe, that while they appear to have proceeded from a conscientious and discretionary exercise of judgment on the part of the individuals performing them, they seem not opposed to the measure of revelation at the time communicated, but in harmony with the divine plan of gradually setting aside the economy of Moses. It is not the method of divine procedure to make violent and abrupt changes. Perhaps in framing the Jewish religion there had been something conceded to existing usages, even

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\* Acts xxi. 25.

such as were borrowed from Egypt, and that too although it involved the permanence of the concession, the object being to smooth the way into the new order of things ordained. The ministry of our Lord, while it formed the very ground of Christianity, yet allowed Judaism to remain in reverence and honour: albeit significant hints fell from Him, which pointed to its coming extinction. Without an express direction to that effect, it was not to be supposed that earnestly religious Jews would at once abandon the divine institutes they had obeyed from infancy. No such express direction was given. Permission to act as Jews would, under such circumstances, have the force of a sanction. Nor does it seem that Judaic observances were retained merely as *national customs*, as the badges of Israelitish citizenship. Some of the observances do indeed bear that character, yet the rite of purification in the Temple observed by Paul was strictly religious, and included, as already noticed, a sacrificial offering. Yet in his case surely it must have been presented simply with an *eucharistic*, not at all with an *expiatory* meaning. It could have been nothing more than an act of solemn thanksgiving, with a devout recollection of the great sacrifice which Paul loved to contemplate, and in which he placed his hope. In connexion with this interesting but difficult subject, it may be further remarked that the feast at which Paul performed the purification was the Feast of Pentecost, "the birthday of the law," not the Feast of the Passover, which now that the great Passover had been sacrificed, it does not appear from anything in his



history that he ever attended.\* While then the idea of Christianity as the one religion for mankind was gradually evolving in the minds of the apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, divine Providence permitted much of that husk or sheath for a while to remain in which the seed of Christianity had existed. As God caused the latter to grow—bringing out more and more of its strong and beautiful life—the envelopment gradually, but only gradually, peeled off, dropped away and perished.

The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, later in date† than the incidents and letters already noticed, show an advance in the divine instructions given by Paul as to the nature of Christianity. He dwells upon the idea of the one family of believers—the breaking down of the middle wall of partition—of the abolition of the law of ordinances, for the making of twain one new man—of the common citizenship of Jews and Gentiles—of the unity of the faith—of the whole body joined together—of the one God and Father of all, above all, and through all, and in all. The letter to the Ephesians is a new and original tract on unity, and the writing of it marks an era in infant Christendom, and that to the Colossians is in the same stage of advanced revelation, pointing to the handwriting of ordinances blotted out, and not only so, but taken out of the way; and to show that its observance was never to be renewed, the apostle points to it as *nailed* to the Cross, torn, tattered, rustling in the

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\* Milman's *History of Christianity*, i. 433.

† They were written during Paul's imprisonment, A.D. 61—63.

breeze. And the signification of the ceremonial law comes out. It was "a shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ." Its typical character had never been so asserted before. Here was the germ of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That Epistle, one of the last of the apostolic writings, while it distinctly declared that Judaism had come to an end, threw light upon its whole history from the beginning. It was an explanation of the law, it was the last word put to a long and enigmatical sentence, and in the instant of its utterance it unriddled the enigma.\* The destruction of Jerusalem confirmed what was taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The dispensation of Moses vanished away, but still the ceremonial law, though no longer to be *observed*, retained a *use*. It had afforded an assemblage of illustrations, a treasure house of significant language to the apostle Paul; for the Christians of all ages it remained an aid to the Gospel in the way of pictorial illumination. The sacrifices in the Temple, and the priesthood of Aaron, help us to understand the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ. The old covenant was a necessary preface to the new. We do not see how there could be Christians had there not first been Jews. Among Jewish rites we are like men walking about the ruins of Egyptian obelisks and temples inscribed with hiero-

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\* In this respect, the law was like a long Latin sentence. "The artificial structure of the discourse," says Dugald Stewart, illustrating a different subject, "suspends, in a great measure, our conjectures about the sense, till at the close of the period, the verb, in the very instant of its utterance, unriddles the enigma."—*Philosophical Essays*, 210.

glyphics—Christianity is as an interpreter; and while it explains the writing, the writing bears witness to, and is descriptive of *it*,

3. We must now proceed to contemplate the divine revelation of Christian doctrines.

The preaching of Peter, in his first inspired discourse, was chiefly historical—Jewish history becomes an introduction to Christian history. The two are presented as parts in the evolution of one divine purpose. Christ sits on the throne of David. It is in fulfilment of that regal progenitor's prophetic words, "The Lord said unto my lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool." Jesus is king. Stephen's address before the council is full of Old Testament facts, seemingly pointing to the same issue. Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, as they had been the burden of Peter's sermon at Jerusalem, so were they of Paul's sermon at Antioch. Fervent appeals to the consciences of the hearers, calls to repentance and baptism, announcements of salvation through the crucified and exalted One, sprung out of the recital of the facts. In these earliest Christian orations, so far as they are preserved, there is little of what can bear the technical name of doctrine. The fundamental doctrines of the Gospel underlie the exhortations, but they are not, at present, fully explained. The Apostles appear at first more as inspired heralds proclaiming facts, and demanding submission, than as divines unfolding doctrinal propositions.

The four Gospels and the Acts present Christianity as a history. The Epistle of James, belonging, as I believe,

to a very early period, is practical, and exhibits Christianity in the light of a law. Peter is experimental and subjective, describing Christianity as a life. The largest doctrinal portions of the New Testament are supplied by Paul and John, the first in a logical, the second in a contemplative form.\* Christianity could not exist totally apart from all doctrine. In all the writings of the New Testament, dogmatic truth is found. It appears in the history of our blessed Lord's teaching—it lies at the basis of all practical and experimental Christianity; but still, in largest measure, and in most systematic form, we see it in the writings of Paul and John.

Paul is the earliest doctrinal theologian of Christendom. His theology is found in his Epistles. The teaching there supposes a previous oral teaching by him, more full, the substance of which may be inferred from these written documents. What he had taught by the living voice may be concluded from what he teaches by his pen. What is on permanent record suffices to inform us most amply as to the Pauline views of Christian truth.

Having reduced the apostle's letters to chronological order, it is deeply interesting to study in succession the strictly doctrinal passages they contain.

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians come first,† and indicate that the expectation of Christ's return to raise the dead occupied a large place in the thoughts of

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\* Boyle says—"Methinks St. Paul reasons as solidly and acutely as Aristotle." The comparison of St. John with Plato is equally obvious.

† A.D. 53.

early Christians. There was among them much misapprehension on the subject. The Apostle, in the earlier of these letters, calmly declares the certainty and manner of the Lord's future advent, and the glorification of dead and living saints;\* and in the next letter he rectifies mistakes on the subject, showing that the day of Christ was not so near as the Thessalonians imagined.† In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, next in order,‡ there is, in consequence of contentions among teachers, and prejudices against Christ crucified, a short doctrinal setting forth of the Lord under that aspect, as the very centre and substance of the Gospel.§ But the fullest doctrinal statement in the Epistle is in the fifteenth chapter, where, in consequence of a denial of the resurrection of the dead, there comes an argumentative and elucidatory presentation of that great doctrine of the Christian faith.|| In the second Epistle, Paul asserts (according to the common view) the fellowship of departed souls with Jesus before the rising of the body¶—a subject evidently introduced from the comfort it afforded his own mind, its assertion forming the chief leading statement of doctrinal Christianity which that Epistle contains: the beautiful allusions to the love of Christ, the new creation in the soul, and the reconciling of man to God through Him, spring out of those inspired thoughts which were mainly occupied with the events of

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\* 1 Thess. iv. 13—v. 11.

† 2 Thess. ii. 1—8.

‡ A.D. 57.

§ 1 Cor. i. 18—24; iii. 11.

|| 1 Cor. xv. 3—58. See also iii. 13, 15; iv. 3—5.

¶ 2 Cor. iv. 10—v. 15.

the great future.\* Putting these Epistles together, we have a sort of cycle—the first cycle of doctrinal passages; and though not an exclusive, yet a leading characteristic in them is *Eschatology*—the end of things—the second coming of the Lord, the resurrection and glory of His people.

Proceeding to read Galatians† and Romans together, the student meets with a close and logically connected exposition of justification by faith alone, also of the production of holiness in the believer through the work of the Holy Ghost, and of the connexion between personal salvation and the preordained purposes of grace in the divine mind.‡ The unfolding to the Galatians§ of the true way of righteousness through faith was evidently occasioned by the prevalence of Judaized opinions among them. Were there such teachers at Rome also? or was

\* No one can read the first five chapters of the Epistle without perceiving how much depression there was at the time in the Apostle's mind. The fourteenth verse and *seq.* in chap. ii., on his triumph in Christ; his joy in the spirituality of the Gospel, chap. iii.; and this outburst of hope, chap. v. 1—7, are bright lights flashing from amidst the gloom.

† Lardner is with me a great authority; but I am constrained to differ from him as to the date of the Epistle to the Galatians. He fixes it early, about 52 or 53, dwelling chiefly upon i. 6. Conybeare and Howson (*Life of Paul*, ii. 136) satisfactorily show that there is nothing in that verse to settle the date; and the resemblance between this Epistle and that to the Romans is a strong argument in favour of their being written about the same time. It was probably composed in 57 A.D., and Romans early in 58 A.D.

‡ Righteousness by faith, c. i. 14—v. 21. Holiness, vi. 1; viii. 39; xii. 1—21, practical application of the doctrine. Divine purposes, viii. 28—30; ix. 1—xi. 36.

§ Gal. ii. 15—v. 12.

that profound commentary on law, and on man's relation to it, sent to the Church there, as fitting above all for a people whose ancient history exhibited them as idolators of law? In this second cycle of doctrinal passages, *Soteriology*—or the method of salvation—occupies the most prominent place, and is unfolded with a fulness not belonging to former Epistles, rendering the lessons on this great theme the characteristic teaching of these compositions.

Ephesus and Colossæ\* had their philosophers speculating on the spiritual universe, the ranks and orders of being constituting it; such men mingled with Christians and used enticing words; Paul broke through their webs of sophistry, and proclaimed Christ as the Lord of the whole universe—exalted above principalities and powers; and by the revelation of Him as a Divine Person, as the Lord of the redeemed family, the apostle guarded Christians of a speculative habit against explaining away, by mystical refinements, the Godhead of the Saviour, or supposing that Christian revelations were given as so much material out of which men were to spin idle theories.† At the same time, as Gentiles were in large numbers gathered into Christ's fold, the inspired writer shows how that fact was the revelation of a purpose hid for ages and generations, and also how those who individually received the adoption of children by Jesus Christ were chosen in Him before the foundation

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\* The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians belong to A.D. 61—63.

† Eph. i. 17—23. The greatness of Christ is the idea pervading chap. iii., and also chap. iv. 6—16. Col. i. 14—29; ii. 2—12.

of the world.\* Upon the purposes of Heaven in connexion with the rejecting of the Jew, Paul had descanted in his Epistle to the Romans; in that written to the Ephesians, those purposes are introduced as connected with the comprehension of the Gentiles within the redeemed Church. The Epistle to the Philippians,† chiefly practical, further discloses a broad and lustrous glimpse of Christ's humiliation and glory.‡ And in this third cycle of doctrinal passages, *Christology*, or the doctrine of Christ's nature, His Godhead and glory, is most conspicuous, and is presented with greater clearness and fulness than before—together with openings into the infinite past, showing God's thoughts of love and wisdom, through Christ Jesus, before worlds were made.

In the Pastoral Epistles, few doctrinal passages occur. The Epistle to the Hebrews,§ as we regard it, comes last in the series; and here the facts of the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice of Christ, together with His everlasting priesthood, are doctrinally presented with the greatest distinctness as the consummation of the

\* Eph. i. 3—6, 11; iii. 5—10.

† Written about the same time as the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians.

‡ Phil. ii. 3—11. The Divine nature and glory of Christ is the under thought of chap. iii. He is exhibited as author of salvation.

§ Its date may be about A.D. 63. The arguments adduced to prove it was written by Paul, as set forth by Moses Stuart, in his work on the Epistle, appear to me convincing. It may be observed, that some who do not admit it was exactly written by that apostle, acknowledge its Pauline character, and consider it to be composed under his influence by Luke or Barnabas.—See SCHAFF: *History of the Apostolic Church*, ii. 342.



old law and the crown of the new Gospel. Christology is here further developed specially in reference to the method of mediation.

No doubt some general view of the plan of salvation was communicated to the apostle Paul at the beginning of his mission. We cannot suppose that he began his ministrations ignorant of any of the main principles of Christianity; we know that, first of all, he delivered how Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; we remember that, at an early period, he said he was determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified; we must also bear in mind that from the first he would be acquainted with the teaching of our blessed Lord, as then preserved, before being recorded in the four Gospels. But this general knowledge of the history and doctrine of Christ from the beginning is quite consistent with fuller divine instruction on particular points, especially in their application to spiritual necessities as time advanced. That Christianity brightened and expanded in the consciousness of the great apostle from year to year, without undergoing any essential change, is a fact which, while it is indicated by the order and progress of thought apparent from a classification of his Epistles, also accords with the nature of the human mind and the analogy of divine dispensations. And as we have also seen, particular doctrines of the Gospel came into clearer view, and filled a larger field of vision, and extended their influence over a wider range of practical relations, as the circumstances of early Christendom called for them.

The lateness and brevity of John's doctrinal writings

prevent us from tracing steps of progress there, such as appear in the Epistles of Paul, which are so numerous, and cover a space of so many years. But so far as concerns the circumstance of doctrinal development being occasioned by passing events, and so far also as relates to the practical bias and end of inspired teaching, these points are as apparent in the remains of John as in those of Paul. The exhibition of the doctrine of our Lord's divine and human nature in the Epistles and the Gospel of the beloved disciple, was occasioned, no doubt, by the heresies then beginning to be broached, respecting the Redeemer's person. And it may be also remarked, that when this last of the inspired teachers is most contemplative, he is never merely theoretical. Moreover, of all the inspired writings, it is true that, though some portions be so doctrinal in form as clearly to make them distinguishable from others, threads of doctrine are interwoven throughout the sacred volume in every part, whether historical or experimental, preceptive or hortatory. And as in all doctrinal passages Christ is the centre, so does the moral teaching of the New Testament rise mainly out of the memory of Christ. "Did the Christian need fortitude? Christ was his rock; equity? Christ was his righteousness; holiness? Christ was his sanctification; liberty? Christ was his redemption; temperance? Christ was his ruler; wisdom? Christ was his light; truthfulness? Christ was the truth; charity? Christ was love."\* Christian doctrine and Christian duty are not

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\* Ruskin.

kept apart in the New Testament. The enforcement of duty springs out of the statement of doctrine, and the formal specification of duty is supported by reference to doctrine. Much, too, of duty as to the spirit, temper, disposition, habits, principles, motives, and ends of the Christian life, does not come out at all on the pages of the divine record, in the way of precise and definite precept, but is rather implied in the facts and doctrines, and is left to be drawn out from them by devout reflection and study, by a clear thoughtful mind, and by a renewed and purified heart. Further, a large portion of the Epistles is taken up with reference to passing events and social relationships; practical directions, personal allusions, expressions of love, and utterances of fear, hope, joy, and sorrow are abundant, showing Christianity neither in a strictly doctrinal nor preceptive form, but as a strong divine spirit pervading all life, individual and domestic, civil and social, with its sanctifying influence.

Finally, on this part of the subject, a thoughtful student cannot help seeing that while there is full harmony between the sacred authors, the peculiar idiosyncrasy of each is preserved,—that as all are employed for a common purpose, each contributes only a part to its fulfilment,—that the sunlight of the Spirit falls on every soul of them, yet each catches and reflects most conspicuously some particular rays. It is remarked by Schaff, that the final summing up of Christianity—the exhibition of it as “a fixed independent whole,” was assigned to John, the last and brightest oracle of the

Logos. This is true to some extent, yet though we find in his first Epistle all the truths of Christianity harmonized and blended as they are not in any other of the New Testament documents, it is only by taking these documents altogether that we can comprehend the whole divine ideal of Christian doctrine. In the beautiful *Liebfrauenkirche* at Treves there are twelve shafts, named after the twelve apostles, each bearing on it a portion of the so-called Apostles' Creed. It is the artistic embodiment of an old legend, which ascribes the authorship of that ancient symbol to the twelve in union. Historically, the legend is valueless, but, like some others, it mythically presents a truth. We must consult all the inspired, if we would reap in fulness the riches of their inspiration.

4. There is another important and difficult point to be considered before we conclude these imperfect notices of what we apprehend was included in the divine revelation of Christianity. Christianity embraces social institutes as well as religious doctrines. Proceeding upon the principle that what, in reference to this matter, our Lord and his apostles expressly enjoined, or in any way clearly sanctioned, is to be held as authority, we will endeavour briefly to state how much that which is so enjoined, or sanctioned, appears to comprise, and how it meets us in the pages of the New Testament. In doing this, it must not be forgotten that every student of Scripture finds it much less easy to ascertain the teaching of the Spirit of God with regard to institutes than with regard to doctrines.

The word used to describe the early Christian believers in their religiously social capacity is *Ecclesia*.\* and as it will be found of advantage to use that term rather than any translation of it, and as it has become so far Anglicised as to form the word *ecclesiastical*, we shall not be regarded as pedantic in here retaining an original Greek term until we have arrived at its full technical meaning. The first Christian *Ecclesia* was gathered on the day of Pentecost. The word literally signifies "called from," or "out of." The persons who on that day gladly received the word, and were baptized, came out of their former state, and from amidst the ungodly and unbelieving, to serve Christ as their Lord and Master. It was not meant by Him who called them that they should cast off their human sympathies—that they should cease to be men; but only that they should cultivate in addition, a new order of sympathies, and so become more than common men. In the *Ecclesia* they found a spiritual family bound by ties not of nature's weaving. They were of one heart and one mind, filled with a love to God and to one another, such as they had never been conscious of before. Their simplicity was great, their intelligence limited; but strong was their faith in Jesus Christ as the true Messiah. They met together daily in the Temple,† they broke bread (at home) "from house

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\* Our Lord, in Matt. xviii. 17, seems to have used the word prospectively, to indicate a Christian congregation, in connexion with a rule of discipline.

† ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ (Acts ii. 46), that is, the portico of the Temple, not the ναός, or house of the Lord itself.

to house." They were sometimes all together—they were sometimes broken up into smaller companies. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship in breaking of bread and in prayers." All this was done by apostolic sanction; but here—to say the least—it would be premature for any man, be he episcopalian, presbyterian, or independent, to bring out his peculiar notion of a Church, and to affix it to the word *Ecclesia* in the second chapter of Acts. Whatever the *Ecclesia* afterwards became, it was certainly in a very unformed condition at first. The word indicated simply a gathering of earnest souls under the power of a new faith. Such a gathering would have in it more of the spirit of a family than the arrangements of a society. This is the first stage of its history. Some weeks or months afterwards, when Ananias and Sapphira deceived their brethren, Divine Providence, through a solemn act of Peter, made an example of them. Then, when murmurings arose about the distribution of relief to needy disciples, the apostles directed the *Ecclesia* to look out seven honest men to superintend such business. Both discipline and a division of labour now appear in the *Ecclesia*. Distinct officers are appointed to administer the temporalities. This is the second stage of the history. Other *Ecclesia* besides that at Jerusalem are mentioned in the 9th of Acts in reference to a later period (about A.D. 36). In the eleventh chapter, not till nine years afterwards, we read of *elders* for the first time. They belonged to Jerusalem. Next we are told that Paul and Barnabas visited Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, ordaining

*elders* in every *Ecclesia*. This is the third stage of the history. Allusion is made to an *Ecclesia* in the house of Aquila, when at Ephesus, and again at Rome (his premises as a tent-maker being probably spacious and convenient for worship). There is notice also of an *Ecclesia* in the house of Philemon, at Colossæ, and afterwards of an *Ecclesia* in the house of Nymphas, in the same city: but whether the word in these passages is to be taken in a generic or specific, in a common or technical sense, admits of a question.\* This is the fourth stage of the history.

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\* The rule was, one Church in a city. With that seems coupled another—a whole Church in one place. Christians multiply; then comes up the problem, Since the observance of both rules as aforetime is impossible, as all the Christians in a city can no longer assemble regularly in one place: which rule is to take the lead? Is the oneness of the body, or the oneness of locality to be retained? If there is to be only one Church in a town, or city, it must embrace several component congregations. If there must be many bodies, if a Church can meet only in one place, then there must be many Churches in such a town, or city. I am convinced that the rule as to the oneness of the locality is subordinate to the rule as to the oneness of the body; and I fully concur in the following remarks by Professor Davidson:—

“*The usage* of Congregational Independents is also exceptionable in regard to this point. They are right in maintaining that all the believers in Jerusalem, the *ἐκκλησία*, met together habitually under the government and instruction of various elders; but are wrong in splitting up what ought to be one Church, the company of believers in modern towns, into several Churches, each with its own pastor, which in their independent individuality are patches and shreds, often incapable of a right self-government, because they have lost sight of the unity and kind of government existing in the earliest Churches. By so doing, they have thrown away much of their strength; and what is more, their views have been narrowed. Every man thinking, moving and acting in the midst of his little society, becomes contracted in his ideas of men and things. It is very difficult for him to avoid being sectarian, selfish,

The First Epistle to the Corinthians, written about the year 57 (eleven or twelve years after our finding elders at Jerusalem), shows that the Corinthian *Ecclesia* was then in a very confused and unformed condition. The Epistle was intended to subdue the confusion, to establish order, and to give form. It describes the proper administration of the Lord's Supper, it supplies directions for the putting away of a person who had committed incest. These facts, though springing out of the original select character\* of the *Ecclesiæ*, may be marked as the fifth stage in their history. Four years after that Epistle was written we find Paul at Miletus, calling the *elders* of Ephesus *bishops* (terms equivalently used by him), and both pointing to the idea of government and superintendence,—neither having the slightest reference whatever to anything priestly or mediatorial.† Later still, Paul, writing to Ephesus,‡ mentions *evangelists*, besides apostles and prophets. The word simply

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unsocial in spirit; because his sphere is so narrow. Comprehensive and liberal views of Christianity are not readily nurtured in the small canton which the preacher looks on as peculiarly his own.”—*Ecclesiastical Polity of New Testament*, p. 123.

\* That select character is plainly indicated in the superscription, “Unto the *Ecclesia* of God that is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.”

† The ideal of the Christian pastorate on its negative side is—not a hierarchy—not a priesthood. Whatever form the development of the pastorate takes, it must always be subject to these limitations. Provided a ministry be neither priestly nor hierarchical, there is nothing in Scriptural congregationalism to confine it to one method of arrangement and operation. Large churches, and numerous pastors in them, with a division of labour suited to particular gifts, are quite in harmony with primitive usage.

‡ c. iv. 11.



means preachers of the Gospel, and since evangelists nowhere appear as officers of any particular *Ecclesia*, we must conclude the word denoted missionaries without a fixed pastoral charge. Timothy is told to do the work of an evangelist, but both he and Titus had evidently some special authority communicated to them by Paul himself, as his representatives. Pastors and teachers are names coupled, parallel to that of overseer or bishop, whose office is to feed the flock with knowledge and understanding.

Between the visit to Miletus and the letter to Ephesus we have one to Philippi, about the date 62, in which, for the first time, we have the official formula—bishops and deacons—deacons, as is commonly inferred, being identical in office with the “seven” at Jerusalem, whose appointment is recorded in the Acts. This is the sixth stage in the history. We discover nothing more throwing light on the history of the *Ecclesia* till we come to the Revelation of John. In connexion with each *Ecclesia* “the Angel” is mentioned. I am aware that difficulties beset the interpretation of the term.\* It is the forlorn hope of some advocates of diocesan episcopacy. Congregational critics of learning and candour have given it a symbolical interpretation. That it cannot mean a *diocesan* prelate appears plain from the rest of the teaching of the New Testament. That it is symbolical I see no reason to believe.† It is more natural to refer

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\* It is used to denote servants, or messengers, in Luke vii. 24, τῶν ἀγγέλων Ἰωάννου; ix. 52 (Jesus) ἀπέστειλεν ἀγγέλου.

† Campbell, in his *Ecclesiastical Lectures*, after expressing himself

it to a person. While the contents of the Epistles evidently relate to the members of the *Ecclesia* at large, it is not inconsistent with that fact to regard the letters as *directed* to one of the officers. Ephesus, when Paul was at Miletus, had its one *Ecclesia*, with a plurality of elders. That plurality could hardly have now dwindled down to an unit. Hence I cannot resist the conclusion that some one of the Ephesian pastors was chief superintendent of the *Ecclesia*, not a diocesan prelate, but a congregational pastor—a *primus inter pares*. Further, the seven *Ecclesia* appear distinct from each other; no signs of any common human government are given, though they had bonds of strong union in common spiritual sympathies and in subjection to common ecclesiastical law. The seven-branched candlestick chosen by the Son of man as the emblem of the *Ecclesia* (as we see it sculptured on the Roman arch of Titus) signified at once their organic independence of each other—their spiritual unity in Him. In this last stage it seems to me we have the *Ecclesia* in full expansion.

I have intentionally passed over the history of the meeting at Jerusalem described in the 15th of Acts, because

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dissatisfied with the allegorical interpretation, observes, "Though we have instances, especially in precepts and denunciations, wherein a community is addressed by the singular pronouns *thou* and *thee*, I do not recollect such a use of an appellative as the application of the word *angel* here would be on the hypothesis of those interpreters. My sentiment therefore is, that as in their consistories and congregations it would be necessary, for the sake of order, that one should preside both in the offices of religion and in their consultations for the common good, it is their president, or chairman, that is here addressed under the name of angel."—p. 92.

that throws no light at all on the development of separate Churches. It is necessary here only to observe that there is nothing in the account which militates against the conclusion of the independency of the primitive Churches, drawn from the seven Epistles, it being a most unjustifiable use of language to call that meeting a synod, council, or assembly in any technical sense, since the fact is that the question about circumcision was there referred solely to the apostles, and elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, and the decree published was by immediate inspiration.

The divine idea of a Christian Church can be obtained only from a study of the whole history of what may be called the genesis of its organization. As in doctrine so in polity, the unfolding of the plan was gradual in connexion with circumstances. No picture of the whole object appears to have been presented to the minds of believers, or even of the apostles, but rather what was developed kept growing up under their hands just as from time to time they were guided in its culture by heavenly wisdom. And all the information afforded amounts to no more than the general outline that a church, in the technical sense of the term, signifies a select community, whose bond of union is faith in Christ, and mutual love—whose limits are confined within narrow local boundaries—whose officers are of two kinds, pastoral and diaconal—whose discipline is in harmony with its spiritual character—and whose constitution is complete in itself. A great deal which some would desire is wholly withheld. No rubric, no liturgy, no canon law

is supplied. Much is left to sanctified experience, observation, and reason to determine, in accordance with the grand guiding points set down, so as to adapt ecclesiastical arrangements to existing states of human society and civilization. He has not seen in the Bible all the wisdom which it shows, who has not pondered well what God leaves out, as well as what God puts in.

Scholars learned in Jewish antiquities, especially Vitringa, have noticed several striking coincidences between the constitution and order of primitive churches and the usages of the synagogue, a circumstance which further illustrates the close connexion between primitive Christianity and Judaism, and one which shows how gently, and by what a wisely-arranged course of previous education, the first believers were led into the use of a framework of social religion well adapted to its simplicity of spirit. In proof of some of the institutes of Christianity being grafted on a Jewish stock, it may be observed that in the Jewish synagogues there were elders who presided over their affairs, and Chazans who took care of the building and the books of the law, and collected alms for the relief of the necessitous. One of the elders acted as president, but still remained of the same order with the rest. Excommunication from the synagogue in cases of delinquency was a prevalent practice, as every one is aware; and it may be further observed, that alms for the poor were put into a chest before the prayers, and on Sabbath evenings what had been collected was distributed.\* But while we

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\* BERNARD'S *Synagogue and the Church*, p. 73.

recognise certain coincidences between the church and the synagogue, we are quite unable to follow some archæologists through all the resemblances they endeavour to detect, many of which seem entirely fanciful and groundless. A Christian Church, in some of its most essential points, was, after all, a perfectly new institute, in immeasurable advance of anything which the Jews before had witnessed or been taught to conceive.\* It was not a new device of man, or simply the improvement of an old one, but an original and beautiful thing which God, by special teaching, showed his servants how to fashion.

We are to remember that another *Ecclesia* is recognised in the New Testament, identical with the aggregate of what the *Ecclesiæ* of all ages would be, had the divine ideal been realized from the beginning, and were the divine ideal to be realized to the end, identical with that aggregate, supposing Christian Churches from time to time embraced all God's living saints, and contained none beside; but far from identical with the aggregate of actual churches, as we find them either in history or in the present day. *They* are imperfect associations at

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\* Especially it should be borne in mind that the synagogue, in the times of the apostles, was in no sense a priestly institute. "It was not till the new Rabbinical priesthood was established, and the Mishna and the Talmud universally received as the national code, that the foreign Jews fell under what may be considered sacerdotal dominion. All this time the synagogue itself was only supplementary to the great national religious ceremonial of the Temple. The Levitical race claimed no peculiar sanctity, at least it discharged no priestly office, beyond the bounds of the Holy Land, or the precincts of the Temple."—MILMAN'S *History of Christianity*, vol. ii. 66.

the best; evil men creep in unawares; the net gathers bad and good: *that* is ever a pure family—all hearts akin, all lives in their hidden root and holy fruitage alike. *They* are organized unities: *that*, from necessity, embracing, as it does, all the saints in heaven and earth, excludes organization. *They* are visible, united by outward bonds: *that* cometh not with observation, and is bound by ties impalpable. *They* may be temporary, as in the seven Asiatic cities: *that* consists of a constant succession—of a regenerate race into which a new soul is born oftener than we can count, out of which no one ever dies. Churches are perishing like forest trees. The Church is a tree of life in winterless verdure, destined to bloom when times and seasons here are all over. *They*, scattered over the world, are a group of republics—certainly not like the Greek ones, left to difference and change, according to caprice, but bound to abide for ever by the will of their divine lawgiver,—thus, indeed, so far resembling the Athenian State to which the power of changing Solon's constitution was denied: *that*, the one Church of heaven and earth, is a monarchy, an empire indivisible, under the King who knows all his subjects, dwells daily in every home, and speaks hourly to each heart. *They* are the ἐκκλησίαι, properly so called, assemblies, according to the classic usage of the word, convened and constituted for transacting business—doing work; *that* is, more correctly viewed as a whole, the πανήγυρις, the great festal assembly, the glorious convention of the triumphant and the blessed, to be complete when “the former things” shall have “passed

away." *They* have in reality proved so many scattered fragments, like the divided limbs of the slain Osiris,—like the "torn pieces of truth," which Milton compares to him of mournful Egyptian fame, and which, as he says, friends go up and down the earth to gather and unite; but *that* is one body, of compact well-built frame—Jesus Christ its head, its reason, its word, its voice, its life—"from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

## LECTURE II.

THE FIRST AGE.—A.D. 31—100.

### THE REALIZATION.

IN what a world the divine ideal had to be worked out! There was a Judæan world, with men in it who waited for the consolation of Israel, who saw in old types a deep meaning, and had an ear for the grand music of prophecy, some who had thoughtfully heard the words of the wonderful Nazarene and were pondering them in their hearts, some who had been startled by the story of his resurrection, yet could not gainsay it, for they had witnessed the miracles of his life. But there were in it, too, formal and dry religionists—Pharisees, merging the spiritual in the ceremonial, and however rich in the knowledge of divine words, never entering into the meaning of divine thoughts. There were also carping sceptics, full of licentiousness and levity—Sadducees, sense-bound and stupidly denying that there was angel or spirit; and there were strange bewildered mystics—Essenes, driven almost mad, and seeking in the wild beasts' haunt, refuge from the crowds of men whose ways so puzzled them. And besides all these, there were children of Abraham abiding in Gentile cities—Alexandria and elsewhere—in whom the sharp angles of Jewish prejudice were in a measure rubbed down, and who



had caught the prevailing rage for speculation, and spoke of strange things—merely playing, it might be, with fine phrases, perhaps actually in conflict with dark problems, and uttering uncouth words with a deep significance in them. Then, while sects and schools were thus employed, the Judæan mass around was boiling with fanatical excitement, which betokened slow exhaustion or a speedy crisis.

There was an Asiatic world, studded with proud gay cities—Ephesus among the rest and a type of the rest, with its gorgeous temple and its Diana, monstrous and Indian-like in form, classically Greek in story—the head-quarters of superstitious worship, yet a worship having in it less fear of Heaven's wrath than hope of earth's gain.

There was a Grecian world, with Athens at its head, full of art, literature, and philosophy, as well as the adoration of new gods—smitten with a rage for novelties, and discussing theories about the fair and good, the just and the expedient, without any deep concern for either; some Fatalists, stoically singing, "Men are the slaves of kings, kings are the slaves of gods, gods are the slaves of necessity;" some Epicureans, laughing at the mystic dance of atoms, and jovially shouting, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

And there was a Roman world, grave and stately, not caring much about verbal quibbles or real metaphysical difficulties, treating most things in utilitarian fashion, keeping up religion on that principle, making it a matter of expediency, not of truth, a convenient fiction,

not at all a creed ; and, so far as it cared for morality, not binding it up with religion, but cultivating it alone, as a matter of proud merit, raising its possessors above the stars, to claim a home among the gods.

Amidst all these there might be some seeking after the true holy and only Living One ; “if haply they might feel after Him and find Him.”

Before such a world of worlds the ideal was revealed. It had a Divine presence with it ; He who descended on the day of Pentecost was its watchful keeper that it should not perish ; but without a series of miracles which no reasonings or analogies would lead one to expect, what was likely to happen but what, as we shall presently see, actually did take place ?

There were some who adopted Christianity only on the negative side ; men such as are found in all ages of society, who, dissatisfied with things as they are, eagerly look out for what is likely to produce a change, and are ready to rally around any standard which is lifted in opposition to the evils they have themselves assailed. Such men, at that period in the history of the Roman world, saw and felt the selfishness, cruelty, and oppression which was so prevalent, and groaned to aid in the removal of the mass of existing evil. They recognised in Christianity a great moral power. They were sharp-sighted enough to perceive that it carried a life in it threatening to crush and remove the dead load of corruption that lay everywhere around them ; but they had no clear intelligent apprehension of its facts and principles, no moral sympathy with its pure and ennobling spirit. Some of these persons might be of virtuous life,

but of a speculative turn, and they would be sure to blend with those truths of Christianity they actually embraced, other notions current or peculiar, which would give to their religion a character very different from what pertained to the positive revelation from Heaven. And further, there would be others neither virtuous nor speculative, only men of strong will and earnest purpose, who were intent on the removal of certain social evils and inconveniences, without being disposed to any personal reformation. They would correct what was wrong in governments, institutions, and the habits of their neighbours, while they continued to cherish their own peculiar habits of self-indulgence. The adoption of Christianity on the negative side by these men so entirely estranged from its spirit and power, would lead, no doubt, to immoral excesses, which would become associated with the Christian name, in minds unaccustomed to the trouble of inquiring after truth, and not caring to distinguish between idle reports and well-ascertained facts.

This will account for the well-known charges brought by Tacitus against Christianity, as belonging to things "atrocia aut pudenda."\* Nor can we even cursorily read the New Testament without being astonished by the allusions so often made to immoral persons calling themselves Christians.

But Christianity was also embraced by multitudes on its positive side—by men who loved it, who adored its Lord, and felt its salvation; yet these, changed as they were, would not cease to be affected by their former

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\* See ARNOLD *On the Church*, p. 87.

selves—would not be proof against all the perilous influences of the age they lived in. Christianity, as realized by them, would be modified from many causes, innocent as well as hurtful—from race, and idiosyncrasy, no less than from Jewish and Pagan education and society.

We have found in the Divine ideal of Christianity a religion or life, a collection of doctrines, and a new form of social organization. Let us touch upon the history of the way in which the ideal in these respects was realized, taking the last first—How was the ideal institute embodied? How was the ideal doctrine comprehended? How was the life which was methodized by the first, and inspired and fed by the second, actually unfolded and expressed?

1. The ecclesiastical institute, so far as outward form was concerned, would, at first, commonly be what it should, seeing that the ideal and the embodiment in that case went together. But as to the spirit—look, for example, at the attempt of the Judaizing Christians to impose circumcision on the Gentiles, to make that the *term* of communion with Christ, saying, “You shall be Jews like us, or you shall not be Christians at all.” This was calculated totally to revolutionize Christianity, to make the Church a mere Jewish sect; and, supposing such men could have had their way, is it likely that Christianity, properly so called, would now have been in existence? This fond Jewish notion, wherever it arose, caused at once a rent among Christians. If there happened to be any among them who were not Israelites; unity was broken, and the sin of schism was committed, wherever an advocate for circumcision cut off from his

fellowship a Gentile Christian. Such an one wronged a brother loved by Christ; and ever since then, those persons who have set up as terms of communion what real Christians may conscientiously refuse, have walked in the same path of intolerance. The men who went down from Jerusalem to Antioch, and refused *to eat* with the Gentiles, were of this class, and grievously did they disturb that infant Church, the first to bear the Christian name. Their refusal, whatever it included besides, must surely have been a refusal to sit down with the un-circumcised at the Lord's table—a refusal to partake of that significant meal so much prized, so very common in the early Church, and then connected with the Agape, the love-feast—being, in fact, a sacred appendage to a social supper; and if so, what a division that refusal to eat with Gentiles would make at Antioch; would it not involve either the unchurching of the Gentiles altogether, or the forcing of them to form themselves into another and distinct Church? Then turn to Corinth, the Venice of the old world, in whose streets the streams of commerce flowing out of all the Eastern territories met and crossed\*—“In that city there was, around the Temple of Neptune, a crowd of miserable sophists, shouting and abusing one another, and of their so-called disciples, fighting with each other, and many authors reading their works, to which nobody paid any attention, and many poets chaunting their poems, with others praising them, and many jugglers showing off their tricks, and many prodigy-mongers

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\* MILMAN'S *History of Christianity*, p. 21, 22.

noting down their wonders, and a thousand rhetoricians perplexing causes, and not a few shopkeepers retailing their wares wherever they could find a customer." This very spirit of pride, idleness, division, and noisy forwardness crept into the Church of Corinth, and created party-strife and bitterness. The members said, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas (or Peter), and I of Christ." The Petrine party was probably composed of Judaizing, rigid ceremonialists, and the Pauline of men who looked more at doctrine, boasting of liberality, yet, withal, contemptuous in their treatment of others. The admirers of Apollos were probably such as prided themselves on biblical study and criticism; and those who called themselves after Christ, in distinction from the rest, were most likely individuals who thereby claimed superior light and piety, frowning upon all sects, and yet at the very time forming a new one. The Corinthian Church was thus a religious world in miniature, exhibiting, in the first century, mimic types of what has been exhibited on a large scale in following ones. And, moreover, the very din of the streets, where all were talkers, seemed also to have had its echo in the assembly, while the gifted members were all anxious for display. The directions about discipline indicate that a deep moral offence had been committed without shocking the community, as, from the pure spirit of the Gospel, we should have supposed it would; a circumstance which evinces that a measure of obtuseness in their moral feelings had been left by a pagan education. In the notices by Paul of Corinthian worship, there may, how-

ever, be discovered the traces of usages which were perfectly Christian: the Lord's Supper was celebrated—different persons employed their gifts in the service of the Church—the people sang as well as prayed—they joined in a responsive Amen—they made collections—they allowed strangers to enter their assemblies—they met for worship in one place—the men were bareheaded, the women veiled.

But it would be unfair to primitive Christianity to suppose that all Churches were like that at Corinth—looking at its great defects. Nor would Thessalonica, with its less striking irregularities, be a fair sample. What we learn of these in Paul's Epistles, it should be recollected, refers to their very early state, when only in a process of formation. Churches more complete, and at a more advanced stage of ecclesiastical order, are juster as well as better specimens. The Epistles to Ephesus, Colossæ, and Philippi, written about nine years after the first to the Thessalonians, five after that to the Corinthians, prove, from the absence of censure on that point, that no such disorders existed there as at Corinth; while that to the Romans, written three years before, but at what year in the age of the Church in that city we have no data to determine, shows a love of order and an obedience to law like what we meet with in the best days of the old Republic, only developed in another form, and sanctified by another spirit. That early Church has left a noble bede roll behind it. There was, in the first Roman Ecclesia, as in the old Roman civil polity, a place for every one, and every one in his place.

On turning to the seven Asiatic Churches, towards the end of the century, we find two of them very exemplary—Smyrna and Philadelphia. No fault is found with them. They loved what they had been taught, kept it, laboured and suffered for it. Two others were beacons—Sardis, not irregular, but formal and dead; Laodicea, lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. Three were of a mixed description—Ephesus, orthodox and orderly, but declining in fervour—Pergamos and Thyatira, suffering, patient, and active, but not firm in the resistance of error, not vigilant in the maintenance of discipline. Our first illustration of the ecclesiastical institute, as realized, showed us narrow-minded Jews; this last exhibits latitudinarian Gentiles, each indicating a tendency which has survived them. Such was the imperfect embodiment of the ideal of Christianity in its ecclesiastical aspect.

2. Proceeding to notice the Divine ideal of Christianity as embracing a collection of doctrines, we may observe that these doctrines were apprehended in two ways—the practical and the speculative.

Among those who practically understood Christianity, there were different degrees of intelligence, as indicated by what Paul says to the Colossians, the Hebrews, and the Romans.

The truth of the Gospel came to many of the Colossians, as in all the world, bringing forth fruit.\* It was to them not so much a light to look at as to walk by.

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\* Col. i. 6.



They had childlike views of the way of salvation, nothing more. They were ignorant of scientific theology, and short of that, their understanding of divine things would seem to have been superficial and narrow. Paul prayed that they might be filled with the knowledge of Christ's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.\* Some of the Hebrews he reproved because they were such as had need of milk and not of strong meat. The time had come when they ought to be teachers, yet they needed that one should teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God.† But to the Romans he could say, "I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another."‡ Very different degrees of Christian intelligence are indicated in such passages; but there were, no doubt, other persons even less acquainted with Christianity than the least of these.

One can conceive how, before the Epistles or Gospels were written (and the first of the former, it should be remembered, was not composed till above twenty years after Pentecost, when Paul had been a preacher some thirteen years; and the first of the latter, according to some able critics, not before the year 61, A.D.), even thoughtful men, among the uninspired, would be unable to reach any great elevation of Christian intelligence; added to which, we should recollect that, after the divine documents were penned, some persons would have no

\* Col. i. 9.

† Heb. v. 12.

‡ Rom. xv. 14.

opportunity of possessing them. Reports, perhaps imperfect, of the teaching of a single apostle would occasionally be all that a primitive Christian received. They might be traditions further removed than second-hand; and even when better knowledge came afterwards, erroneous impressions first received might be still, to some extent, retained.

Among uninspired primitive Christians, the best informed and most thoughtful would still be below the divinely illuminated. Eye to eye they would see the cross and the throne—hand in hand they would ponder and worship—but an inequality there would still be between Paul and John on the one hand, and the men they taught on the other; for there were, no doubt, in the discourses, as in the writings, of those greatest seers, thoughts on divine things of wondrous compass, containing such breadths and depths as ages of study could neither measure nor explore. The direct inspiration of one mind, and the instruction conveyed by it to a second mind, are not the same. No doubt, by study and prayer, the instructed may approximate to the inspired, in the profoundest forms of thought; but such an approximation, all at once, and without most laborious, earnest, and devout thinking, seems impossible. Taking into account the actual state of early Christendom, the estimate of the probable approach of the taught to the level of the teacher is still further moderated.\* No

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\* There seems to have arisen a consciousness of this in the mind of Apostolic Fathers. Polycarp says, in his Epistle to the Philippians, "Neither I, nor any other like me, is able to reach fully the wisdom of

doubt, by a special agency of the Holy Ghost, a primitive disciple might at once be raised to the same standing with his apostolic master—but that would be to suppose the equal inspiration of both. We are now, however, considering the case of men left to the employment of their own faculties, with such divine aids as are vouchsafed in common to all humble Christians. Looking, then, at the circumstances of the whole case, it seems unlikely that many of the early believers would actually grasp the reasonings of Paul, or completely rise to the contemplations of John. Certainly, as matter of fact, we do not find, in Scripture or elsewhere, any proofs of great theological attainments among the uninspired members of the first Churches. They, no doubt, understood the great facts of the Gospel, so as to be saved through faith in them: but none, so far as we have means of judging, appear to have largely exercised their powers of reflection upon the grounds, relations, and harmony of Christian doctrines.

The Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers have often been cited to show the immense descent in theological thought from the apostles to their immediate successors—a very conclusive proof of the inspiration of the former.\* Serving that most important purpose, these compositions also obviously serve another—the purpose we have

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the blessed and illustrious Paul ;” κατακολουθησαι τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ μακαρίου καὶ ἐνδόξου Παύλου.—*Ep. ad Phil. Pat. Apos. Jacobson*, p. 470.

\* Well does Arnold, in his *Sermon on the Interpretation of Scripture*, p. 330, speak of the wide belt of desert on every side of the goodly garden of Scripture—of the “howling wilderness that reaches up to its very walls.”

now in view. The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians is the earliest genuine relic of the class. Even if we adopt the latest date assigned to it, Clement must have been contemporary with Apostles, and this interesting production of his must have been written while at least one of them was alive.\* Hence it is an uninspired document belonging to inspired times. Remembering its practical object, it would be unreasonable to expect any doctrinal disquisition, but as it is easy to tell, in reference to any author, from his allusions to doctrinal points, and from his style of Christian exhortation, whether he has made any considerable theological attainments or not, we may plainly see, from the study of this Epistle, that while Clement was a true Christian, while his piety was sincere and beautifully childlike, while, also, he was a man of intelligence, and could write even rhetorically, still he was very deficient in masculine understanding, grasp of truth, and breadth of view.† A large portion of his letter consists of quotations from Scripture, chiefly the Old Testament, some of them inaccurate as to language, and inapposite as to

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\* Wake places this Epistle between A.D. 64 and 70. Lardner as late as A.D. 96. Bunsen is of opinion that Clement was Bishop of Rome from 78 to 86, during which time he wrote his Epistle.

† “Clemens, the prosaic Roman, was a man of good and deep practical sense, a pious Christian, full of divine wisdom, who had studied his Greek Bible, and read some of the classics; but feeble in his criticism, and weak in his learned arguments. Mosheim and Neander think some passages in this Epistle interpolated, because from their mythical tendency they are unworthy of a disciple of the apostles. This is begging the question, and mere fancy.”—BUNSEN'S *Christianity and Mankind*, Vol. i. 44.

use, the comments also being what a well-instructed expositor would pronounce anything but judicious. Scripture words are only heaped together like so much corn rough gathered from the field—they are not by Clement ground and kneaded into daily bread, as they will be by well skilled instructors of their fellow Christians.\* Clement could hardly have been below the average Christian intelligence of his age: his position, influence, and fame would rather lead to the conclusion that he was above it. If so, the inference to be drawn as to the theology of the uninspired portion of the Church at that period is not very favourable.

Speculative thought, so far as it obtained among the first professors of the Christian name, took, it would seem, too commonly a false and heretical form. Hence the Apostle, alluding to philosophy in connexion with religion, stigmatises it as science falsely so called.

Three main branches of speculative error in the times of the apostle may be discovered from the New Testament—the first relating to law, the second to the resurrection, the third to the person of Christ.

1. As to law. We noticed the practical apprehension of Christianity by many of the Colossians, but we find also that, as a Church, they were exposed to the influence of philosophy and vain deceit—taking a transcendental form, resolving religion into mysticism, and duty into

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\* Clement has been much laughed at for his story of the phoenix, *Ep. ad Corinth.* c. xxv. ; but in that matter he was no worse than the wisest of his age. Why should the good father be ridiculed more than Tacitus and Pliny?—*An.* vi. 28. *Hist. Nat.* x. 2.

an ascetic abstinence and neglecting of the body.\* Law is here perverted. An element of speculative thought† is also mentioned in connexion with strong views of the virtue of obedience to ceremonial institutes. Law is here rigidly confined. Philosophy is further seen taking another turn in relation to the same subject of law. Early antinomianism was by no means merely practical. It was wrought into theoretical forms, it was excused and defended. Thus, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul warns them against sophistries (κενοῖς λόγοις), by which certain teachers justified sins of impurity, contending that acts of the body could not contaminate the soul.‡ Law was here explained away. Did not the Balaamites and the Nicolaitans hold some vile theory in relation to morals?§

2. As to the resurrection. A distinct assertion was made by Hymenæus and Philetus to the effect that the resurrection was past, giving to the word resurrection some mythical meaning.||

3. As to the nature of Christ. From the Epistles of

\* Col. ii. 18—23.

† Col. ii. 8.

‡ Eph. v. 6.

§ Rev. ii. 14—22. The immorality referred to in this passage was united with pretended inspirations from above, and a knowledge of the depths of God, which the seer, with fearful irony, calls “the depths of Satan.” Bengel says on the passage, “The false teachers said that the things they taught were deep things. This the Lord concedes; but with the qualification that they were not divine but Satanic depths, just as he allows the Jews the name of a synagogue, but calls it a synagogue of Satan.”—SCHAFF'S *Apostolic Church*, ii. 378. Justin, in his *Dial. cum Tryph.*, speaks of those who said, that though they were sinners, yet if they know God, the Lord will not impute to them sin. John may have alluded to such when he spoke of persons saying they had no sin. See BURTON'S *Bampton Lectures*, 444.

|| 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.

John we clearly gather that some persons speculated on the nature of Christ, so as to deny that he had come in the flesh.\*

These three branches of error relating to law, to the resurrection, and to Christ, all spring from one stem. They involve alike a depreciation of what is corporeal or material in human nature; they vilify the body; they debase "the outer man." The speculations about law, on the one hand, require the ascetic mortification of the body as a thing merely cumbersome, or they, on the other hand, allow the abandonment of the body to licentiousness as a thing only worthless. Licentiousness and asceticism are contrasts, but it is curious how they spring, as forked branches, out of one trunk. Nay, sometimes licentiousness comes from asceticism—actually grows out of it. It is curious that Eusebius describes the Nicolaitans as a licentious sect, proceeding from an ascetic leader, whose motto was the equivocal one, "that we ought to abuse the flesh."† The speculations about the resurrection are of the same stamp. The human body is not fit to be raised—the soul is better without it. The speculations about the nature of Christ point in the same direction. A Divine Spirit coming upon earth for the deliverance of man would never assume a body—the fountain of all evil and misery. It would be dishonouring the infinitely pure to imagine it. All this with regard to the heretical philosophy of the first age is obvious. Yet, though we thus hold a clue available for

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\* 1 John iv. 3.

† *Hist. Eccl.* iii. c. 29.

our guidance to some extent, through the perplexing labyrinth of early error, we must not suppose that here we discover anything like the whole philosophy of primitive heretical speculation, for in it, no doubt, were involved principles and methods of thought beyond what the most learned have been able to elucidate.

No student of ecclesiastical history can fail to recognise in such opinions as we have mentioned the seeds of those elaborate theories which grew up in after times, and which are grouped under the generic name of Gnosticism. And this remark serves to reconcile the opinions of those who, like Dr. Burton, trace the existence of the *principles* of Gnosticism in the first century, with the opinions of those who date the beginning of *systems* of Gnosticism in the second.\* That a form of sentiment so alien from Christianity should have appeared so soon may, at first sight, seem strange, but the strangeness melts away when we remember amidst what a wild storm of excited human thoughts Christianity was born into the world ;

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\* Eusebius, *Hist.* lib. iii. c. 32, observes that Hegesippus, of the second century says, that the Church, to the time of Trajan, remained an uncorrupted virgin—that those who corrupted the Gospel skulked in darkness—that when the choir of the apostles was gone, error arose through the delusion of false teachers, who now, with unveiled head, asserted their falsehoods against the truth of the Gospel. Error skulking in darkness, and then appearing with unveiled head, is a representation in exact accordance with the statement of the existence of Gnostic *principles* in the time of the apostles, and their exhibition as a *system* afterwards. Read in connexion with the above passage a quotation from Hegesippus in Euseb. lib. iv. c. 22. Valesius, in his Notes, *Scrip. Hist.*, Tom. I., p. 228, in order to save the credit of the Church, says that Hegesippus refers only to the Church at Jerusalem : a gloss utterly inadmissible.



and the few advantages of some early professors of the Christian name will quite as much help to account for their rash mistakes as for their remaining ignorance.

For years after Pentecost the apostles remained at Jerusalem, during which period the Gospel was conveyed to many parts of the world by merely human, and, therefore, fallible agencies. When we come to consider, as Dr. Burton says, "the state of philosophy at that time, and the fashion which prevailed of catching at anything new, and of uniting discordant elements into fanciful systems, we shall not be surprised to find the doctrines of the Gospel disguised and altered, and that according to the language of that age, many new heresies were formed." Those who adopted Christianity, not exactly on the negative, but yet on only a speculative side—men vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, unimbued with the humble, docile, and devout spirit of the true disciple, could be expected to do no otherwise than misapprehend the truth: and many such there were who hung on the skirts of the Christian army—who were a sort of ecclesiastical camp followers. And here it should be observed, that among the heresies of the first age, when the nature of Christ formed a leading subject of speculation, the errors on that subject related to his humanity rather than to his divinity. Some denied that he had a human body—none that he possessed a divine spirit. Those of the heterodox who admitted the reality of his manhood did not deny the union with it of something celestial. "There literally was not one single heretic in the first century who did not believe that Christ came

down from Heaven; they invented, it is true, various absurdities to account for his union with the man Jesus, but the fair and legitimate inference from this fact would be that the apostles preached that in some way or other the human nature was united to the divine.”\*

Passing from this inquiry into the apprehension of the Divine ideal of doctrinal truth by the uninspired in the first age, we come to our third point.

3. The main object for which the Gospel was revealed is neither the establishment of institutes nor the knowledge of doctrines, it is the inspiration of life. *They* were to be subservient to *this*. Now, there were persons gathered into Christian folds who had a name to live while they were dead. The appellation they bore was a falsehood, and they entailed on themselves dishonour and shame; for as when those who pretend to wealth or wisdom, being found paupers or fools, are exposed to merited contempt, so such as call themselves children of God, while belying that noblest of relationships, excite not only Heaven’s pity, but earth’s scorn and hell’s mockery; for men and devils who have never

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\* Burton’s *Bampton Lectures*, 244. “The fact that there was not one heretic in the first century who did not maintain the divinity of Christ has not been sufficiently attended to. The Ebionites, it is true, believed in the human nature of *Jesus*; but that *Christ* was born of human parents, or that, in any sense of the term, he was a mere man, would have been treated by the Ebionites as the most irrational and impious error. So long as we know from history that the first Gnostics believed *Jesus* to be a phantom, and that they who acknowledged his human nature yet held that *Christ* descended upon him from heaven, so long we have a right to argue that the apostles could not have preached the simple humanity of *Christ*.”—p. 246.

admired the real Christian, have always despised the nominal one. Further, there might be spiritual insensibility, and therefore the absence of vital religion, in those whose external conduct was respectable. But, besides, we know that, with such estrangement from the Gospel spirit, and such avowal of the Gospel name, there was sometimes also associated the practice of pagan licentiousness. Such facts dissipate the illusion of a golden age while apostles lived—a play of fancy that, in strange forgetfulness of express statements in the New Testament, and striking analogies in the Old. Paul, Peter, and Jude bewail the immoralities of their professed converts, and old Hebrew history proves how men can stand face to face with God's messengers fresh from Heaven, and signs and wonders blazing round them, and yet live in sin.

It is unjust, however, to confine one's view to a part of the picture. The experience of 1800 years has shown that in the spiritual no less than the physical world, there may be imperfect development and much disease, where there is life. With partial paralysis there may be partial sensibility. The heart may play while here and there the blood may stagnate. There may be action in the cerebrum, though a limb be palsied. To some truths, duties, and privileges, a man may be dead; to others he may be tremblingly alive. Imperfect spiritual life has been the too common experience of Christendom. Many Christians of the first century were neither worse nor better than those of the nineteenth. They caught and embodied but a portion of the Divine ideal. Yet,

so far as they did so, they were witnesses of a power in humanity, the working of which we should in vain search for throughout the history of pagan law, philosophy, or religion. Even some narrow Jews, warped by nationality, the pride of which we might almost pardon; and others whose asceticism rested on different grounds, and whose narrow scruples disturbed harmony and created division—we should wrong if we wrote them down as aliens from Christ's kingdom. Some such persons the apostle Paul only judged "weak," yet brethren still, not living to themselves, but in the thing they allowed not, living to the Lord. And his lesson to the strong was to show their strength, not by censuring others, but by being cautious themselves; not by asserting their liberty so much as by loving care not to make it a stumbling-block in another's way.\* And some, who even fell into sin, were recovered by grace; nor was cleansing fire wanting in many a Corinthian heart to separate and consume the dross of carnality, and to leave for the last day much fine gold of righteousness.

The inconsistent characters of the first age are the more striking from comparison with those grand apostolic models of spiritual excellence which, next to their Divine Lord, have ever inspired the reverence and wonder of Christian minds. The wonder, indeed, has at times transgressed its bounds, and Christians have been too forgetful that the grace given by the Master made apostles what they were; that they, in yielding the

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\* Romans, xiv. 1—13.

fairest, richest, ripest virtues, only lived the life of his religion; and that the sanctifying spirit bestowed on them was the common inheritance of the redeemed family. The error of Romanists in worshipping the apostles as saints, in placing them on an elevation unapproachable, is one the spirit of which extends beyond the Roman pale; and a dangerous mistake it is to deem apostolic piety the piety of a class; to look on the twelve in their moral endowments as an aristocratic order, in relation to whom all other believers *must of necessity* compose the commonalty of Christendom. Patrician and plebeian rank is abolished in Christ's kingdom. Compared with the royal *One*, all subjects are on an equality, and equal in rank, entitled to an equality of spiritual privilege. Christians now should aim to be morally what the best of Christian apostles were then. Nor should it be forgotten that while they were beautiful embodiments of the Gospel ideal, yet placed beside Him who is the truth itself, they are seen not to be faultless. And, moreover, if no other Christians achieved what they did or had understanding like them; if no others possessed such a spirit of power, such a soundness of mind; if no others wore, as they did, that crown of Christian manhood, is it too bold to ask,—were there none among the uninspired who, in faith and love, devotion and humility, could be called their compeers?

Interesting is it to study the natural peculiarities of these most honoured of the sons of men, and to see how from on high the Spirit hallowed their idiosyncrasies, and mellowed the fruits of their experience. To acquaint

ourselves intimately with the Galilean sailor, brave but rash, deeply loving but not deeply thoughtful, trained on the sea-shore in a fisher's hut, and whose only learning was the Law and Prophets, and the holy hymns of David and the rest, which as a boy he had sung in his father's boat, making the rocks echo with those holy lays; and then to form a friendship with the Cilician tentmaker, who had all that sailor's braveness without his rashness—all his love, but coupled with a keener broader intellect, who had read Greek as well as Hebrew poets in the city of Tarsus, and had studied the rolls of Holy Writ and the lore of Rabbis, at Gamaliel's feet. And then to enter the still more spiritual presence of that "disciple whom Jesus loved," the tempestuous morning of whose life settled down into an eventide of summer calmness, who carried not his gentleness to the breast of Jesus, but found it there, whose eagle eye to the last blenched not, but on the rocks of the Patmos isle let in light and glory to a heart of dove-like tenderness.\*

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\* In one of the mediæval hymns, *De S. Joanne Evangelistâ*, there are the following beautiful stanzas :—

"Cœlum transit, veri rotam  
 Solis vidit, ibi totam  
 Mentis figens aciem.  
 Speculator spiritalis  
 Quasi seraphim sub alis  
 Dei vidit faciem.  
 Volat avis sine metâ  
 Quo nec vates nec propheta  
 Evolavit altius :  
 Tam implenda, quam impleta,  
 Nunquam vidit tot secreta  
 Purus homo purius."

We have no space to dwell on the love of the Corinthian Christians—on the works, labour, and patience of Ephesus—on those at Sardis, who defiled not their garments, nor on the many virtues of the elect at Rome, including those of more than valorous constancy, who in Nero's gardens, on the slopes of the Vatican, were hung up as blazing torches for the monster's shows. Nor can we tell, for want of material, as well as of space, of missionary efforts, which, notwithstanding, we know were made. Documents recording some may have perished; but we cannot help thinking that the workers of that day were not careful to write down their own doings—they sought a better immortality. Did the Gospel reach Britain during the first century? If so, then, while we know all about the military Cæsar's coming, and can point to the shingly beach where he landed, and to the downs and river banks whither he marched (for the conqueror has reported his own achievements); where the missionary Cæsar arrived, whence he came, whither he wended his way, how he fared, what he did, we do not know. I think the hero did not care that we should know. In other cases, we have indications of the result without marks of the process. Lights are seen at midnight stealing up the hill sides of Paganism. We discern the torches, but not the bearers.

## LECTURE III.

THE SECOND AGE.—A.D. 100—325.

### INNOVATION.

**I**N my former lecture, I endeavoured to distinguish between the Divine ideal and the human realization of Christianity in the apostolic age. That distinction is of great importance, and must be kept in mind, as we proceed to examine the history of Christendom during the next two centuries.

The special gift of inspiration ceased with the apostle John. He stands last on the list of the miraculously illuminated. Writings pretending to the authority of inspiration, or to which such authority was by some for a time conceded, have, after a searching criticism, been reduced to the level of human compositions; but the claim of all the Books of the New Testament to Divine authority has been vindicated repeatedly. Though attacked with all the aids which erudition and ingenuity could supply, they have been victoriously defended; and never has the controversy been raised with more determination, nor settled by such accumulated and decisive arguments, as in our own times.

The Christian oracle of truth is complete in itself. It is perfect as the source and standard of all religious faith and practice. From it all Christian teaching



should be drawn, by it all teaching calling itself Christian should be tested. There is not an atom of evidence to prove that we have any trustworthy record of the ministry of Christ and his apostles except in the Bible. Such additional information respecting that ministry as the early Fathers furnish is insignificant, and some of it manifestly false.\* Indeed, ecclesiastical tradition betrays itself as soon as ever it begins to speak. When losing its taciturnity, it is only to show that its talk is idle and confused. What it says may be divided into two portions—that which relates to the express teaching of Christ and his apostles, and that which relates to the actual practice of the then existing Church. Its report of the former is wanting in evidence. The latter which it reports is wanting in authority. In the one case we object to the credibility of the witness; in the other, to the claims of the pretended lawgivers. To the Scriptures there can be brought no *co-ordinate* authority; and whatever authority of an *inferior* kind, or degree, may be set up, must be subjected to a careful comparison with the written word; and if found in any thing opposed to that it must be corrected as a mistake, or be denounced as an imposture. The unrivalled authority of Sacred Writ must be admitted by all Christian controversialists, even by those who challenge reverence for some authority of lower inspiration; and if claims to a secondary degree of inspiration must come

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\* These traditions are collected by BUNSEN—*Christianity and Mankind*, Vol. i. 63; Vol. v. 29. See also STANLEY'S *Sermons and Essays*, 31.

under rigid scrutiny, in the light of the one ideal, of course claims to submission based on grounds short of any inspired authority at all must be examined in the same way. No current opinions at any period, no practices however common, can have binding force upon the conscience of posterity. Many valuable uses may be made of the study of such opinions and practices; but the place of statute law, or legal precedent, they can never have. At the best, they are but human realizations of Christianity—the thoughts and doings of good men according to their advantages. They may be right; but if so, it can be proved only from comparison with the Divine ideal: from that comparison may result the conviction that they are wrong. The bare possibility of the latter shows that they are destitute of all authority, properly so called; while the proof of their being right does not invest them with any authority, further than it is borrowed from their agreement with that to which originally authority alone belongs. Even what was said and done in the apostolic Churches supplies no decisive rule, save as it comes with express apostolic sanction. The heresies, schisms, and other evils of the first age, demonstrate that sentiments and usages of the highest antiquity may be really beacons to avoid rather than guides to follow. What, as an authoritative precedent, would be the value of any practice simply proved to have existed in the Corinthian congregation? A full history of the apostolic period would need to be studied in the light of clear apostolic instructions. Without a Paul or a John to lead us in the first

century, we should never feel sure of being in the track of Divine Christianity. How then, without constantly looking to their infallible leadership, can we be safe in pronouncing upon what was right or wrong in after times? How far that which we discover in the literature of ancient Christendom may help us to understand the meaning and spirit of Christianity we shall see as we proceed.

We have now to do with Christianity as a thing expressed in human words and acts—subjected to reflection and argument by different minds and under different circumstances—embodied in certain institutes and arrangements—felt and realized in human souls; and, therefore, presenting itself under some aspects which are merely human, but also manifesting itself under other aspects, showing that it had in it what is more than human.

Our first division will refer to doctrinal opinions, and the relation to them into which certain philosophical habits of thinking were brought.

Our second to ecclesiastical principles, and the influence produced by certain innovations in this respect, also in part, but by no means wholly, arising out of mistaken philosophies.

Our third to religious life, and the effect on that, resulting from both the former.

In noticing first the application of human thought to Christian doctrines, we commence by observing, that the remains of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp furnish us with no indications that those venerable men studied Christianity for much beyond experimental and practical

ends. We have seen how the first of these addressed the Corinthians, and his genuine Epistle may be taken as no unfavourable specimen of the way in which the Gospel was apprehended by the rest of his class. The Epistle to Diognetus by some unknown author of the second century,\* holds a decided pre-eminence in point of clear strong Christian thought, except, indeed, that some unguarded passages occur in reference to the Jews, implying dishonourable reflections on the Mosaic Law.†

Next to these writers, we may mention a class of early divines, who may be termed *traditionalists*, not in that sense in which many of the Fathers may be called so, but in a sense specific and particular. They did not reflect *theologically* (using that term in a strict scientific meaning) any more than their simple earnest-minded predecessors had done; but they carefully collected and preserved whatever fragments of apostolic teaching they could find handed down to them by oral tradition. Deficient in logical acuteness and activity, they were not less so in the art of historical criticism; and, therefore,

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\* It must be of early date, as the writer speaks of himself as a disciple of apostles; yet the allusions to the spread of Christianity, and to recent persecutions, seem to require that it should not be dated before the reign of Trajan. The expression, "cast before wild beasts," *παραβαλλομένους θηρίοις*, probably points to Ignatius. It may be assigned to about A.D. 117.

† See sections 3 and 4 of the Epistle in Bunsen's *Analecta Antenicæna*, p. 109. It is considered to be made up of two fragments, the second of later date than the first. In the first part, we have a clear testimony to the Pauline doctrine of justification through the righteousness of Christ.—Section ix. Bunsen, without shadow of proof, attributes this letter to Marcion.

their adoption of a report can of itself be no sufficient ground of credibility. Such a man was Papias, who, side by side with his interpretations of Scripture, placed, as he tells us, what he had learnt from the elders, and accurately remembered. He made it his employment to inquire what the Apostles had said, counting a living tradition better than a written book.\* Such, too, were the elders mentioned by Irenæus, persons who had conversed with those who had seen apostles and had been taught by them. Hegesippus belongs to the same class, while in him we find the earliest of ecclesiastical historians. He travelled and conversed with the view of accumulating such knowledge of earlier times and opinions as might be scattered over Christendom, and in his books he records, according to Eusebius, what he had gathered from the unwritten traditions of the Jews.† It is remarkable that a decided Jewish element is discernable in these men. That element, visibly working in apostolic times, did not at once, or speedily die out. Indeed, on the borders of the churches, we find it rife in the post-apostolic age in the form of Ebionism. There it produced heresy, as it had before created schism, blending false and degrading speculations upon the person of Christ with attachment to legal ceremonies, and the imposition of Jewish law. The character and bearings of Ebionite and other errors, do not come within the scope of these lectures, except as they influenced the religious thought and life of Christendom at

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\* Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39.

† *Hist. Eccl.* L. iv. 22.

large. Certainly, a strong tinge of that Jewish spirit which pervaded Ebionism, apart from the grosser heretical element with which the system was charged, strongly appears in the writers we have named. Acquitting Papias and Hegesippus of all participation in the heresy of the Ebionites, we detect in them much of the narrowness and legalistic thralldom which characterized that Jewish party. In Papias there is the absence of all allusion to the teaching of Paul, a circumstance which throws no discredit on the writings ascribed to the apostle, but one which betrays clearly enough the prejudices of the credulous traditionalist against the Pauline views of justification, and shows how essentially defective must have been his divinity—how very partial and incorrect, at the best, his views of Christian truth. Of the opinions of Hegesippus we have less means of judgment, as the passages from him given by Eusebius are historical; but the interest with which Hegesippus dwells on the story of James the Just, and the particulars he records of him, so full of a Jewish spirit, as well as his careful preservation of unwritten Jewish tradition, also show the Jewish habit of his mind, and the Jewish stamp impressed upon his sentiments.

But a different order of divines claim our attention.

We have seen Christianity taking possession of the heart and the memory, we see it also taking possession of the reason and the understanding.

There are minds disposed to intense activity upon subjects of importance and interest. They strive to

ascertain the grounds, reasons, and relations of what they see, believe, and know. The thorough comprehension of what is presented to them becomes a conscious want in their thoughtful nature. A constitutional peculiarity is at the bottom of the tendency; early corresponding education draws it out, circumstances help to excite and stimulate it. The knowledge acquired by such persons is sure to fall into some systematic form. New information blends with what is already possessed, so far as the old and new have affinity. It is obvious enough that there are perils incident to this cast of intellect. The conditions of human knowledge may be overlooked. Attempts, mischievous or only vain, may be made to overleap its boundaries. Dreamy and indistinct thoughts have a certain fascination for minds of this order. Things may be supposed to have relations to one another when they have none, or true relations may absorb attention to the neglect of eternal differences.

There are, on the other hand, minds that do not care to dig under foundations; structures meeting their wants are all they wish for. Having ascertained a fact, they have no curiosity about secret causes and hidden principles. Content with a common knowledge of common things, they work, not explore. Yet may they be as mentally active as the others. They may show great keenness of perception, much skill in arranging thoughts, and immense vigour in dialectic argument. And this sort of mental constitution has its dangers no less than the other. It has to beware of superficial notions, ungrounded premises, hasty conclusions, inappre-

ciation of differences, blindness to relations, irritability under the pressure of doubt, and the sacrifice of the interests of truth for the sake of getting at some plain, palpable result.

With intellects of both descriptions, richly cultivated and used to activity, the Christian revelation soon came in contact. It could not but interest and arouse them. Each would look on it from his own point of view. Each would take it up after his own manner. We do not forget the new birth, we believe in the regeneration of every man who is a true Christian, but there is nothing in Scripture which leads us to doubt—on the contrary, much is there, as well as in all religious history, leading us to believe—that spiritual renewal never annihilates intellectual idiosyncrasy. As the varieties of the human mind, roughly classified under the words philosophical and practical, remarkably coincide with varieties in race, whatever may be the links of connexion between the mental and physical in man—as the whole of classical history and literature testify to the predominantly philosophical cast of the Greek mind, and the predominantly practical cast of the Latin—it was to be expected that the methods of reflecting upon Christianity adopted by these different races of men would differ. As spiritual believers, created anew in Christ Jesus, they would become essentially the same; as intellectual investigators of that truth lying at the root of the life of both, they would remain distinct. As Christians, their religion would be *one*—as divines, their scientific treatment of doctrines would be, at least, *two*;



not but what the doctrines might remain fundamentally alike, under modes of exhibition far from identical. Accordingly, so it was.

Turning to look at the divines of the second age, we have the Greek Justin Martyr, who had gone the round of Greek speculation, "seeking goodly pearls," before he met the old man by the sea-shore, who told him of Hebrew prophecies and of Christ's Gospel, and exhorted him to seek by prayer "the opening of the gates of light."\* —"This great and wonderful man," as the Byzantines call him, whose noble words were,† "There is truth, and nothing is stronger than truth;" who had been seeking it all his life long, and strengthening his natural habits of thought, felt, after he became a Christian, a desire to attain to deeper views of Christianity than such as might content Ignatius or Polycarp. It was perfectly natural for him to make theology his study. Deep and comprehensive views of it to such a man would be a pressing want. That he should adopt philosophical forms of expression—that he should connect with what he had long known, the fresh and wonderful tidings of heavenly truth—that, in the light of Christianity, he should look at the moral and religious problems which had for ages puzzled the most earnest thinkers—can surprise no one. But it is plain, at least after the experience of centuries, that it behoves men of the Justin class to keep a tight rein on their thoughts when

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\* *Dial. cum Trypho.* Ed. Jebb, p. 26.

† Fragment preserved by J. Damascenus.—Otto's *Justin*, Vol. ii. 552.

investigating the metaphysical mysteries of religion; to mark with carefulness the boundary between the *terra firma* of the Divine word and the cloud land of human speculation; to distinguish between the authority of Scripture and the inferences of reason—between objective facts and subjective deductions from them, and ever to make the former the ground of their whole Christianity. Now, Justin Martyr, not apprehending this sufficiently, was fond of speculating on abstruse points, unilluminated by Scripture; and further, in his regard for the studies of his earlier days, did not always draw a line of sufficient breadth between the Greek philosopher on the one hand, and the Hebrew prophet and Christian apostle on the other. The generation of the divine λόγος was with him a favourite inquiry; and, at the same time, he spoke of that Logos as the reason of which the whole human race participates—as the source of wisdom to Socrates, of inspiration to Elias.\* A very important sense there is in which reason is a Divine gift, and conscience a heavenly voice—in which the same Divine Being is the fountain of intellect to the sage and of holiness to the saint—in which He who speaks in the Bible is the Author of all true and beautiful thoughts in the soul, of genius and inspiration—of ideas in the Bible and of ideas in some other books. Nor are we warranted to deny something above mere genius in the case of the most eminent of the heathen—a Divine influence more spiritual than that which works on the

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\* *Dial. cum Trypho*, p. 183. *Apol.* i. c. 61.

intellect alone. Yet, though the *origin* of an inward light and of an outward revelation be the same, the *gifts* in themselves are widely different, not only in *degree*, but in *nature*—a distinction which, if Justin saw, he did not express, but by his language gave countenance to a confusion on the subject, which has often since been mischievously revived, especially of late.\* To his philosophical habits and predilections, no doubt, is to be ascribed Justin's inquiry into the generation of the Logos, but it is utterly unjust to attribute to the same cause the substance of his theology respecting the Divine personality of the Logos, and His incarnation in the humanity of Jesus. To pretend that the doctrine of the Trinity was borrowed by this first uninspired Christian philosopher from the pages of Plato, is utterly without foundation, as Bishop Kaye has very ably proved in his work on Justin's writings.†

Clement of Alexandria, another of the Greeks, is abundant in allusions to philosophers and poets, for no one as he took such full possession of classic ground—like the possession of Canaan by Israel,

The heathen toil,  
The limpid wells, and orchards green,  
Left ready for the spoil.

Orpheus and Apollo were with him types of Christ,

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\* The difference in *degree* is acknowledged in the second *Apology*, where he says, that to the philosophers was given but a small part—to the Christian the full knowledge of the Word, even Christ.—*Apol.* ii. c. 8.

† *Some Account of the Writings and Opinions of Justin Martyr*, p. 47.

and this idea of their being so became current in Christendom. It penetrated the catacombs. The sybils were represented as prophets of the Gospel. This also was long a common notion, as the ceiling of the Sistine and the pavements of Siena to this day attest. The *Hortatory Address to the Gentiles* abounds in classical allusions and quotations, and while exposing the follies and falsehoods of heathenism, and the infinite superiority of the Gospel to philosophical systems, beautifully shows how Plato at times "touched the truth."

Clement's philosophical habits became more injurious to his theology than Justin Martyr's were to his. Whether those habits helped or not to throw into the background certain most important Christian doctrines, and to beget a habit of allegorizing Scripture—an error common in that age among practical as well as philosophical divines,—and certainly to be set down, in large part, to other causes than a mere fondness for philosophy—it is clear enough that such a predilection induced the great catechist of Alexandria to give undue prominence to knowledge as an element in religion, to impart to piety an air of mysticism, to confound objective truth with subjective feeling, to mistake human thought for Divine revelation, to exhibit Christ as a teacher more than as a priest, to represent regeneration chiefly as an effusion of light, and not enough as an inspiration of life and a baptism of love, to dwell upon what is obscure, or curious, or trivial, and to divide Christians broadly into two classes—believers and Gnostics—the children

of faith and the men of knowledge.\* In this latter instance we find, as we shall continually, that errors are often exaggerations of truths. Undoubtedly a distinction is to be made between the simple disciple and the scientific theologian, and it is quite proper that the young and tender Christian should defer inquiries into abstruse dogmas; and so far as Clement meant no more than that, we cannot find fault with him, but when his distinction implies something more, and encourages the creation of a kind of caste in the Church of God—when it seems to countenance, on the one side, an ecclesiastical aristocracy, and, on the other, reconciles the plebeian believer to ignorance and submission, his teaching becomes dangerous.

Clement's tastes by no means indisposed him to practical teaching. His *Pædagogic* is full of it, but, what is remarkable, anything but a philosophical treatment of morals is found there. It abounds in trifling details. He describes what a Christian lady's dress should be, even to the colour of her shoes; he prohibits gravy or sauce for the table, but allows sweetmeats and honey cakes to such as have a taste for confectionary.† Thus

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\* Illustrations of these points are supplied in his description of the Gnostic in the *Stromata*. Clement is remarkably defective in the arrangement of his thoughts; but Kaye, in his *Account of Clement*, has carefully grouped them under distinct heads. See particularly on the points above noticed, chapters v. and x.

† *Ped.*, lib. ii. c. 11; lib. ii. c. 1. It must be admitted, however, that Clement gives some excellent advice (lib. iii. c. xi. § 67), where he remarks that the true ornament of a woman is the wise management

he enjoins moderation in a multitude of specific instances, instead of following the example of Paul by laying down "general principles to be applied by the discretion and conscience of each individual." At Clement's sumptuary laws we only smile; but when we find him so explaining the principle of becoming all things to all men, as to tamper with the first maxims of morality—when we find him carrying out his theory of accommodation so far as to say that there are circumstances under which the Christian, like a physician, for the good of his patient, may utter what is apparently false;\* when, in

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of her house. The minuteness and strangeness of Clement's details indicate the childish condition of the Church at Alexandria.

\* *Stromata*, lib. vii. c. ix. (§ 53). ἀληθῆ τε γὰρ φρονεῖ ἅμα καὶ ἀληθεύει, πλὴν, εἰ μὴ ποτε ἐν θεραπέιας μέρει, καθάπερ ἰατρὸς πρὸς νοσοῦντας ἐπὶ σωτηρία τῶν καμνόντων ψεύσεται ἢ ψεῦδος ἐρεῖ κατὰ τοὺς σοφιστάς. The phrase κατὰ τοὺς σοφιστάς is commonly taken to mean, according to the method of the sophists, or as the sophists say; but it has been suggested to me by Professor Newth, that it is not to be taken as an appeal to the example of the sophists in justification, or even illustration, of any principle of conduct he may be supposed to be recommending, but as a clause qualifying the words ψεύσεται ἢ ψεῦδος ἐρεῖ—i.e. as sophists would call it. The true Christian always speaks the truth (see the strong statements in the preceding chapter); nevertheless he wisely adapts himself to the circumstances of his hearers, and does what, according to the sophists, your mere quibbling arguers—the men who think themselves clever, but look only at the forms of things—is called deception or falsehood, but which he denies is false in reality. That something of this sort is his meaning seems evident to my learned friend from the fact that in the very next sentence Clement refers, in illustration of what he has just said, to the example of Paul, who, though he condemned circumcision, yet circumcised Timothy. Paul only did what seemed inconsistent, but was not really so. This is ingenious and plausible, and I am disposed to admit this plea of a defender of Clement; yet still I cannot but look upon the doctrine laid down by the Alexandrian

maintaining this, he anticipates the modern Jesuits, something very different from a smile is provoked by such pernicious philosophy, however disposed we may be to put the most favourable construction upon Clement's motives, and to allow for all which may be charitably conceived as to the qualifications with which he might guard the use of so false a maxim. Clement has sometimes had hard measure dealt out to him. Let us be just. After all, it must be allowed that Christianity modified his views of philosophy, more than philosophy modified his views of Christianity. In his eagerness to make Christ and Plato agree, he did still more violence to the teaching of the Greek sage than to that of the Divine Saviour. If, like Justin Martyr, he failed to apprehend the nature of the difference between reason in the Pagan philosopher and revelation in the inspired Hebrew and seer, he did not omit to insist strongly on the fact that there was a difference, and a vast difference, between them—that the knowledge of the Greeks was limited, but Christ opens the Holy of Holies, and reveals a more sacred ascent in truth to the heirs of divine adoption.\* Nor must Clement be confounded with Plotinus—the Neoplatonic Christian with the Neoplatonic Pagan school of Alexandria. Though mysticism was a habit common to these thinkers, they were

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Father as exceedingly pernicious. It was carried to much greater length afterwards, when we have the doctrine of "economy," "phenakism," and "reserve." See the attempted justification of this sort of thing by Anglo-Catholics, in *Tract No. XC.*

\* *Stromata*, lib. vi., cap. viii. (§ 68).

specimens of very distinct species of that legion-genus: and Clement was to Plotinus what Coleridge was to Hegel. Whatever may be the points of resemblance between the two as to philosophy, infinitely distant were they as it regards religion. Clement felt that he was the object of the love and pity of a personal God. Plotinus sought after a mere idea—the absolute, the immutable, the One. Clement looked on every man as a brother, with a soul capable of divine light; Plotinus treated the herd of human beings as hopelessly blind; Clement made Christ crucified his joy and glory; Plotinus pronounced all that “foolishness.” Plotinus and his Eclectics were at war with Christianity. Clement, however injudiciously in some respects, sought to beat them with their own weapons. He did battle for Christianity on philosophical grounds. He was not to be blamed for carrying the war into the enemy’s country—only for certain positions he there selected, and particular tactics he there employed. He was a man of pure mind, of large intellect, of loving heart, and of strong zeal for Christ’s glory. His efforts in his catechetical school were most assiduous; nor should it be forgotten that it was a missionary as well as a polemical institution, formed for the conversion of Alexandrian speculatists, through the defence of Christianity against their objections and the attempt to solve or silence their philosophical doubts. On the whole, we must not quarrel with Clement for his mental tendencies and love of learning, for his wish to make philosophy the handmaid of religion, but only blame him for any false reasoning and any misuse of



erudition which can be justly charged against him. As a specimen of the true Christian philosopher of the ideal school—one who far surpassed him of Alexandria in clearness of vision and breadth of grasp, though little known to many students of Platonic and patristic literature, we would point to the noble Puritan, John Howe, who kept philosophy and the Gospel in their due relations, whose thoughts and expressions were tinged by his love for Plato, while the system he expounded was purely that of Christ, and who, when he availed himself of the use of classic lore, “took care to wash the vessel, that it might be receptive of divine communications.”\*

Origen exhibits to excess the idealistic temper of Justin and Clement. Their sentiments, however, must not be inferred from his. He dived far deeper into speculation, soared higher into allegory. If his predecessors made occasional excursions into fields of doubtful inquiry, Origen chose them for his home. The views of the former were unsystematic—the latter shaped his into a theory of the universe, in the midst of which he inserted Christianity. They said a few things that were erroneous; he, with prolific genius, started a number of heresies, or questions tending to heresy. Clement did not repudiate Bible histories; whatever allegorical sense he gave them, he recognised the literal as the basis; but Origen sometimes renounced the historical meaning altogether, to give only a spiritual signification, proceeding on the principle that Scripture is to be inter-

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\* SPADEMAN'S *Funeral Sermon for Howe.*

preted from *within*—that the mystical sense is the true sense, the kernel of which, history, or its appearance, is only husk.\* His threefold sense corresponded with his ideas of the threefold nature of man. The literal was the flesh or body related to the outward frame—the moral was the soul, given for the guidance of the practical understanding—the mystical was the spirit, designed for reason, the noblest portion of humanity. Further, if Clement prepared for Pelagian errors, Origen did so still more; and while the first was, on the whole, orthodox as to Christ's divinity, the second approximated to opinions afterwards developed by Arius.† Origen did much, by his fondness for the theoretical, to deteriorate the Christian school of Alexandria, and so to involve it in the fate of its heathen rival. Sliding off more and more from the revealed grounds of Christianity towards the abysmal depths of the subtlest metaphysics (its advocates becoming more and more worldly, contentious, and intriguing), the Alexandrian theology at last plunged into the darkest of gulfs, and perished—a warning for Christendom to the end of time. Origen had some apprehensions of the danger to others which he so much overlooked in his own case, and which his

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\* ORIGENES *De Princip.* l. iv. c. 14. In *Contra Cels.*, i. § 18, he represents Moses as carefully selecting and introducing into his writings phraseology which would convey a twofold sense, so that unlearned hearers might find therein plain directions of duty, while men of clearer insight would discover higher truths.

† εἰ πάντα διὰ τοῦ Λόγου ἐγένετο οὐχ ὑπὸ τοῦ Λόγου ἀλλ' ὑπὸ κρείττονος καὶ μείζονος παρὰ τὸν Λόγον· τίς δ' ἂν ἄλλος οὗτος τυγχάνῃ ἢ ὁ Πατήρ;—*Comment. in Joh.*, c. 1.

followers had not wisdom to avoid. And, taught by experience, we must own with him, that it is rare for men to accept the precious things of Egypt and use them only in the worship of God. "Most," as he says, "who go there are Hadad's (Jeroboam's) brothers, who invent heresies with a heathen dexterity, and set up calves of gold in the house of God."\*

The philosophical systems by the study of which these fathers nourished their constitutional tendencies, and from which they imported modes of treatment and principles of belief injurious to the interests of Christianity, have been often pointed out.† The writings of all the principal sages of the Greek schools contributed, in a measure, to shape their opinions; but undoubtedly the chief master whom they followed was Plato. There was more in the works of that wonderful man than of any other that could be blended with the truths of the Gospel; and, smitten as Clement and the rest well might be with the exceeding beauty of Plato's productions, they were further insensibly led to follow his example, to adopt his sentiments, and to use his language in cases where irreconcilable differences existed between the productions of his genius and the lessons of Divine revelation. Philo, the Jew, was distinguished among the great literary names of Alexandria; and he, by his Platonic system of theology, and his allegorical expositions of the Old Testament Scriptures, greatly contributed to

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\* ORIG., *Ep. ad Gregorium*, § 2.

† See Dr. VAUGHAN *On the Causes of the Corruption of Christianity*, in the second course of these Congregational Lectures.

mould the minds of those who studied in the Christian *didascalion* of that city. Like Philo, Clement believed that philosophy was essential to the right apprehension and use of what God has taught, and, following in the wake of the mystic expounder of Genesis, he compared philosophy to Hagar, and divine wisdom to Sarah, and insisted that as the patriarch was childless till he took to himself the handmaid of his wife, so the Christian will not bear fruits of knowledge till he allies himself to human philosophy. As much of the spirit of Clement, so also a large number of the comments of Clement are identical with those of Philo.\* And there is reason to apprehend that in those passages in which Clement and Origen, speaking of the Lord, use language that is unguarded and bordering on subsequent heresy, they were influenced by the Platonized theology of Philo. Oriental philosophy—the mysticism of the East, which, with its depreciation of matter and ascetic tendencies, embodied itself in the Gnostic schools of Syria and Alexandria, also, as we shall point out hereafter, largely affected some of the teachers of the Church.

We have roughly indicated a few particular instances, as serving better than any general statement to illustrate the effect of philosophy on early Christian intelligence and thoughtfulness. They show that mischief arose from the *misapplication* of philosophical inquiries; from prying into subjects beyond the reach of human knowledge;

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\* The influence of Philo on Clement, is largely illustrated by the Abbé F. J. Biet in his *Essai sur l'école juive d'Alexandrie*.

and from the blending of erroneous notions borrowed from heathen systems and associated with Christianity; but they do not furnish grounds for indiscriminate declamation against every form of Christian philosophy. There are minds which cannot exist without philosophising. To rebuke such for the ineffaceable stamp of their mental nature is equally idle and unjust. Wisdom and benevolence alike dictate that they who see the errors of such minds, instead of denouncing philosophy altogether, should seek to aid them in the right use of their faculties towards the attainment of sound scientific views of the Christian religion, which is only using another phrase for sound theology.

Passing from the Greek idealistic, we must be satisfied with one example of the practical and Latin school of Christian thinkers. What Origen was among the Greeks, says Vincentius Lirinensis, Tertullian was among the Latins, "nostrorum omnium facile princeps." Tertullian, however, enjoyed preeminence over Origen and all the other Fathers of his age, in this respect, that he was founder of theology in a new language. Latin Christian literature owes its birth to him. Pagan Rome had blotted out Carthage: Christian Carthage now took precedence of Rome. We hear Patristic Latinity in rich Punic tones before we catch the sound of it in any other. Theology was all Greek till Tertullian made it Roman. Neander calls him Antignostikos. The title is just in its largest meaning. He was not a Gnostic in the Clementine, any more than the heretical sense of the term. He had no sympathy with the Alexandrians.

Plato was anything but a favourite, and the African father insinuates that the demon of Socrates was of a very questionable character.\* Tertullian's theology, like himself, was realistic, practical, earnest. But though he eschewed philosophy, he could, like other men of his class, while condemning it in one form, use it in another;—be very un-Platonic, and at the same time very Aristotelian;—abuse transcendentalism and embrace metaphysics. In the treatise '*de Animá,*' Tertullian grapples with Plato with dialectic skill, and employs to boot speculations as wild as the Academy ever heard, and all in behalf of the corporeity of the soul.† Tertullian's case also shows, that if theology has suffered from Greek philosophy, it has also suffered from prejudices traceable to unphilosophical Jewish ceremonialism—that the narrowness and bondage of the one may do harm, as well as the stimulus to excursiveness supplied by the other.‡ And whereas the habits of the Greek sage are seen in Origen, the habits of the Latin lawyer are manifest in Tertullian, for he was wont as a Christian advocate to speak like a special pleader,§ with rare ingenuity, copiousness, and eloquence; but at times with arguments which, though earnestly adopted, will raise in many minds a suspicion of the orator's not being over-

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\* *De Animá*, c. 1. † *Ib.* c. 6. ‡ See Treatise *de Pœnitentiá*.

§ "Think of a poor earthborn man taking Christianity under his patronage. It was precisely the mistake of the Carthaginian to do this, as it has been the mistake of thousands of others. They have thought that the Gospel was *their* cause, which *they* had to manage to defend by their wit and chicanery."—MAURICE: *Lectures on the Eccl. Hist. of the First and Second Centuries*, p. 275.

scrupulous.\* He ably vindicated the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, though here he indulged in material analogies, which really degrade the ineffable truth they are intended to illustrate.† His representations of human depravity are much stronger than those of the Alexandrian school,‡ and he earnestly pleads for the literal resurrection of the body, a doctrine afterwards impugned by Origen.§ Though occasionally allegorizing what we should take literally, Tertullian was quite opposed to such a method of interpretation as prevailed in Alexandria, and some remarks of his on the interpretation of parables would be deemed in the present day very sober and judicious.|| He also took views of Divine grace and the human will harmonizing with those so fully developed by Augustine, but he did not exhibit what are justly deemed some grand peculiarities of Christianity more clearly and prominently than his philosophical brethren; thus showing that there was something beside philosophy at the bottom of that reserve. His adoption of the fanatical views of Montanus—so similar to those of modern Irvingism, the fervid African of the third century finding his parallel in the gifted and erratic Scotchman of the nineteenth—did not materially modify his doctrinal opinions, though they

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\* The *Apology*, to go no further, furnishes illustration of this. The statement as to miracles, and the number of the Christians, betrays a want of careful consideration, and too great an anxiety to make out a case.

† *Adv. Praxeam*, c. 8.

§ *De Resurrectione Carnis*.

‡ NEANDER, *Hist.* ii. 381.

|| *De Pudicitia*, c. 8, 9.

strengthened, as we shall hereafter see, certain principles in his character and teaching.

Still, wishing to illustrate early modes of thought by particular instances rather than general observations, let us add a few words respecting another representative theologian, one who though a Greek lived among Latins, and, in a measure, as large-minded men often do, embraced the tendencies of both. Greece was intimately connected with Gaul. Irenæus evinced the culture of the former in one of the cities of the latter. A beautiful picture occurs in the history of the Bishop of Lyons—a companion to that in the life of Justin. He speaks of having, in his boyhood, seen Polycarp sitting and talking, going out and coming in.\* The appearance and voice, as well as the instructions of that venerable father and confessor, had made a deep impression on the youth's mind. With the truth he caught the spirit of his instructor. That spirit was one of earnest zeal for essential principles, blended with charity towards those who differed in non-essentials. The name Irenæus—the peaceable—expressed the tone of his character and theology, except where fundamental error was concerned. Against that no warrior more fierce than he. His work on the Gnostic heresies exhibits his merits as a theologian. With more of practical good sense than Tertullian, he never attempted to explain the mysteries of Christianity, wisely observing, that in the natural works of creation subject to touch and sight, there are

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\* IRENÆI *Op.* Ed. Stieren, Vol. i. p. 822.



many things we cannot understand, which we refer to God as the first cause.\* And in his refutations of heresy, he continually appeals to Scripture authority, quoting passages in a manner which showed his familiarity with the sacred writings. At the same time, he also appealed to tradition; and so did Tertullian. It was in harmony with the Latin character to urge precedents and ancient opinions. The ‘κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας’ (canon of truth) of Irenæus, and the ‘regula fidei’ (rule of faith) of Tertullian, went beyond the ‘ἐκκλησιαστικὴν παράδοσιν’ (ecclesiastical tradition) of Clement and Origen.† The latter was founded on Scripture and an explanation of it; the former was built outside of Scripture, though coincident with it. No one can be surprised that within a hundred years of the death of the last apostle, importance was attached to the accounts of their doctrine, handed down by old men who had known them; yet even Irenæus urged tradition against the heretics; chiefly on the ground that the heretics had recourse to it as more conclusive than Scripture.‡ The champion would fight his enemies with their own weapons, but in doing so the Gallic Father unwittingly employed an instrument afterwards used in a very different manner by persons pleading his example. Could the early Fathers have had the present Romish view explained to them, they would, I apprehend, instantly

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\* *Adv. Hær.*, ii. 28.

† See DAVIDSON'S *Sacred Hermeneutics*, p. 109.

‡ *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, 4; iv. 12. See BEAVEN'S *Account of the Life and Writings of St. Irenæus*, 143.

have shrunk from it, yet, from defective experience and the effect of controversy, they were led to make statements on the subject of tradition tending to prepare for it a place in theological argument which they never meant it to hold.

To conclude. While we see the realistic tendencies of Irenæus, we recognise some of another description. In him the Greek and Latin were blended together, for, like Clement, he could Platonize on the subject of free-will,\* and though sometimes sober in interpretation, at other times he betook himself to allegory, and that in the worst form, by giving to the misdeeds of the patriarchs a figurative and mystical sense.†

Such are the examples we would offer of early Christian thinkers—the Greek, idealistic; the Latin, practical, and the blending of the two in one. We would now offer a few general observations on their theology. In regard to them all, it is to be observed that their works were mainly apologetic. They dealt in questions of immediate interest, and defended the citadel of Christianity against Jews, infidels, and heretics. They wrote on the controversies of their age, and hence they did not attain to the calm contemplation of Divine truth in its breadth and variety. Even the most philosophical were driven into what was partial and one-sided. Doctrines which have occupied much thought in subsequent ages were not distinctly present to their minds.

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\* See conclusion of Book iii. *Adv. Hær.*

† See Illustrations in *BEAVER'S Account*, &c., 221—231.

They saw generally the essential facts of the Gospel, but they did not make them all objects of scientific study. Their theology, regarded in the light of later research and thoughtfulness, appears defective and inaccurate.

Their idea of Christ's satisfaction did not amount to the idea of modern evangelical divines. They were generally content with a simply religious view of the death of Christ as the price of our redemption, without aiming at any philosophy of the atonement.\* The tendency was to look at it not so much in relation to Divine law as in relation to Satanic power. Redemption was a deliverance from the devil, yet not by simple force, but in a manner which would prove to him the righteousness of God, so says Irenæus—a view which, though foreign to our habits of thought, perhaps involves some principle of satisfaction to Divine law.† Neither was the forensic view (as it has been called) of the believer's acceptance, clearly brought out by the ante-Nicene theologians. They distinguished, of course, between the enjoyment of forgiveness and the possession of Christian sanctity; they also spoke of justification by faith, but not so as to indicate a distinct apprehension of the doctrine of Paul on that momentous subject. They

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\* HAGENBACH, *Hist. of Doct.*, i. 173. See passages in WALCHII *Bibliotheca*, 511.

† HAGENBACH, i. 176. Neander's account of the early doctrine of redemption is clear and full; but it is manifest from it that no distinct view was taken of the change effected by Christ in our relation to God. The *end* of redemption is evolved, but not the *method*. The subjective effect predominated in Christian thought.—See *Hist.* ii. 417. The passage at p. 420 deserves study in connexion with modern opinions.

were too apt to confound justification with holiness, and to insist upon the efficacy of baptism and martyrdom so as to undermine the Pauline principle of Christian righteousness.\* Nor were the doctrines of human corruption and Divine grace precisely defined. They remained simply as facts for the excitement of religious feeling: they were not yet transferred to the region of the understanding to undergo there a logical process and assume a strictly dogmatic shape. The ante-Nicene Fathers did theologize upon the Trinity—it was the grand problem with which they grappled; but after all which has been written by Bishop Bull and others on the subject, it is impossible to reduce their opinions into any harmonious and consistent form. The pre-existence and Divine glory of Christ in some sense, however, were almost universally believed by those calling themselves Christians. It cannot be proved that, among the heretics of the first two centuries, there were many who believed in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ.†

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\* Sometimes a passage seeming to express the doctrine of justification by faith, as evangelical Protestants explain it, occurs in a connexion which greatly impairs its effect. Few passages are as clear as this in Cyprian: "Every one who believes in God, and lives in faith, is found just, and long since, in faithful Abraham, is shown to be blessed and justified." *Ep.* lxiii. But read the whole Epistle. It is a long one against the use of water unmixed with wine in the Lord's Supper; and this passage respecting justification is incidentally introduced in a paragraph intended to show that the bread and wine brought to Abraham by Melchizedek prefigured the body and blood of Christ. Melchizedek's cup, says Cyprian, was mixed with wine; so was Christ's. It seems plain enough that Cyprian's mind dwelt more on sacraments than on justification by faith, whatever his notion of that might be.

† There appear to me to be considerable difficulties in the way of adopting Dr. Burton's opinion of the Gnosticism of the Ebionites, as

Christianity was looked upon from different sides, according to mental constitution, habit, and early training; preferences for some sacred writers above others are faintly traceable. In certain cases the influence of the teaching of James is pre-eminent; in others, that of Peter; in others, that of Paul; in yet others, that of John. Hermas, author of the *Shepherd*, exhibits the Gospel chiefly as a law, and is typical of the first; Cyprian, remarkable for deep experimental subjectivity, represents the second; the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, with his clear enunciation of Gospel righteousness, belongs to the third; Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria are chief among the fourth. Not by any means do we intend to intimate that, in these instances, the influence of any one sacred writer was exclusive. We only speak of what seems to have been predominant; and most entirely do we reject the Tubingen fiction of early Petrine and Pauline schools, out of a compromise between which, it is pretended Christianity as we have it, came forth in full development. Yet, as the most baseless theories have often in them faint colourings of truth, so here a ray of historic fact has been so far caught by the erudite, mystical, and imaginative Germans, that it appears something of a distinctive kind did exist in the early habits of looking at the objective

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expressed in his *Bampton Lectures*; but without entering here on that thorny subject, I would just observe that there can be no doubt that the main body of the early heretics were Gnostics, and that the Gnostics, whatever might be their ideas of Jesus, held the pre-existence and superhuman nature of the *Æon* Christ.

truths of Christianity, even as they still exist in the theological habits of modern Christian thinkers. Still, we believe there was a Catholic faith in the primitive age—an universal consent to certain infinitely precious and glorious verities.

Of the Antenicene theology, as a whole, we may remark that Christ in his Divine nature was the central point. On himself as the eternal Logos, as the coequal Son of God, the minds of the chief theologians reflected, while on Him their hearts reposed. His mysterious incarnation was a subject to which their thoughts were ever recurring, and which they regarded, not simply as a preparation for the atonement, but as a most significant fact in itself, a revealing of God to man, of Divine sympathy to human suffering;—a phase of truth perhaps not always sufficiently prominent in modern times. Much has been gained for us which the Fathers had not, we should take care not to lose any precious thing which the Fathers had.

## LECTURE IV.

SECOND AGE CONTINUED.—A.D. 100—325.

### INNOVATION.

**W**E shall now proceed to our second general inquiry—that which relates to the application of human thought and activity to Christian institutes. Thus we shall arrive at some notion of the ecclesiastical principles of the Antenicene age.

Whatever influences might warp theology, stronger influences were at work upon ecclesiastical organization and usage. Doctrines were rather imperfectly developed than corrupted in substance, though germs of error were being sown, as we shall afterwards more fully see; but the institutions of Christianity, as established by the apostles, underwent some startling changes before the close of the era under review. A revolution was wrought by the adoption of three principles—the sacerdotal, the ascetic, and the secular. The first involved an ignoring of the common rights of the Christian commonwealth; the second a limiting of the practical range of religious influence; the third a confounding of Christ's kingdom with the kingdoms of the world.

1. It has been acknowledged by a party who never would have made the acknowledgment if not driven to it by overwhelming evidence, that the tone of the New

Testament is unsacramental, that the impression it leaves is not that of a priesthood and its attendant system.\* Certainly nothing of the *opus operatum* can be found there—no recognition of spiritual and saving virtue communicated to material elements by priestly words. And it is equally certain that no priesthood is mentioned, except that of Christ and of all believers. Clement is like the apostles—unpriestly in claim, unsacramental in principle. So is Polycarp. Ignatius, owing to the suspicions attaching to his remains, is scarcely a valid witness; yet even in his case, it is open to question whether any such priestly and sacramental ideas, as obtained afterwards, can be made out from the writings which bear his name.† In the second century, however, sacramental efficacy appears. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement, Cyprian—Greek and Latin—philosopher and realist—all speak of baptism after a manner different from the New Testament, different from the apostolic Fathers. Some are less explicit than others; but the impression produced on us by them generally is such that we may employ the term *baptismal salvation*, as fitly expressing what they held.‡ They not only speak of the soul being illuminated and renewed in baptism: as often, perhaps more often, they connect

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\* *Tracts for the Times*. No. 85, p. 58.

† See ARNOLD'S *Fragment on the Church*, 75.

‡ In proof of this—the passages being so numerous—I would ask the reader to take a good edition of any of the Fathers I have named, and turn to the index for words referring to baptism, under which will be found no small number of references; and then to compare together the portions of the author's writings so referred to. Wickham, in his *Synopsis of Baptism*, has made a large collection on the subject.



with it the forgiveness of sins. The whole deliverance of the soul comes to be connected with baptism; some dwelling at great length upon the virtue of the water itself. The idealistic Clement calls it grace, illumination, perfection, chiefly looking at what is conveyed through it;\* but Tertullian, the realist, plunges into, and revels in, the very element, as the bath of salvation; declaring that such as undervalue the water are "snakes and basilisks, seeking after dry places," whilst he and every true Christian is a poor fish, following ΙΧΘΥΣ, Jesus Christ, "born in water, nor safe except when living in water."† This may appear an extravagant figure and nothing more; but the African Father goes on through many pages, insisting on the wonderfulness of water, evidently associating with the material of baptism some healing virtue. Such a manner of writing is at first sight very astonishing, yet the astonishment diminishes if we think of the character of the age—of its strong belief in occult powers—its craving after what is mysterious, and the agitation and excitement produced by the vivid remembrance of a recent epoch of miracles. The astonishment continues to diminish when we conceive of men, with such tendencies and associations, dwelling on certain passages of Scripture, such as Paul's allusion to the Red Sea, and Peter's reference to the waters of Noah;—when we further reflect that baptism was then, in a multitude of cases, coincident with a marvellous

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\* KAYE'S *Clement*, 437, gives numerous citations illustrative of this.

† *De Baptismo*, c. 1.

change in the human soul—the enormous gulf between paganism and Christianity being at once crossed through a faith, of which baptism was the visible symbol and uplifted standard; and when we proceed with such considerations, further to dwell on the aptness of inexperienced but imaginative and fervent minds, to confound the figurative with the real, the sign with the signification.

The Lord's Supper was originally a commemorative and eucharistic feast. It was Christ's passover. In connexion with it thanks were given for his one offering. A frequent sacrifice of praise, a constant sacrifice of self: both Christ required; both the eucharist expressed. How natural for minds as yet unwarned by any beacons, and amidst the flush and fervor of childlike love and devotion, to transfer the idea of sacrifice to the substance of the sacrament; to mistake the eucharist itself for a sacrifice. The transference took place: the mistake was committed. Then came the commemoration of departed souls at the supper of love, and Cyprian spoke of the oblation presented to God, in grateful remembrance of those who by their glorious death of martyrdom had ascended to a blessed immortality.\* Feelings and forms, in which there was piety as well as superstition, gathered round the institute, and a style of speaking became common, which, though by no means amounting to transubstantiation, did imply some sort of mysterious, but real, presence in the bread and wine of the sacramental feast. There was no controversy on the subject; ideas were vague and undefined; and probably no modern

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\* *Ep.* xii.

notion of the sacrament, had it been then logically propounded, would have been in exact accordance with their impressions and sentiments.\* Perhaps, it is not going too far to say they had no theory at all, but just expressed in strong language what they took for granted none would dispute; some thus, however, preparing, innocently, for a theory dishonourable both to revelation and reason, both to God and man.

Such sacraments created an exclusive priesthood; and here was a fundamental innovation on the original system of Christianity.

Pause for a moment to notice the doctrine of Divine revelation on the subject of priesthood. Both Judaism and Christianity are systems of mediation between God and man—mediation including sacrifice, or rather resting on it. They proceed on the fact that man is not now an innocent creature; that the original relation between him and his Maker is deranged; that over against Divine justice there is human guilt. These religions provide for the wants they recognise, and restore the destroyed harmony which they point out. Judaism

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\* See NEANDER, ii., 423—425, and HAGENBACH, Vol. i. 197. Justin Martyr and Irenæus connected the Logos with the elements. Tertullian and Cyprian, though sometimes giving a symbolical view, also refer to the supper under a supernatural aspect. Hagenbach observes that the negative view of Zwingle is represented by Origen; but the passages quoted by Neander show, that though Origen adopted (as might be expected from his theological tendencies) a figurative interpretation of the passages relating to the sacraments, yet he attached some sanctifying virtue to the outward supper after the use of the words of consecration.—ii. 427. The superstitious regard for the Lord's Supper is strikingly illustrated in the story told by Eusebius.—*Hist. Eccl.* lib. vi. c. 44.

comes between man and God, with its long line of priests, and its manifold sacrifices—its object being reconciliation. Christianity also comes between man and God, with its *one* priest and *one* sacrifice—its object being reconciliation. In the former case we have a typical arrangement, in the latter case a real arrangement. The one is shadow, the other substance. The doctrine of Paul is, that the old priesthood in succession, with its manifold sacrifices, is done away—that the idea, is taken up into, and absorbed in the priesthood and sacrifice of the one Christ. Priesthood and sacrifice, in their proper sense, as involving mediation and propitiation, have no longer a place on earth; centred in Christ, they have with Him been carried up to Heaven. Not that the Christian Church is thereby cut off from its one priest. It, too, is lifted up to “the heavenly places,”—a standing for it is secured on a higher elevation than the old Church could reach. The platform of the New Testament Church is on a level with the gate of Heaven—“Ye are come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to God the Judge of all, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, to the blood of sprinkling.” The human mediatorial priesthood—the priesthood of an order of men distinct from other men—therefore disappears of necessity. There is no room for it—no place left for it to stand in. The one Divine Priest is by the mercy seat. All Christians are at the door and are invited to enter. “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which

he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a High priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

The New Testament, then, proclaims the one priesthood of Christ, from which all besides are excluded. Not a word is said of human mediators. A spiritual priesthood, indeed, is described, but it is the priesthood of every believer. Allusions of a sacerdotal cast in the writings of apostles, where they do not occur in connexion with Christ, are connected with the character of his people in general.\* This makes the omission in reference to Christian ministers in particular the more remarkable, indicating that the founder of the Church intended to shut out pastors and teachers from even any especial, much more from any exclusive, order of priestly privileges, duties, honours, and titles.

Now, into this Divine system the innovation of a human class-priesthood was gradually thrust—thus subverting one of its foundation principles.

A distinction early grew up between clergy and laity, but it was in the sacrificial acts the former were believed to perform that the cause of subsequent sacerdotal pretensions is found. It is not clear that the idea of the clergy, as a class distinct from the laity, did at first involve the other idea of an exclusive priesthood. Nor, after the two became blended, did the scriptural doctrine

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\* The only exception is in Rom. xv. 16, where Paul refers to his *offering up*, not *for* but *of* the Gentiles.

of an universal priesthood totally disappear, for Tertullian, while he calls the bishop *Summus sacerdos*, expresses "the primitive Christian consciousness of the universal priesthood and the common rights grounded thereon."\* For the sake of order he restricts the administration of the Sacraments to the clergy, but he distinctly asserts the right of the laity to that, as well as to teach when circumstances required.† But after Tertullian the formation of a sacerdotal caste was completed. The eucharist could be celebrated only by a priest. It was a sacrifice. Who could offer it but one of sacerdotal caste? Peter's‡ idea of a Church of spiritual priests was now pushed further into the background, the rights of the Christian commonwealth were ignored, and the Jewish temple, with its Levite tribe and Aaronic family, became a model by which ecclesiastics fashioned their notions and did their work.

We are little surprised at this early appearance of an exclusive priesthood in the Church when we consider the perfect originality of apostolic teaching on the subject—when we look at the dissimilarity of all other religions to the Christian in this respect—when we bear in mind that many had been nurtured and all were encircled by priestly systems, that they daily saw men

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\* Neander, i. 267.

† *De Baptismo*, c. 17. See NEANDER'S *Antignostikus*, Ryland's translation, p. 333. Tertullian, with Roman practical good sense, while laying down broadly the law of ecclesiastical privilege, and asserting the priestly rights of the whole Church, connects with the practical working another important law, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 5—10.

in sacerdotal garbs, and witnessed worship by sacerdotal ministrations, and finally, when we remember that Judaic prejudices clung to many, that Judaic sects survived the first century, and that the Judaic spirit lived long after the form was gone.

The priesthood grew into a hierarchy. There was some distinction between presbyters and bishops in the second century; the distinction was marked in the third. The presiding elder became exclusive bishop. The other bishops, always called presbyters, but before only in common with him, now sunk into a position of inferiority, and were exclusively styled presbyters, as marking that inferiority; and thus the episcopacy of the third century was a step, but only a step, towards the diocesan prelacy of the fourth and fifth.

The bishop still was but the head pastor in a city, or the sole pastor of a village.\* Objectionable as the

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\* In the Council of Carthage, held A.D. 256, the majority of the bishops assembled were village pastors. In Palestine, too, it is evident that many of the Churches were rustic assemblies, and must have been of inconsiderable size; for in that country, which included a space of about 150 miles by 60, there were nearly fifty Churches. There were also twenty-eight or thirty-six bishops in Lycia, only one hundred miles square; and no less than twenty bishoprics existed within forty miles of Rome, of which vestiges still remain in the titles and functions of the six cardinal bishops associated in the Pontifical college. Abundant illustrations of the small extent of some bishoprics are supplied by Bingham, in his *Antiquities*, Vol. ii., who, by the way, proceeds on the principle of bishoprics having been territorial, whereas, from the conditions of the case, they could not have been more than congregational. It is useful for the student to compare Clarkson's *Tracts on Primitive Episcopacy* with Bingham's statements. For my own part, I can neither agree with the episcopal advocate in his exaggerated estimate of village populations, nor with the congregational controversialist in his low com-

growing distinction was in itself, it was scarcely hierarchical. But the combination of a priesthood with it soon made it so, and the increase of numbers, wealth, and influence contributed to the ultimate result. Deacons were Levites, presbyters were priests, bishops were high priests. The social rank of city pastors gave them precedence over rural ones. Bishops of chief provincial cities became a distinct class. At the Council of Nicæa they were called metropolitans.

The rights of the Christian commonwealth at large were powerfully affected by these changes. Magical sacraments in the hands of a priesthood invest the order with special attributes. Every priest, so armed, is potentate in a realm where he meets with no resistance; for the very conscience of the worshipper counts it an honour to honour him. The sacerdotal principle once admitted, leads to the overthrow of those individual and congregational rights which are conceded in the New Testament. The right of private judgment, and that of a voice in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, were not utterly lost in the second and third centuries—were only more and more faintly recognised, less and less valued and exerted. Their final loss arose from their non-assertion. It was not like a modern

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putation of the number of Christians in large cities. In the minds of those who are accustomed to associate with the name of "Bishop" the mitre, the crosier, and the palace, it must create a strange revolution of ideas to turn and look at one of the bishops of Palestine, Lycia, or Italy, in the third century, and to find him some poor and humble individual, perhaps a pious husbandman, ministering the word of life to a few simple-hearted cottagers.



struggle between priestly encroachment on one side, and the intelligent and manly defence of liberties on the other. It was no case of robbery and resistance. Instead of forcible invasion, there was quiet voluntary surrender. No priesthood could rise and reign where people appreciated their Christian privileges. The key to an explanation of sacerdotal despotism is found in the fact of Christendom's failing to realize the Divine ideal of its liberties.

2. A second innovation of the age under review was the principle of asceticism. The tone of the New Testament is no more ascetic than sacramental. Fasting is not ranked among the virtues. Not even as a method of self-discipline is it enjoined. It is merely recognised as a natural expression of anxiety and sorrow not to be ostentatiously shown. Marriage is pronounced honourable in all. Paul asserts his right to lead about a wife. The wedded life of bishops is sanctioned, if not enjoined.

A thoroughly different tone pervades the writings of the later Antenicene Fathers. It is remarkable, indeed, that we find so little about fasting for two centuries. Polycarp alludes to the practice. Justin Martyr joins fasting with baptism. But Irenæus, in his letter to Victor of Rome, speaks of a fast before Easter as an ancient practice, and Clement alludes to fasting as a weekly observance. Tertullian attaches great importance to it. And after the key-note struck by him, later Fathers abound in the praises of it as a cardinal virtue. Nor do we hear celibacy dwelt upon and enforced with zeal till we open the pages of the African Father.

Justin, according to his *Second Apology*, rejoiced in women remaining virgins seventy years. Clement of Alexandria condemns heretics for abstaining from marriage, but he praises it in the orthodox, pronouncing chastity, or a celibate life, the gift of God.\* Then, at last, the renowned presbyter of Carthage raises celibacy to the highest honour, and that too where one would least expect it:—in letters to his wife. Marriage is, in his estimation, a miserable necessity, “it is permitted, but what is permitted is not good.” He makes a proper distinction between marriage with a heathen and marriage with a Christian; but only the continent can attain to heights of spiritual excellence. While not yet a Montanist, he strongly condemns second marriages, and forbids his wife to wed again, should she survive him.† Even Cyprian scarcely mentions fasting; but no theme inspires him like virginity. Virgins are with him a sort of spiritual aristocracy, an angelic quire—souls in white, shining ones. “These,” he says, “are the flower of the ecclesiastical plant, the beauty and ornament of spiritual grace, a happy produce, a work of praise and honour, whole and uncorrupt, an image of God corresponding with the sanctity of the Lord, the more illustrious portion of the flock of Christ. By these and in these, the glorious fecundity, mother church, flourishes and rejoices, and by as much as this copious virginity increases, by so much does she augment her

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\* The passages are brought together in KAYE'S *Clement*, p. 456.

† *Ad Uxorem*, i. c. vii. The two books, *Ad Uxorem*, are classed by Neander among Tertullian's Antemontanistic works.

maternal joy.”\* Cyprian attaches great efficacy to their intercession, and entreats them to remember him when they should receive the reward of their spotless purity.† The Cypriatic virgins were a distinct class; they professed to retire from the world, but as they neither dwelt apart from the other sex, nor bound themselves by any vows, they differed considerably from mediæval nuns. The secluded convent has been judged an improvement upon the loose institute of the African church, which left its daughters exposed to the fires of temptation: perhaps it was, but then such an improvement is worse than questionable, for it is only the improvement which follows when an evil becomes consistent with itself.‡

Asceticism, as a principle, is intolerable. It is a violation of nature, of nature as God made it—good, true, pure. It is a violation of Scripture morality, because a viola-

\* *De Habitu Virg.*, c. 3.

† *Ib.* c. 24.

‡ The praises of virginity are copiously introduced in a curious work by Methodius, Bishop of Tyre, A.D. 290, in his *Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, a dialogue reminding one of Plato's *Symposium*. In the first speech, Marcella says, that to lead a virgin life is to lay hold on heaven, that it was little known under the law, that God, by degrees, curbed human waywardness, till the perfection of discipline was shown in the life of Christ, who, being the chief of priests, and the chief of prophets, and the chief of angels, was also the chief of virgins. In the third speech, Thalia refers to the command, “increase and multiply,” as fulfilled in the extension of the Church, and she remarks that marriage is to be regarded as diet on a fast day, allowed to a man who is sick: a healthy one will abstain altogether.—See DUPIN'S *Eccl. Hist.*, iii. c. 157. CLARKE'S *Succession of Sacred Lit.*, i. 201. MATTER, *Hist. de Christ.*, i. 239, observes that the Fathers regarded Christ as an ascetic, because of his fasting, his celibacy, and his poverty, and hence they recommended these examples of abstinence in him as the sure means of Christian perfection.

tion of nature; for the Bible is, of all books, in its teaching and precepts, really the most natural in the world. Yet, while asceticism is thoroughly bad, ascetics need not be so by any means. The man and the principle may be distinguished. The philosophy of Zeno was false, but no one can say there might not be a noble side to the character of a practical stoic. If, however mistaken, he made his life for the cause of virtue a battle with the whole universe of sensations, the cause was good, and the battle brave. However foolish the striver, there was heroism in the strife. It was soul asserting itself to be mightier than body, and doing so in order to attain goodness. The ascetic is a species of stoic. No doubt some of the Antenicene ascetics were full of spiritual pride; but still we cannot read of the self-mortifications of others, with such aims as they proposed, such motives as they avowed, without feeling that there was something in them which deserves veneration. Nothing can redeem a bad principle; there may be much to redeem the reputation of men deceived and led away by it. I believe the Antenicene ascetics were deceived and led away by their principle. They did not understand that which enslaved them. In their eyes it was an angel of light. They read in the Gospel about renouncing all for Christ, taking up the cross, crucifying the flesh, and keeping under the body, and they construed all that to mean *asceticism*. They found Paul advising celibacy as expedient, under certain circumstances; and what he recommended as means for one end, they mistook as means for another; what he

regarded in reference to official work and efficient service, they coupled with spiritual sanctity in general; and what he made a measure of occasional convenience, they made an everlasting law of merit.\* They transferred to earth the conditions as well as the spirit of Heaven, and Tertullian maintained, that those who wish to enter the celestial paradise must abstain from that which is excluded there.†

Asceticism went deeper into the heart of Christendom than merely to produce certain acts of self-denial. It affected, more or less, the whole range of religious thought and feeling. In the Scriptures there is a beautiful sympathy with nature as constituted by God—with domestic relations—with the common employments of mankind—with the order and end of society. They prepare us for eternity by teaching the sanctification of time—of time not to be spent in seclusion, but in social and useful occupations. Christ is the purifier of humanity; Christianity has the promise of the life that now is. The New Testament declares generally the secular relations of religion, the Old Testament illustrates them in biographical, historical, and poetical detail. Asceticism is the opposite of this humane spirit. It limits the range of religious influence. It confines it to the future, or to

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\* It may be observed, however, that the rules on this point, given in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, scarcely go beyond the advice given by Paul.—Mand. iv. The efficacy of baptism is strongly asserted in this fourth command.

† *De Exhort. Cast.*, c. 13. J. Damascenus, the mediæval systematic theologian, thus sums up the matter, “*Cœlibatus angelorum est imitatio.*”—*Orthod. fid.*, L. iv. c. 25.

the present, simply in relation to the future. It prevents uses being made of God's book to which it was evidently meant to be applied. It drives from the attempt to ennoble what is inseparable from nature and essential to society. Holy marriage in the eye of the ascetic is stripped of holiness. It is merely an accommodation to human weakness. Justin Martyr did not believe that the relationship of a mother could exist in a state of perfect purity. Eve, he said, was a virgin till she fell.\* The most beautiful form of human society thus dishonoured, all other forms of human society were also dishonoured, except—significant exception—except the ecclesiastical. One receives the impression from reading the most ascetic of the Fathers, that they regarded the whole constitution of things here on earth as only fit for cursing—whose end is to be burned.† To get out of the present life was their hope and prayer. "We have in this world," says Tertullian, "no concern but to depart as quickly as we may."‡ At times, when engaged in argument, he speaks differently. But this despair of the world and nature is the predominant feeling. It is true he was a Montanist, and in his extreme sentiments some of his contemporaries did not share. Clement was more moderate, had more sympathy with nature and society. But the Montanism of Tertullian in this respect became afterwards, to a large degree in Cyprian—to a

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\* *Cum Tryphone Dialogus*, c. 99.

† Jerome afterwards distinctly says,—“Difficile, imo impossibile est, ut et præsentibus quis et futuris fruatur bonis.”—*Hieron. Ep. Juliano*.

‡ *Apologeticus*, c. 41.

much greater degree in later Fathers—the orthodox spirit of the Church. Nicene and mediæval Christendom, as we shall see, became intensely Montanistic.

We must connect the ascetic principle with the habit of excessive allegory. The practice originated, no doubt, in a well-meant endeavour to derive from the Scriptures the greatest possible benefit. It was the injudicious and indiscriminate application of a method which, within limits, is sanctioned by an inspired commentator. It was countenanced by the example of philosophers, in the exposition of ancient poets. It was adopted in the school of Alexandria by Clement and Origen, especially the latter, who, as we have seen, pushed it to the greatest length; but it must be remembered, it was also employed by teachers who were not addicted to the study of philosophy, but were repudiators of it, even casting dishonour upon its pursuit. Asceticism, it would appear, had more to do with the habit of allegorizing than philosophy had. If not the mother it was the nurse of this sort of Biblical interpretation.\* Though I cannot say with Bunsen,† the *ultimate* cause of the fact is to be found in the despair into which the human mind had sunk with regard to the world of reality, yet I am persuaded that the despair of nature, which was a ground of the ascetic discipline, helped to strengthen the disposition to allegorize the venerable records of ancient Hebrew life. At

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\* The connexion between asceticism and the habit of allegorizing may be noticed in the case of the Therapeutæ. PHILO, *De Vita Contemp.*—FLEURY, *Ecl. Hist.* i. 95.

† *Christianity and Mankind*, Vol. i. 245.

the same time, however, it is possible that there might be hope as well as despair at the root of all this, for men had been so long under the thralldom of the material, that the spirituality of the gospel acted as a mighty charm upon them. A pathway out of the dark and troubled scenes of earth into the heaven of heavens was opened before their eyes. Wakened hope urged them to turn their backs on the lower world and climb upwards. Nor can one help noticing, in connexion with this asceticism, and this despair of material things, the conviction of the Fathers, that the world was on the eve of dissolution. Most eloquently does Cyprian dwell on the earth's old age, comparing it to the once green bough now sere and withered—to the once overflowing vein now trickling with almost stagnant blood.\* Mournfully does Tertullian speak of the order of nature and of the nearness of judgment, like the day of fear which overtook the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in the midst of their marrying.† And Justin Martyr anticipates the second advent of Christ as close at hand.‡ The idea was that the world must be dissolved and cleansed by flames, or Christ could not reign over it. Matter must be purged by fire ere it could serve as a palace for the Great King. Conflagration must come before the establishment of His throne, and the glory of His church. And the notion of the millennium, and that the bodily reign of the Redeemer—so common in the second and third

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\* *Lib. ad Demetrianum.*

† *Ad Uxorem*, i. v. Also *De Cultu fœm.*, L. ii. c. 9.

‡ *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, c. 28.



centuries among the beliefs of Christendom would be realized in the millennium—were connected with the idea of speedy accomplishment. Whatever Irenæus might say of the six thousand years\* of the world's continuance in its present state neither he, any more than the rest, expected that the reign of Christ was to be postponed for ages—they never dreamt of the earth lasting nearly two thousand years without the Lord's kingship over it; from the idea of such a dreary interval they would have recoiled.† So that whatever countenance the literal exposition of learned and pious men, who believe in a bodily reign of Christ during the millennium may receive from the early Church, it is quite certain that the immense interregnum which that system now supposes, would have shocked the primitive advocates of such a reign. Time has demolished one, and to them the most cherished part of their creed; has it not, therefore, impaired the force of any argument in favour of the other part founded on their belief?

But to return to the principle of asceticism, to which the allegorical method, and the millenarian theory are related, it may be asked whence arose this potent principle? It is not difficult to be accounted for, when we see the tendency of men to become unnatural in religion, to fall into superstition and extravagance with the hope of thereby promoting their salvation. Buddhism,

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\* *Adv. Hær.* V. xxviii. 3. See also *Ep.* of Barnabas, c. xv.

† Lactantius thought that the 6000 years was within 200 of its accomplishment.—*Inst.*, lib. 7, c. 7.

Brahminism, Soffeeism, Manicheism, and ecclesiastical asceticism are all of one family.\* They spring from one source deeply rooted, not in true, but in fallen human nature. Nor is it necessary to suppose that asceticism must have first come into Christendom through some mediate process. The seed out of which the rest sprang might produce this. There is no more difficulty in supposing it indigenous than in supposing it transplanted. The divine permission of it under the one view is no more mysterious than under the other.

There were circumstances which help to account for it. Social life had become utterly corrupt. The age of the decline of the Roman empire was not one in which homes were pure. The days of Lucretia and Virginia had long passed away. Nor had Christianity as yet cleansed the hearth as Anglo-Saxon people have it. Families, like ours, would have been a marvel to the Fathers. They saw how bad was the Roman world, and they had no idea of any other world till the earth itself should be changed. So they shrunk from it—from its homesteads

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\* Every one is aware of the prevalence of asceticism in India. It is not so generally known that monastic establishments are very numerous. From 700 to 800 examples of ancient monasteries are known at the present day, and probably there are many more. In Thibet, there are enormous monasteries; some, according to M. Huc, containing 15,000 lamas. Buddhist priests were, and are, sworn to celibacy and poverty, they shave their head, wear a peculiar dress, and, like mendicant friars, subsist by begging.—FERGUSON'S *Handbook of Architecture*, Vol. i. 31. This author further notices the striking resemblance between Buddhist and Roman Catholic worship—a fact admitted by missionaries of the latter communion. All they can suggest, by way of explanation, is, "Que le diable y est pour beaucoup."

and institutions, all polluted and corrupt. Asceticism was their refuge. Circumstances cannot vindicate their principles, but circumstances may excuse their conduct.

Though we need not go out of Christendom to account for the rise of the evil, we perceive principles at work beyond which contributed to strengthen it. We have scarcely mentioned Gnosticism at present. It now arrests our notice. Upon the difficult question of its rise, progress, and varied manifestations, it is not our business to enter. As a metaphysical question outside religious life and ecclesiastical history, we have nothing to do with it, only so far as it affected either or both, is it properly introduced here. It did influence both to a considerable degree. It was bravely assailed by the Fathers, they exposed its absurdities, exploded its doctrines; but there was in it an element for which their own minds had a strong affinity—that they imbibed. As stated by some historians, Gnosticism appears the most atrocious nonsense that can be conceived. Some of the Germans, on the other hand (and the Chevalier Bunsen is among them), have pronounced certain of the gnostics the profoundest thinkers of the age.\* The truth probably lies between. The common sense of Dr. Lardner taught him to see, in his *History of Heretics*, that the gnostics were not such utter madmen as many scholars

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\* Baur, the disciple of Hegel, extols the Gnostics as the true philosophers of their times, and the precursors of Jacob Boehmen, Schelling, Schleiermacher, &c. Gnosticism is no doubt often but poetry veiling truth under a drapery of strange images. This is eminently the case with the system of Valentinus. Gnosticism could be better felt by a warm eastern fancy than it can be now fathomed by the logic of an Anglo-Saxon.

believed. At the bottom of their strange forms of speculation, under their system of pleroma, and Æons, and Demiurgus, there lay elements of thought common to them and other thinkers. They saw the existence of evil, and they wanted to have that explained. As their system bore on that insoluble problem, it interests us here. Their maxim was, "Not to hinder is to cause." The Being, then, able to prevent evil, but not preventing it, is the cause of evil. Who is that Being? They said, it cannot be God; the maker of such a world as this must be some other power, some inferior power, the mere tool of fate, a blind slave who turns the wheel of the universe like Samson grinding in the prison-house of the Philistines.\* The Demiurgus could not be the supreme God. Their conscience taught them that the Supreme must be good; and so they sought relief from their difficulties in the idea of another and inferior being, the creator of this mundane system. Yet while their perplexed conscience drove them into Dualism, their reason arose and asserted its right to be heard, declared the absurdity of believing in more Gods than one, and so drove them back to Monotheism. Between the two systems confusion became worse confounded, and the origin of evil remained in as much darkness as ever. One thing, however, they held to: both the Dualist and the Monotheist counted matter as something inherently corrupt, the mother of all evil. Adopting this old notion, they looked on the material world as bad—the body as the soul's prison, in a deliver-

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\* AMPÈRE, *Histoire Lit.*, i. 177.

ance from which, and from the whole universe of matter, it could alone hope for freedom and purity. Some of the men who mingled Christian names with their speculations, called the God of the Hebrews—the God who, according to the Books of Moses, made the world—the evil Demiurgus. The recognition of creation as good was their abhorrence. The material portion of it was only evil.\* The soul, of better birth, was the victim of the world-framer. The Old Testament saints were all his slaves; their whole history an abomination. Jesus Christ was a good Æon, a pure benevolent spirit emanating from the primeval fountain of light, purity, and bliss. His mission was to deliver man from the Demiurgus, not by living in a body of his own (how could the Divine be so united to matter!) but by temporarily descending into some other person, or by assuming some fantastic shape. The Gnostics were conscious of the want of a redeemer, but they miserably perverted the revelation of the only one. They did not deny, but they misrepresented redemption. The atonement was ignored. The death of Jesus Christ was explained away. They did not believe in a sacrifice for sin. Salvation was not a deliverance from guilt and a spiritual renewal of the soul. The whole became a cosmological revolution, or

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\* It is curious to notice how Bardesan carries out the Gnostic principle into the consequence of the *accountability* of the material universe. “Nevertheless,” he says in his book of the *Law of the Countries*, “know ye that even those things of which I said that they stand by ordinance, are not entirely devoid of all freedom, and on this account at the last day, they shall be subject to judgment.”—*Spicil. Syriacum*, p. 5, by Cureton.

a purely intellectual and metaphysical change. Christianity was put in opposition to Nature, not to fallen Nature simply, but to Nature as constituted at first by its Creator. True Christianity, however, is opposed only to the evil now connected with Nature—to evil arising out of a departure from the highest laws of the universe—out of a violation of its original constitution and order. The redemption revealed in the Gospel is not a destruction of Nature, but a return to its perfect state.

The Gnostics did not see this. Adopting the tenets we have indicated, they drew different practical conclusions from them. Some treated Nature as too contemptible to be cared for in any way. Let it take its course. They were licentious. Others said, its impulses must be resisted, its power crushed. They gloried in asceticism. Asceticism was the glory of the religious portion of the Gnostics. As Irenæus and Clemens Alexandrinus inform us, the Gnostics believed “that to marry and to beget children was of the devil; and, under pretence of continence, were impious both against the creature and the Creator, teaching that men ought not to bring into the world other unhappy persons, nor supply food for death.”\* Celibacy was with them a cardinal virtue. Abstinence and contemplation were methods for attaining the highest excellence. To free the soul from the bondage of matter was to rise into godlike purity and holiness.

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\* I employ the words of Bishop Newton in his xxiii. *Dissertation on the Prophecies*.

Now, in two ways Gnosticism contributed to the asceticism of the Church. In the first place, probably the example of Gnostics acted *directly*. Christians saw themselves rivalled by heretics in what was esteemed the highest moral distinction. It is very true that Tertullian opposed the dualistic theory of Gnosticism, but, at the same time, he expressly exhibits the asceticism of those who were not Christians as a stimulus to such as were. He extols continence in the Pagan virgins who tended the vestal fires. He regarded this as a Satanic challenge to the Christian Church. "These things," he adds, "the Devil teaches his own, and is obeyed, and thus provokes the servants of God by the continency of his own."\* Surely heretics, no less than idolators, would provoke emulation. Tertullian might protest against the Gnostic condemnation of marriage, and in a certain way acknowledge its sanctity; but still, did he not show himself under the power of the spirit of the system when extolling the saintliness of the celibate, and when insisting on the inferiority of the married? A man may oppose error in some particulars at the moment when he is in bondage to the principle whence its life is drawn. In the second place, Gnostic principles contributed to the ascetic temper of the Church *indirectly*. That the philosophical Christians of the third century, while writing books against the Gnostics, became deeply imbued with some of their characteristic sentiments, is as clear as possible. They spoke of a Gnosis handed

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\* *Ad Uxorem*, i.

down to them as a mystery for the initiated. Notions of God borrowed from nature they were careful to avoid. They were ever striving to purify the doctrines of religion from everything earthly and material. The very name of Gnostic had a charm for them. Pre-eminence in Christian attainment was Gnostic perfection. It was a realization of the highest knowledge. Emotion was subdued. "The Gnostic desires nothing." "He has neither pleasure nor fear, anger, emulation, joy, or desire." "Like his master, he is exempt from all passions—perfectly apathetic (*ἀπαθής*)."\* In this way Clement of Alexandria expressed himself in his *Stromata*, when sketching the portrait of the Christian Gnostic.

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\* See passages in KAYE'S *Clement*, 193. Mr. I. Taylor, in his *Ancient Christianity*, notices particularly the hymns of Synesius as pervaded by a Gnostic tone, and observes that a copious citation of passages from Nicene writers might be made, presenting "not merely innumerable coincidences of expression, but many real analogies of doctrine and near approximation in feeling, and all tending in the same direction, to establish beyond a doubt the fact that the oriental theosophy, while formally repelled by the orthodox Church, had silently worked its way into all minds, uttering itself in the various modes of mystic exaggeration, and condensing its practical import within the usages of the ascetic system."—Vol. i. 175. I give a translation of some verses by this Synesius, a Christian bishop, Gnostic in phraseology—very much so in spirit. "Father of the worlds, father of the Æons, maker of the gods, it is holy to praise thee. The intelligences praise thee, O king—thee blessed, the cosmogi hymn, those lamplike eyes, and starry intellects, round which dances the illustrious body of the world. Thee all the race of the blessed praise, those that are about the world—those who are in the world—the zonic and the azonic, who govern divisions of the world—wise defenders, stationed about the illustrious pilots of the universe, whom the angelic love sends forth." He also speaks of the incorruptible intellect as "a Divine emanation diffused everywhere, embracing the sphere of the heavens, and preserving all things in various forms."



The influence on his own mind of the system he in some respects opposed is obvious throughout his book. The Gnostic doctrine of matter is seen moulding his opinions, tinging his language. What is material, physical, natural in the constitution of man is depreciated. There is a constant struggling after what is utterly inconsistent with the conditions of our present existence. Clement and the other Christian fathers, it is true, rejected the Gnostic doctrine of the *intrinsic* evil of matter and its origination by an inferior and fallen power; they devoutly ascribed the creation of the universe to Almighty God; but this did not prevent them from considering matter as *now* thoroughly corrupted, as the very seat of depravity and the great hindrance to Christian holiness. And thus Clement, while in his asceticism he was more moderate than many, was really laying down principles which were the grand bulwarks of all ascetic practice.\*

In conclusion, as it regards the influence of Gnosticism

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\* Gnosticism affected Christianity in another way, not often noticed. "We cannot be astonished," says Didron, "to find that Gnosticism should have penetrated into Christian art, and exercised a powerful influence even on our western cathedrals. M. Raoul Rochette has, in fact, proved the most ancient images of Christ, the Virgin, and the chief apostles, to have been of Gnostic fabrication, and from that source, impure as it was, we probably derived the portrait of Christ, of his mother, and of the disciples."—*Christian Iconography*, 191. Translation, Bohn's Edit. It should be further remembered that Gnosticism powerfully influenced mediæval Christendom through the apocryphal gospels. Those gospels have been shown to be of Gnostic origin. They depreciate matter, and ascribe docetic, unreal, and fantastic miracles to Christ (see, for example, the *Gospel of Christ's Infancy*, § xxxvi.) The circulation of these Gnostic fables, to say the least, was commonly winked at in the middle ages; and their effects are plain enough in the windows, halls, and doorways of old churches all over Europe.

on Christendom, it may be observed that Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage divided between them a large portion of that system which both formally opposed. Gnosticism was compounded, in no small degree, of mysticism and fanaticism. Clement was mystical,\* and Tertullian fanatical; but the mischief done by the Greek idealist was probably not so great, certainly not so continuous, as that produced by the Latin realist, who bequeathed his corruptions of Christian morality to be the plague and curse of Christendom for ages afterwards. Clement is the type of the intellectual *élite* of early Christendom; Tertullian of the multitude when inspired with earnestness.

Another source whence asceticism was nourished is to be found in the influence of Montanus, the Phrygian fanatic. That influence strengthened the tendencies of Tertullian, the disciple who, in power, far surpassed his master. Of all heretics, Montanus was most tenderly treated by the Fathers; but their liberality has been exceeded by a modern

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\* Alexander Knox, in his *Remains*—referring to the sixth and seventh books of the *Stromata*, justly remarks, that Clement was the first to make mystical religion the subject of direct description. Mysticism is apparent enough in the passage in which Clement describes the soul as passing beyond the state of the holy orders, as holy among the holy, transferred in a state of integrity from souls which are in a similar state; advancing continually from better to better places, and embracing the Divine contemplation, not in a mirror, or through a glass, but *feasts eternally upon the vision in all its clearness*.—See *Stromata*, lib. iv. 35. I do not mean to say that Clement directly and consciously borrowed mysticism from the Gnostics, but that the element of mysticism which pervaded Gnostic theories, and the Neoplatonism of Alexandria, had great power over his mind.

Roman Catholic writer. According to Dr. Newman, Montanus only came a little too soon. A few centuries later the heretic would have been a saint. The pretender to the revelations of the Paraclete is regarded by the author of the *Essay on Development* as his own forerunner—not in one principle or doctrine only, but in his whole system. He says: “Montanus is a remarkable anticipation or presage of developments, which soon began to show themselves in the Church, though they were not perfected for centuries afterwards. Its rigid maintenance of the original creed, yet its admission of a development, at least in the ritual, has been instanced in the person of Tertullian. Equally Catholic in their principle, whether in fact or in anticipation, were most of the other peculiarities of Montanism, its rigorous fasts, its visions, its commendations of celibacy and martyrdoms, its contempt of temporal goods, its penitential discipline, and its centre of unity. The doctrinal determinations and the ecclesiastical usages of the middle ages are the true fulfilment of its self-willed and abortive attempts at precipitating the growth of the Church.”\* A thing so like what was realized in mediæval Christendom, so favoured by some, so kindly treated by most, so zealously embraced and eloquently recommended by Tertullian, could not fail to help on the consummation which, according to Dr. Newman, it too eagerly anticipated. Imbued with an ascetic spirit from the beginning, the Carthaginian presbyter naturally adopted the

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\* *Essay on Development*, 351.

extravagancies of his new oracle, and, throwing them into his own writings, transferred them over to the Churches, which continued to read and admire his productions after he had separated from their communion. But, in addition to what he did to make Christendom Montanistic, his influence upon the mind of Cyprian contributed to that end, for no one, so powerful and popular in the advocacy of ascetic discipline, appeared in the third century as the Bishop of Carthage. It is curious to notice how that asceticism which is the pride and strength of a Church so hot in its hatred of heretics, should have received the strong impulse it did from a teacher whom it has branded with that most odious of names.

The influence of Montanus on Tertullian, of Tertullian on Cyprian, of Cyprian on Augustine, and of Augustine on the Church of the middle ages, presents a chain of facts worthy of the special notice of the ecclesiastical student.

3. The third innovation we are to consider is the principle of secularism:—

In apostolic times, it appears from the New Testament, that *visible* churches were distinct communities independent of each other, and that the *Catholic* or *universal* Church, was considered to be *invisible* and spiritual, consisting of the whole family of the redeemed in earth and heaven, united by the connexion of the members with the one *invisible* and *Divine* Head—the Lord Jesus Christ. It is described there, not as one great visible society, presenting itself to the eye of the world clothed

with the pomp and circumstance of an ecclesiastical empire, but as a spiritual fraternity, a brotherhood of the faithful—united by ties which the world's eye cannot discern—apparently scattered, but really one. But this notion of many *visible* and *independent Churches*, and of *one invisible* and *Catholic Church*, came to be superseded during the first three centuries by other notions. The *visibility* which formerly belonged alone to separate congregations became associated with the *Catholicity*, which had before been esteemed invisible and spiritual, and thus the idea of *one visible Church*—one Catholic and organised society was evolved. An *outward unity* was confounded with an *inward unity*, hence a connexion with the visible Church was held to be essential to salvation; and gradually the principle of the independency of individual Churches, and the spiritual character of Christ's universal kingdom slipped out of sight. The magnificent idea of one visible and organised Church, patent to the eyes of the world, filled the minds and captivated the imagination of Christians. The idea is developed in Cyprian's book on *Unity*.\* He makes out episcopacy to be the bond and expression of the Church's union. "The Episcopate," he says, "is one, of which part is held by each bishop—the Church also is one, which by its fruitfulness is increased into a multitude;" and then he

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\* *ἐκκλησία καθολικὴ* occurs in Ignatius, *Ep. ad Smyrn.*, c. 8. Irenæus lays down the maxim, "Ubi enim Ecclesia ibi et Spiritus Dei, ubi Spiritus Dei, illic Ecclesia et omnis gratia." The order of his words is very significant. For Tertullian's views, which first resembled those of Irenæus, and then were altered by his Montanism, see NEANDER'S *Antignostikus*, 332—336.

illustrates this unity of the Church and Episcopate by comparing it to the rays which flow from one source of light, the branches which spring from one tree, and the streams which flow from one fountain. But what is the one origin to which the Father refers? Hear his own words. "The Lord said to Peter, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.' And, again, he said to him, after his resurrection, 'Feed my sheep.' Thus Christ built his Church on *one*,\* and committed his sheep to be fed by him. And although he gave equal power to the apostles after his resurrection, yet that he might manifest unity, he declared, by his own authority, that the origin of this unity should begin from one. For though the other apostles were endowed with as much power and honour as Peter, yet the beginning was from one; and the primacy was given to Peter, that the one Church and Cathedra of

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\* "The oneness here spoken of is, according to Roman Catholics, fulfilled in the organization of the *whole* Church, whereas, according to Anglo-Catholics, it is fulfilled in each bishopric; each bishop, viewed by himself, being a full representative and successor of St. Peter." This appears in a note to the *Treatise on Unity*, in the Oxford translation of Cyprian, edited by J. H. N., p. 134. How the Anglo-Catholics can, in harmony with their view, interpret the following sentence in Cyprian, one is at a loss to conceive:—"She stretches forth her branches over the universal earth in the riches of plenty, and pours abroad her bountiful and onward streams; yet is there one head, one source, one mother, abundant in the results of her fruitfulness."

Christ might be manifest. He who does not hold this unity, how can he believe himself to hold the faith? He who rebels against the Church, he who deserts the *Cathedra* of Peter upon which the Church is founded, how can he consider himself to be in the Church? when the blessed Apostle Paul teaches and shows the sacrament of unity, saying, ‘There is one body and one spirit, and one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.’ Which unity we ought firmly to hold and vindicate, especially we who are Bishops who preside in the Church, that we may prove the existence of one indivisible episcopate.”\* We see here a new notion of unity—not a spiritual unity, consisting in a multitude of hearts linked by the chain of Christian faith, hope, and sympathy—but a visible unity bound up in episcopal bonds. The essence is not in the oneness of hearts and minds, but in the oneness of the *episcopate*. And though Cyprian held the *equality* of *Bishops*, and did not give to the Bishop of Rome a rank above the rest, yet he speaks of Peter so as to give the Romanists a handle for asserting the primacy of that apostle, whence they deduce an argument, though certainly most sophistical, in favour of the primacy of his pretended successors.† “It must be confessed,” says Neander,‡ “that this idea was at first very confused and indefinite, but after the false principle had once been admitted, and firmly rooted, it might be just so much the more intro-

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\* CYPRIAN, *De Unit.*, cap. ii.

† *Epis.* 55.

‡ *Church Hist.* i. 291.

duced into such an indefinite representation." Here, then, we have the dim shadow of that boasted unity of which Rome afterwards became the centre, and which was worked out by ecclesiastics, striving to give it a perfect embodiment.

How was its realization sought? The Churches of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria were proclaimed the conservators of tradition, the oracles of orthodoxy. Gradually they rose to an ecclesiastical position, corresponding with the political one, in which their respective cities were placed relative to the provinces and the empire at large. Contemporaneously with this change provincial councils appear—assemblies composed of bishops and presbyters,\* who consulted on ecclesiastical affairs, and bound the people by their decisions, the bishop of the metropolitan Church presiding over the assembly. No divine authority, in the first instance, was pleaded on behalf of these assemblies. Both Tertullian and Cyprian refer to them as a human institution.† That they were formed on the model of political meetings, of which the Greeks furnished notable examples, is a common and well-sustained opinion.‡ The resemblances, also, between the relative position of Churches among themselves and of the cities in which they were placed as just noticed, and also between the

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\* Sometimes deacons were admitted.—See EUSEBIUS, *Eccl. Hist.*, lib. vii. c. 28.

† TERTULLIAN, *De Jejuniis*, c. 13. CYPRIAN, *Ep.* 75.

‡ MOSHEIM'S *De rebus ante Const.*, 264. MATTER, *Histoire du Christianisme*, i. 136.



rising hierarchical distinctions and the grades of honour and power in the civil magistracy, are so very manifest, that not only Protestant, but even Roman Catholic writers, have admitted this organization of the Church to be a copy of that existing in the State.\* The innovation of secularism upon the spiritual nature of the early Churches here meets us in no doubtful form—to work, as we shall see, with far more potency in the next age. Secularism at present does not come out so boldly as priestism and asceticism—it could not, owing to the unacknowledged position and the often persecuted condition of the Churches by the imperial power. That which so palpably let and hindered the development of the tendency was not yet put out of the way, but the tendency was there. A secular element tinges the idea of Cyprian. With his higher qualities, with his love of holy order—in which respect we might compare him to Hooker,—and with his great talents for government, his strong resolute will, and his aptitude for ecclesiastical statesmanship, do we not further see combined something of the Latin politician intent on the establishment of an absorbing empire?

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\* DUPIN, *Antiqua Ecclesie Disciplina*.—MATTER, *Hist. du Christ.* i. 138.

## LECTURE V.

SECOND AGE CONTINUED.—A.D. 100—325.

### INNOVATION.

**B**EFORE proceeding to the main subject of our present Lecture, which is an inquiry into the religious life of the second age, we beg to recur for a moment to the topic in our last Lecture, and, in addition to the particular considerations tending to abate the startling effect of early innovations, just to indicate some facts of a general character, bearing in the same direction. The imperfect apprehension of the Divine ideal of Christianity by the Apostolic Churches, which was noticed in a former Lecture, must be carefully borne in mind. If by some of the contemporaries of inspired men the Gospel was but partially understood, and elements of error were admitted and cherished, it is not astonishing that the Churches of the second age, starting from the common level of the Churches of the first, should evince, at least, an equal amount of fallibility and weakness; and, in addition to errors already broached, come under the influence of others unknown to their predecessors.—Moreover, the inexperience of the early Christians presents a contrast to the large and varied knowledge accumulated through after ages. It was not to be expected they would foresee the consequences

involved in much which they allowed.—Further, it should be recollected that in the second century the books of the New Testament were not bound up together, and many Christians would possess but a partial knowledge of revelation.—It should be noticed, too, that divines generally were ignorant of Hebrew, and were ill qualified to explain the Old Testament, while the commonly loose method of quotation from the New Testament shows how a critical examination of the sacred text was neglected. This, as well as the misapplication of passages, betrays the want of qualification for testing the theological opinions and the ecclesiastical principles silently growing up through the age in which they lived.—Now as these facts help to explain the origination or countenance of error by early teachers, the adoption of error by the taught can surely not be wondered at—nor their failure to claim or exercise their individual and ecclesiastical rights, nor yet their willingness even to surrender them, especially when we consider the low level of theological intelligence in the second century. Take an illustration.

There is a book which was at that period, and for some time afterwards, very popular, but now generally treated with contempt,—I mean *The Shepherd*, written in the name of one Hermas, a Roman citizen. It consists of apocalyptic visions and similitudes, with an abundance of supernatural machinery. If the writer did not mean it should be regarded as inspired, yet it certainly was quoted as Scripture, and read as such to religious assemblies in Greek Christen-

dom.\* Whether we take it as a mould or a mirror of Christian thought,—and from its popularity it must be regarded as one or the other,—it conveys an impression anything but favourable to the Churches that adopted it. Niebuhr used to say he pitied the Athenian Christians for being obliged to hear it read in their meetings, and the Chevalier Bunsen, in the first edition of his *Hippolytus*, calls it “that good, but dull novel.”† The whole work, as a key to the popular thinking of the age, deserves study, both in reference to what it omits and what it includes. It shows how religion was regarded practically, and that the minds of Christians had begun to be agitated by questions very

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\* The anonymous author of a fragment on the Canon is the first who mentions this work, and he protests against its being used in the Church, either among the Prophets or the Apostles. Origen spoke of it as a writing very useful, and he says, “as I fancy divinely inspired.” To him the idea of its inspiration owes currency. Eusebius and Jerome only repeat the report, without confirming it.—WESTCOTT *On the Canon*, 217, *et seq.* I would add, that Tertullian speaks of it as apocryphal and false. Mr. Westcott further observes: “The whole tone and bearing shows that it is of the same date as Montanism; and the view which it opens of Church discipline, government, and ordinances, can scarcely belong to an earlier period. Theologically the book is of the highest value, as showing in what way Christianity was endangered by the influence of Jewish principles as distinguished from Jewish forms.”—220. Its spirit is legal and ascetic, and indicates strong feeling in favour of ecclesiastical order and organization.

† From the second edition of his work, it however appears that the learned German has discovered in it such genius that he compares it to the *Divina Commedia* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Few Italians, I apprehend, will deem this any compliment to the Florentine poet: certainly few Anglo-Saxons will count it any honour done to the Bedford puritan. Comp. *Hippolytus*, 1st Edit., i. 315, with *Christianity and Mankind*, i. 182.

different from those suggested by apostolic teaching. Outward discipline—penance to restore the fallen—forgiveness of sins after baptism—re-admission to church communion—these are the grand questions, as Bunsen says, contemplated by *The Shepherd*, and he answers them, the same author remarks, “in a childlike, yet mysterious and authoritative manner.” It will appear, I think, to most readers of *The Shepherd* that if the moral feeling of the book be childlike, its mental character is anything but manlike. It has some poetry, but more childishness. It shows that they who heard it might comply with one injunction—“In malice be ye children,”—it afforded no help with regard to another—“In understanding be ye men.” Compare Bunyan with Hermas, and the manliness of popular puritan thought in the seventeenth century appears in enviable contrast with the puerility of popular Catholic thought in the second and third. The fame and influence of *The Shepherd* are very significant. It is plain that in an age when that book could be very popular, there must have been a small amount of sound theological intelligence, and much in the thoughts of men that was weak and worthless, and hence, at such a time, innovations on apostolical Christianity appear by no means wonderful.

We now reach our *third* general inquiry touching the subject of religious life, and its modifications by the theology and Church system of the age.

Upon our inquiring into the actual religious life of

Christendom, during the second and third centuries, we are met by facts which demand classification.

The writings of Clement of Alexandria present a picture of society in that luxurious city. He takes us into the banqueting room of Roman architecture, elegantly furnished, and there are crowds of guests, with dyed hair, garlands, and perfumes—in dresses of costly material and fashionable shape, wearing strings of pearls and precious stones, and chains of gold. They drink out of the richest cups—the pipe and the flute are heard in their feasts; they delight in birds, dogs, and monkeys. He conducts us into the streets. Here are women with purple veils and gilt slippers. Rebuked for their finery, they ask, “why should we not use what God has given?” Some are going to the baths—men and women together—or to the theatre, or to the circus, or to some such place of amusement.

But are these people Christians? According to what Clement says, some of them profess to be so. He says they change like the polypi on the rock. They are grave in church, but gay when they get out. Having waited on God in worship, they haste to amuse themselves with the love ditty and the stage-play. In contrast with this Clement gives his ideal of a Christian’s outward life. He is plain in his habits, indeed very abstemious, eating fish rather than flesh—satisfied with one meal a day, or at most two—and eating dry bread for breakfast without drinking. His clothing is cheap—strong, but not fine. He wears a ring on his little finger, with the device of a dove, a fish, a ship, a lyre, an anchor—all emblems

of holy things. His hair is thin, his beard thick—he never stains either, and never puts on a wig. He eschews garlands, flowers, and perfumes, as well as luxury in furniture—also musical instruments and profane songs. But he wrestles, plays at ball, walks, digs, draws water, chops wood, dresses himself, puts on his own shoes, washes his own feet—in short, is self-helpful. He sleeps on a bed neither rich nor soft. He rises at night to pray—gets up early and reads. The Christian lady is moderate in all things. She does not use dyes or ointments, wears no flowers, no purple robe, no embroidered slippers, no gold chains. She performs domestic duties, spins, bakes, cooks, and makes the beds. She is particular in her actions, and in gestures, gait, looks, and tones, avoids the appearance of evil.

Here then we have the outward life of professors at Alexandria, in forms deplored and in forms admired.\*

Turn to another picture. The writings of Cyprian disclose a different phase of things at Carthage. His virgins were addicted to strange practices—professing spotless purity, they lived on terms of intimacy with the other sex shocking to an ordinarily moral mind.† The

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\* All these particulars are found in the second and third books of the *Pædagogæ*. The *Hortatory Address* was designed for the conversion of heathens. The *Pædagogæ* was meant for young Christians in the infancy of their faith. The inward and spiritual life of the Christian is described in the *Stromata*. The piety there is mystical.

† See *Ep.* iv. The practice of the clergy having unmarried women living with them in their houses is first noticed by Irenæus, who charges it on the heretics. Tertullian imputes it to Catholics. It was an accusation brought against Paul of Samosata, and was forbidden by the third Canon of Nice.—See ROUTH'S *Reliq. Sacræ*, i. 506.

unnatural asceticism he did so much to promote was sometimes a cover for gross sensuality. The violation of nature roused its nemesis in a violation of morals. The holy man's letters afford a terrible commentary on the working of his own well-meant but wretched system.

Once more—as to Rome, it is remarkable how little we know of its early Christian history—how ignorant we are of the biography of its bishops, and the manners of its people.\* But one episode has of late become prominent and popular:—that of Callistus, an occupant of the episcopal chair of the Eternal City, whose name is honoured by its connexion with the catacombs. He is described by Hippolytus as a thorough villain, a swindler, a hypocrite, an impostor, a rogue, and a heretic. Yet, curiously enough both Hippolytus and Callistus are saints in the Roman calendar.† The effect of the antinomian teaching of the latter must have been as horribly immoral as the tendency of his character, if we are to believe the Bishop of Portus.

The apocryphal writings of the second and third centuries are not without value, as serving further to illustrate the state of mind and the order of morality at

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\* Mr. Shepherd, in his *History of the Church of Rome*, has very ably pointed out this fact. But in his rejection of the Cyprian letters and other documents, which scholars in general hold to be genuine, I cannot agree. It appears to me most plain, that had the letters ascribed to Cyprian been the product of later ages, they would have given a far more glowing picture of the state of the Church, and would have conceded much more power and authority to the Bishop of Rome. The difficulties involved in Mr. Shepherd's method of dealing with patristic literature are vastly greater than any of those which he attempts to remove.

† See BUNSEN'S *Hippolytus*, i. 391.



the time existing in Christendom. Many of those productions—the worst among them—were no doubt of Gnostic origin. Irenæus expressly states, that the Gnostics forged innumerable spurious books to pervert the ignorant and unwary; but besides *their* labours in this direction, there were men to whom the taint of doctrinal heresy did not attach, who were similarly employed. They wrote pieces under the name of our Saviour, His apostles, and followers. “The letter of Jesus to Abgarus,” “the Preaching of Peter and Paul,” “the Acts of Paul and Thecla” were of this class; to which may also be added “the Sibylline Oracles.” Jones, in his “Book on the Canon,” speaks of their design as “more pious than honest;” and Casaubon says he cannot but resent the practice of many, in the earliest ages of the Church, who reckoned it an action very meritorious to make additions of their own to the truth of the Gospel, that Christianity might so be better recommended to the world.\* To say nothing of the objectionable sentiments in some of these writings, and of their idle fables and abominable falsehoods,† the very fact of Christian men having supposed that they could promote the cause of their Master by imposition and fraud, shows how imperfectly they must have apprehended His teaching, how imperfectly they must have imbibed His spirit.

But facts of this class, viewed alone, would give an incorrect impression of the life of Antenicene Christendom. It would be monstrous to imagine that all Alexandrian

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\* JONES *on the Canon*, Vol. i. 40.

† See *Acts of Paul and Thecla*.—JONES, ii. 399.

Christians were worldly or formal, that all Cyprian's virgins were impure, that all the Bishops of Rome were cheats and impostors, or that spurious gospels and other works of the kind were generally welcomed. With regard to the Acts of Paul and Thecla, Tertullian informs us that it was composed by an Asiatic Presbyter from love, with a view to increase the apostle's fame, but that being convicted of the forgery he was deposed from office. Nor must the habits of one place or period be deemed specimens of habits in all. I believe the picture drawn by Bunsen of the Christians of the third generation after Christ to contain much truth. "The Christians themselves knew of no sanctuary but that within themselves; of no temple but of that built up in their hearts in the act of common prayer and Christian life; of no God but of Him whom they carried in their bosoms, as the old saying of Ignatius (the Theophorus) has it; of no sacrifice but that of their own thankful heart; of no mediating sacerdotal caste or order; indeed, of nothing and no one between God and themselves, except the Saviour whose Spirit they felt was with and in them. The more of them were killed, the more numerous they became; their holy life, truthfulness, mutual brotherly love and dignified courageous death, made converts of the bravest men, even of their gaolers. The mothers and sisters clung to the pure and dignified words of womanhood and marriage. The poor grasped at what they wanted, association and brotherhood."\*

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\* BUNSEN'S *Hippolytus*, i. 63.

This picture of the third generation, however, the age of Ignatius, would not be true of the eighth, the age of Cyprian. Sacerdotalism, asceticism, and secularism, in his time, were visible in their effects. They gave a tinge to Christian life; they introduced questions with regard to ceremonies, ecclesiastical regulations, and external morality, which drew off the attention from things deeper, holier, and more fruitful. Also a season of peace and outward prosperity—the severest of tests presented to piety—proved too successful a temptation to avarice, worldliness, and frivolity; as the Bishop of Carthage in his tract on “The Lapsed” bewails. Yet in faith, tenderness, bravery, and love, there were many in the third century equal to those of the second or first.\*

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\* The *Apostolical Constitutions*, a large collection of moral and ecclesiastical rules, claiming apostolical authority, but plainly the fabrication of a later age, have been assigned to the latter end of the third century, and have been employed by some scholars for the purpose of illustrating the state of the Church at that period. A learned prize essay by Dr. Krabbe upon the subject, presents this view; the author, however, separates the first seven books from the eighth, believing the latter to belong to the end of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century, and he also admits that there are interpolations in the former. The Chevalier Bunsen regards the whole as a compilation, having a groundwork in apostolic or supposed apostolic custom, and says as to its age, “the latter part of the third century is the horizon to which most of the ancient ordinances have been more or less adapted.” He largely employs the collection to illustrate the Church life of the third century. After reading what these learned men have written, it does not appear to me that they have established the date which they give to these Constitutions. Epiphanius, A.D. 368—403, is the first to cite any Apostolical Constitutions at all, and his quotations do not agree with our existing texts. There are serious discrepancies and absolute contradictions between them. The conclusion at which Lardner arrives, after

As one gives a broad glance at the history of the period, the eye is ever and anon arrested by indubitable signs of a great moral power, new in its character, vigorously at work in many forms of blessing on society. Yonder we catch the indistinct appearance of men unknown, engaged in extending the outposts of Christendom, toiling with earnestness and in silence, to subjugate heathen souls to the government of Him, whose spirit and purpose might well strike the Greek as a strange

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a careful examination, is, that the exact time of the work cannot be determined ; but he inclines to think it was composed in the latter part of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century. "The author," he adds, "probably was a bishop of a proud and haughty spirit, who was fond of Church power, and loved pomp and ceremony in religious worship," (LARDNER'S *Works*, iv. 225) : and it was very likely a compilation by him, with additions of his own, and may thus contain a development of some things which had existed at an earlier period in writings under the title of *Ecclesiastical Rules and Ordinances*.

Even could the Constitutions be proved to belong to the third century, the man who could be guilty of such an imposition as that of writing them in the name of apostles would be no very safe authority for what might be contemporary customs. Such a person would be more likely to give an ideal of his own than the mirror of his age. Yet the priestly tone of the Constitutions, the extravagant terms in which they speak of bishops (B. ii. 29), the Jewish ecclesiastical spirit breathed throughout, and the doctrine of the visible unity of the Church, which underlies the whole, are in harmony with cherished sentiments of the third and fourth centuries ; and such regulations with regard to worship, festivals, penance, and other usages as the Constitutions exhibit, *may* represent what obtained at that period : but the moderate spirit of asceticism they indicate, and their subdued manner of treating virginity (B. iv. 14), are by no means in accordance with the mind of Cyprian and his Church at Carthage ; nor does the depreciation of all Pagan literature which occurs in them (B. i., 6) agree with the opinions of Clement and the Alexandrian school. They cannot, therefore, be justly regarded as a reflection of the image of the Church at large either of the third or fourth century.

contrast to Alexander's ambition, and the Roman to Cæsar's. And, at home, in the heart of the churches, we find ourselves surrounded by instances innumerable of fraternal love, of pledged attachment, of self-sacrifice for a brother's or the common good—all through union with the Elder Brother in Heaven, and faith in His one sacrifice. Through the exhibition of disinterested beneficence to those without—beneficence even at the hazard of life, while some tremendous plague was raging—as, for example, in Alexandria in the time of the Bishop Dionysius, when Christians nursed the sick and buried the dead, the heathen leaving them to their fate—through such charity, which spake to the hearts of men, and through the testimony borne to Him who himself died to save, souls savage and selfish, or frivolous and vain, were turned to a life of love and wisdom. The heavenly music of the Gospel changed them, outrivalling in reality, as the classic catechist of Alexandria used to say, the poetic fable of Amphion and his lyre. The heroism of the martyrs is known to all who have the slightest acquaintance with Church history. Ignatius thrown to wild beasts in the Coliseum—Polycarp at the stake in Smyrna—Blandina tortured and slain at Lyons—Cyprian beheaded by the gates of Carthage,—these martyrs afford proofs of Christlike patience which all ages have conspired to venerate and extol. Nor was the number of these heroes small. The extent of persecution must not be measured by imperial decrees. Magistrates overstepped legal bounds—popular fury raged—and a man's foes were those of his own

household. The number of martyrs must not be estimated by the names preserved. The pages of Eusebius testify to the noble army in the east; the catacombs to that in the west. We forget not that the temper of some Christians in reference to martyrdom was fanatical, and that their notion of it as a second baptism—a purification from sin—involved an alarming error; but, on the other hand, we have proof sufficient of the calmest, gentlest, and most thoughtful constancy, in many instances; and that their hope rested on no merit of their own, but on Him who loved them. At the worst, their sacrifice of this world to the next involved a strength of faith in the unseen, of triumph over the visible and earthly, which no one who can appreciate the sublimity of such faith but must be constrained to admire. And the spiritual devotion of the early Christians, their worship of the invisible God, through Jesus Christ our Lord—the meeting of the faithful for this purpose in some large house, at Rome, or in the crypts and vaults of the dark catacombs, when persecution raged above ground;—what a contrast, full of instruction, teeming with proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion, and of its elevating spiritual power, do these scenes present, when placed beside a picture of the temples round the forum, or the grand Pantheon crowded with worshippers, paying homage to their gods of marble!

Faith in Christ was the root of this religious life;—it was faith in Him as a Person, as a Divine, glorious, ever-living Person, present with His people. They looked not at propositions logically expressed as the

object of their belief—not at any abstract system of truth at all—but at a collection of facts having a personal centre—even the incarnation and the sacrificial life and death of Christ. The earliest Creed—the Apostles', as it is called—is an illustration of this. It has nothing propositional from beginning to end: it is all personal. It expresses faith *in* the Father Almighty, *in* His only Son our Lord, and *in* the Holy Ghost. That Creed is an incomplete exposition of the facts of the Gospel, and of their meaning; but it shows the phase which Christian faith then wore. Creeds were brought out, were added to and enlarged, by controversy; they do not show at any time the whole faith of Christendom, but they show what was most prominent and frequent in its religious, as well as theological thought. Thus regarded, the Apostles' Creed becomes a deeply interesting study, not only in its contents, and the form in which they appear, but in its omissions also. Yet what it omits of Christian truth, we must not hastily suppose was unbelieved, though we may infer that it did not fill so large a place in the sphere of Christian reflection as that portion did which is there introduced.

The whole collection of patristic literature belonging to the Antenicene period, shows that while Christ's priesthood was not forgotten—that while His atonement was held and prized—that while His blood was regarded as the fountain for sin—that important part of the Gospel, in the consciousness of Christians, did not stand in the same proportion to other parts which it afterwards acquired. They knew that He had been upon the cross,

but mostly they thought of Him as being now upon the throne. And on the throne of Heaven they longed to see Him. Their faith in eternal life through Christ was strong beyond the power of words to tell. If their faith at one time appeared more brightly than at another, it was when they were called to stand face to face with death. Nowhere do we see it so beautiful and strong as amidst scenes of confessorship and by the gates of the grave. The relics of the catacombs are in harmony with the genuine martyrologies. The old sepulchral tablets, engraved with the significant words, "in pace" "in Christo," and the most ancient artistic symbol of the Redeemer—a shepherd carrying home a sheep upon his shoulders,—point to the firmness of their blissful hope, its end and ground.

The lives and writings of particular men furnish illustrations of the varieties of spiritual character at that period. We see religious life modified by circumstances, by education, and by natural temperament. There could not be one type for all experience in the first three centuries any more than for all now. Clement was very much of a philosophical mystic—his views were dreamy and vast, but mostly deep and pure; and with all his philosophy and allegorizing, he loved his Bible infinitely better than any philosophy, and rested for salvation upon Jesus Christ, while his life was free from excessive asceticism and bondage to forms; and if we are to take his true Gnostic as the model of his own character, we shall find him, with all his mysticism, a man of holiness and prayer—a man who walked and talked with God,



who communed with Him in secret, and broke the silence of the night by songs of praise, perhaps by that beautiful hymn which he has left among his writings:—

“ Shepherd that goest before us,  
Guardian that watchest o'er us,  
Receive our hymned chorus—  
Our simple lays.

Lead, Lord of lambs, the lowly,  
Lead, King of saints, the holy,  
Lead far from sin and folly—  
To thee.

Sing guilelessly the Giver  
Of mercy like a river,  
And Him, O let us live for—  
Till life shall cease.”

And though Origen was wilder and more wayward, he still watched for salvation on the rock of ages. Tertullian puzzles us, because of the fierceness of his nature and the moroseness of his piety. He presents religion in ascetic guise, full of dread. The dark African walks before us, bearing a heavy burden—struggling with pain, and longing for the end of time or life. His hope for those who sin after baptism is small,\* and this life is to him a weary thing at best—so weary, that he feels no love for aught it has or yields. The Divine Author of Christianity had deep sympathy with nature and holy affection for children. Tertullian had neither. When he touches on natural objects,—and he does so occasionally with some power of eloquence,—he betrays a want of clear and warm appreciation of their beauty; and as for

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\* *De Pœnit.* c. 7.

children, he speaks of having them as “a bitter pleasure.” He regards “anxiety for descendants” as an “idle” thing.\* “For why,” he asks, “should we wish to bear children, since, if we have them, we desire to send them before us, on account of impending tribulations, we ourselves also longing to be delivered from this evil world, and to be received by the Lord, which was the prayer of an apostle.”† Yet I love to dwell on Tertullian’s praise of patience and the touching confession of his own impatience, as he prays for grace to restore the health of his soul, otherwise hopeless—and that passage where he says, “Ye have sought and ye have found, ye have knocked, and it is opened to you. Thus much I ask, that when you seek again, you remember me, Tertullian, a sinner!”‡ And in his contempt of the world’s pleasures, his condemnation of its sins, his glowing pictures of immortal bliss, his longing for heaven, his asceticism comes out on its bright side, tinged with hues of rich moral splendour. There are passages in his works which carry one’s soul to heaven, and inspire the hope that this wild, brave, antisocial man was, after many battles, schooled down to gentleness and love, and has now found his home in the world which he so strongly believed in, and hoped and prayed for.§ May we not, after all, apply to him the blended approval and reproof addressed

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\* *Ad Uxor.*, i. c. 5.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *De Baptismo*, c. 20.

§ Speaking of the worldly, he says, in his *De Spectaculis*, c. 28, 29—“On these luxuries let the guests be feasted—our festival, our marriage is not yet—we cannot sit down with them, nor they with us. The thing is arranged in turn. They are glad, we afflicted. The world shall

to Pergamos? "I know thy works—that thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith. But I have a few things against thee."

Cyprian was the ascetic priest—the High Church prelate, yet a purer mind, one fuller of love and patience, of faith in his Lord and devotion to his service, there never was. The shady side of Cyprian's character is plain enough,\* but I do not envy any one who looks on

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rejoice, ye shall be sorrowful. Let us mourn while they rejoice, that we may rejoice when they mourn.

"Suppose that you pass this life in delights, why are you so thankless as not to acknowledge the pleasures which God bestoweth? What can be more delightful than reconciliation with God, our Father and Lord, than the revelation of truth, the detection of error, the forgiveness of sins? What greater pleasure than the contempt of pleasure and the world—than true liberty—than a pure conscience—than a sufficiency of life, without the fear of death—than to beat under foot the gods of the heathen—to cast out demons—to heal the sick—to obtain revelations—to live to God. These are the pleasures of the Christian—holy, lasting, free. These are your games—your circus. Behold the course of ages, the gliding seasons, the spaces of time. Expect the consummation of things—defend the churches—rise at the signal of God—stand up at the sound of the angel's trumpet—glory in the martyr's palm. If science and learning delight you, we have enough of books and verses, of sentences and songs, and of voices which are not fables but verities, not strained, but simple. Are you for wrestling and combats? Here they are—not few but many. See licentiousness cast down by chastity—perfidy slain by faith—cruelty bruised by mercy—wantonness overcome by modesty. Such are the games in which we are crowned. Would you have blood? You have Christ's."

\* It is very painful to read in Cyprian such a passage as the following one, which contains, mingled with an amount of truth, a principle *in semine*, of which some of the worst errors of popery are developments:—*Dominus nostrâ satisfactione placandus est.—Liber de Lapsis, c. 17. Qui sic Deo satisfecerit, qui pœnitentiâ facti sui, qui pudore delicti, plus et virtutis et fidei de ipso lapsus sui dolore conceperit, exauditus et adjutus a Domino quam contristaverat nuper lætam faciet Ecclesiam; nec jam solam Dei veniam merebitur, sed et coronam.—Ibid., c. 36.*

that alone, or chiefly. No other of the ante-Nicene fathers has left in his writings such traces of deep experimental piety. He was no self-righteous Pharisee, nor a prelate seeking power for his own sake. It was for the prosperity of the Church and the glory of her Lord that he toiled, even as it was from his love to both that he suffered and died. And the mainspring of all his misguided strivings for Catholic unity lay in his desire for peace and holy order. It would be strange if we could study his writings without profit, and happy he who can most sympathize with Cyprian in his victory over the world, in the triumph of a faith which looketh at things not seen, in a willingness to part with all for Christ, and in the anticipation of a glorious heaven—the home of all the pure and good—the abode of Christ and God.\*

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\* Cyprian thus writes in his *Liber de Mortalitate*, c. 26. "It is to be considered, dear brethren, to be retained in our thoughts, that we have given up the world, and are continued here for a while as pilgrims and strangers. Let us welcome the day that will conduct us to our rest, rescue us hence, break our earthly chains, and restore us to paradise and a kingdom. What traveller does not hasten to his native land? Who that hastens to them he loves longs not for favourable winds, that he may embrace his friends the sooner? Paradise we reckon our native land: patriarchs we have begun to have for parents. Why do we not haste to see that land—to salute those parents? It is a company large and loving who expect us—parents, brothers, children—a numerous assemblage who, secure themselves, long for our salvation. To come into their presence—to embrace them—what a joy to them and us! What pleasure there, in celestial rejoicing, without the fear of death! and with an eternity of life, what full and perpetual bliss! There is the glorious choir of apostles, the assembly of exultant prophets, the innumerable multitude of martyrs crowned with victory through strife and sorrow. Triumphant virgins are there who have subdued through

The ascetic spirit gave a tone to Christianity like the melancholy grandeur of the Roman Campagna at sunset, while the mystic threw over it an indistinctness like the golden haze on the Swiss mountain side at noon. The ideal of the spiritual life as we find it in the New Testament was not perfectly realized by any one individual. But piety came nearer to divine teaching than did theology or the Church system. The new life of the converts escaped not unhealthy influences, but it survived them, and, in spite of them, showed the divinity of its birth. Clement, the mystic, and Cyprian, the ascetic, were one in Christ; and so, in spite of erring forms of thought, then as now, hearts anointed by the Spirit, presented to the one Lord the service and sacrifice of their faith. Compare the great men of young Christendom with the great men of old heathendom—Clement with Plotinus, Cyprian with the Antonines, and you behold the infinite superiority of Christian character and the unmatched purity and force of Christian faith.

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continence the desires of the flesh. Merciful men obtaining mercy are there who have done deeds of righteousness by feeding and relieving the poor, who, obeying the Lord's precepts, have changed earthly patrimony into heavenly treasure. So there let us hasten, beloved brethren, with earnest longings—let us desire that we may quickly be among them—quickly come to Christ. Let God see these thoughts in us; this purpose of mind and faith may the Lord Christ witness, who will give longer recompences of glory according as our desires have been greater."

## LECTURE VI.

THE THIRD AGE.—A.D. 325—787.

### DEVELOPMENT.

NICÆA was a town in Bithynia, on the eastern bank of the lake Ascanius. In the year 325, a concourse of Bishops, about two hundred and fifty, accompanied by presbyters, deacons, and others, were seen crowding within its gates, and passing up its straight and stately streets. The Emperor Constantine provided horses and mules for their conveyance, and during their stay entertained them at the expense of the state. They had come to discuss an important subject, and, during a portion of their time, held their meetings in a church, with an open Bible before them. When they had closed their conferences there, they assembled in the royal palace. The Emperor being conducted to a chair of gold, received a glowing panegyric on his diligent attention to ecclesiastical affairs. A Creed was drawn up and signed, with the imperial sanction, to be enforced by imperial authority: all ages have known it since as the Nicene Creed.

Constantine gave the fathers a banquet; "None of the Bishops were absent," says Eusebius. "Guards and soldiers, drawn up in order, with naked swords, kept the vestibule of the palace, and through their midst the men

of God passed, without fear, and entered into the inner hall. There some sat with the Emperor himself—others occupied couches on either side. Any one might have thought it a picture of the kingdom of Christ, and a dream rather than a reality.”\*

The scene is significant of the changed circumstances of Christendom since the hunted believers sought refuge in Roman catacombs; and the style, also, in which Eusebius describes the whole transaction, and especially the strange words in which he speaks of the splendour of the entertainment, as a shadowing forth of Christ's kingdom on earth, indicate the ecclesiastical spirit of the age, and the manner in which the new relation between Church and State was regarded; at the same time, the great theological question the assembly came together to discuss, shows the bent of thought among vigorous Christian intellects at the period, and reveals the source of other controversies which afterwards arose.

Here we commence our notices of the Church system and dogmatic theology of the third age of Christendom, with the view of tracing their influence on ecclesiastical society and religious life.

We shall find it was an age of development. Of what kind? Very different indeed from that development of revelation which marked the age of Hebrew prophets and Christian apostles. There had been, from time to time, a gradual unfolding of Divine truth; higher and higher had the curtain been lifted up, disclosing new

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\* EUSEBIUS *de Vita Constant.*, lib. iii. c. 15.

prospects before watchful souls ; truths of the Old Testament had been more fully explained in the New. Gregory Nazianzen observed, that under the former dispensation, the Father was clearly revealed—the Son but obscurely ; in the ministry of Christ the Son was manifested, but not the Spirit. And again he remarked, the operation of the Spirit on the apostles before the death of Christ was faint,—between the resurrection and the day of Pentecost, clear,—after the latter, perfect. Adopting this account of the progress of revelation, we have here to remark, that revelation had now long since come to an end,—authoritative development had ceased,—the canon of Scripture was closed, and in that canon no organ for further development had been recognised ; no commission was given for any man, or body of men, to carry on the work of apostles, in the way of authoritatively expanding what they taught, or of making any additions to their teaching. The power to bind new views of truth upon the consciences of men, ceased with those miraculously-gifted guides.

Neither can there be, properly speaking, any development of Scripture at all ; for that depository is as unchangeable as its deposit. Objective truth in the Bible cannot grow, any more than objective truth in Nature or in God. It is an accomplished fact—a thing unalterable.

Yet is there abundant development in Christendom, but it is the development of man—of the mind of man, the heart of man, the life of man, the character of man. There is theological development—the development of



scientific thought on religious themes. There is sentimental development—the development of religious feeling and affection. There is moral and ecclesiastical development—the development of active habits in religious individuality and social relations. The principle of development on the theatre of Christendom is seen in vigorous activity. It is found to be restless as man—changeable as man—going on, then stopping—starting aside, then turning back—now full of promise, then disappointing hope. Human thoughts and feelings and activities grow and fade and wither—die down to their roots, and then sprout again. The seasons are repeated in the history of inquiry and speculation, sentiment and effort. The physical is a type of the mental, moral, and religious. Post-apostolic developments are developments of man, not of God—of human thought, not of Divine revelation.

Developments may be true and precious. The germinating power may come from God. Divine seeds, dropped into human intellects and rooting there, may grow and thrive. Scientific theology, when sound, is a development of conclusions from Divine premises. Divine facts and principles are studied, arranged, and systematized—evolved into inferences and applied in practical relations. Yet is the growth but a human process in that case, though derived from a Divine origin. The development is on our side of truth, not on God's; it is in the subjective aspect of truth, not in its objective reality. The process may be under the Spirit's influence, yet is it human notwithstanding, just as the bursting of

buds and the opening of flowers is *natural*, though it be by virtue of a *Divine* energy.

But developments may be of a different kind. Even if the seeds come from God's granary, the culture may be so bad, the tillage so unskilful, the soil so barren and unhealthy, that the plant may prove a miserable abortion, or become an ugly monster. Or, worse still, the very substance of what is developed may proceed from another source. It may be something invented by man or created by the devil. It may be a strong thing from hell, or a weak thing of earth. It may be a wilful falsehood, or a mere mistake, or a mixture of both. Nay, a further mixture it may be, it may be a mixture of seeds bad and good—Divine, human, and diabolical—gleaned from above, or gathered from below, or reaped from fields that lie between. And there may be a mixture of tillage, too—of tillage careless and careful, foolish and wise. There may be a true development of Divine ideas, or there may be a false development of Divine ideas, or there may be a development utterly base and mischievous, of ideas the opposite of Divine, and suggested by a far different agency. I should give the doctrine of the Trinity as an example of the first kind of development; the doctrine of transubstantiation as an example of the second; the doctrine of purgatory as an example of the third. The first rests directly on a Divine revelation; the second on a transformation of what is revealed; and the third on an invention, into the deepest origin of which I do not care to inquire.

With the possibilities of error in human development,

no such development can in itself be authoritative. It cannot be trusted till it has been tried. There must be a careful examination of its form and principle, of its properties and tendencies. Its nature must be analysed, its history must be investigated. It must be brought to what is above itself. To some authoritative standard a reference must be made. The prevalence of a development, the antiquity of a development, can never be a criterion. Such a criterion would be only on a level with the thing developed—a human criterion whereby to decide on a human case. A criterion above that level is surely necessary. What of religion appears in humanity must be tested by something higher than humanity. And, in the absence of all other authoritative revelation from God, remaining in a trustworthy form, we are shut up to the tribunal of the written Word. To that all human claims to realization of Christianity must be brought. The Divine ideal is the test of all developments. And the question must be, in relation to any doctrine put forth as Divine, not merely, Is it a development of something consistent with the Bible? but, Is it a legitimate development of something in the Bible? \* Nor is the legitimacy of the process to

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\* Vincent of Lerins has some observations on development really fatal to the scheme of his Catholic admirers and disciples (*Commonitorium*, xxiii.) “Sed forsitan dicit aliquis: Nullusne ergo in Ecclesiâ Christi profectus habebitur religionis? Habeatur planè et maximus. Nam quis ille est tam invidus hominibus tam exosus Deo qui istud prohibere conetur? Sed ita tamen ut vere profectus sit ille fidei non permutatio. Siquidem ad profectum pertinet ut in semetipsum unaquæque res amplificetur: ad permutationem vero, ut aliquid ex alio in aliud transver-

be tested simply by canons of logic. The conclusion in any one particular point must be compared with the teaching of revelation in general.

The Divine ideal we repeat, is the test of all developments.

The age now to be reviewed may be characterised by a reference to its developments. In this respect it was peculiarly vigorous; therein it presents a difference to the age it followed. The ante-Nicene age had but in a small degree developed what was previously in existence. Its theology had not been a careful unfolding of the apostolic—not a patient and steady drawing forth of the fulness of Scripture. Its chief theological activity had consisted in philosophical speculations, which the Christian thinkers connected with divine truth; but instead of seeking to understand from the Scriptures what Christianity is, they busied themselves in torturing it for help in the solution of problems that had already entangled their minds, and those of all metaphysical inquirers before them. There had been activity more than enough in the ecclesiastical department, but it was activity far less in the way of carrying out the true apostolical constitutions than in the way of borrowing from sources not apostolical, and in the way of inventing

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tatur." Then illustrating his subject by the growth of the human frame, he adds, "Quod si humana species in aliquam deinceps non sui generis vertatur effigiem, aut certe addatur quippiam membrorum numero vel detrahatur, necesse est ut totum corpus vel intercedat, vel prodigiosum fiat, vel certe debilitetur." A just illustration is that of the result of development in the Roman Catholic Church.

anew what could not be vindicated, though it was quite capable of being accounted for. This age, on the other hand, was not so original as it was industrious, and not so inventive as it was bold in drawing forth to their consequences the opinions and principles it had derived from the age before it.

In studying the age of development we shall inquire into the history of the Church system,—of theological controversies,—and of religious society.

We shall first inquire into the Church system. The Church system at Nicæa, the working of which threw Eusebius into ecstasies, was by no means so much a substantial novelty as a development, under new and flattering circumstances, of the principle maintained by Cyprian. The system of the fourth century was essentially the system of the third, though not the system of the first. Ante-Nicene fathers had paved the way for the imperial biographer's Kingdom of Christ on earth.

1. The marriage between the civil and ecclesiastical powers meets us as early as 313, when we find Constantine convoking a clerical synod. It is decidedly marked at the Council of Nicæa in 325. The bishops' banquet described by Eusebius was the wedding feast. The right of convening the assembly, and also a sort of general presidency over it, having been freely allowed to the emperor,—the clergy concurring in the Nicene creed availed themselves of the secular authority for the enforcement of their opinions. At first this union was between the State and the Athanasian party; then it was between the State and the Arian party. Each party,

when in power, persecuted the other with variable degrees of bitterness. There was plenty of intrigue, at times, on the ecclesiastical side, to influence the imperial mind and will, and plenty of despotism, at other times, on the secular side, subjecting Christianity to the condition of the old Roman religion, and making ministers of the Church, like priests of the temple, tools of political policy. The violent enforcement by law of the imperial creed from the time of Constantine to the final overthrow of the empire was the rule—mildness and tolerance the exception. Through the whole period, also, the favoured sect for the time being participated in royal grants, though it was not till the sixth century that laws were made respecting tithes, and not till the time of Charlemagne that their payment was rendered compulsory.

The working of a principle detected in the last lecture is plain enough throughout the history of the Church system in Nicene times and afterwards. The one spiritual race had been merged, the single independent congregation lost, in the organic Church of Catholic Christendom. The sort of imperial grandeur with which the ante-Nicene fathers had clothed the object of their love and veneration, fitted her to be the bride of the first and royalest of earthly kings. It was not as the Church of a nation that they did or could contemplate her for a moment, but as a Church whose home covered the whole world. Under that character, not at all as occupying a limited local sphere, did Constantine, the world's emperor, receive her in alliance. Between the

Roman empire and the communities which existed in apostolic days a connexion of the kind now formed would have been utterly impossible, as well from the nature of those communities as from the aversion of the State. Their constitution and spirit were such that they could not have attracted any more than they could have courted the favour of princes. While, however, the Churches in the days of Paul, if animated by his spirit, could have done neither, the Church in the days of Constantine did both. It was prepared to lean on temporal patronage and power, and its numbers and influence, its organization and compactness, rendered it a respectable ally even to the occupant of the throne of the Cæsars. Greatly shall we misunderstand the first connexion between the ecclesiastical and the imperial powers, if we suppose that the latter was aggressive and that the former resisted, that there was a struggle, and that the mightier by force won the mastery.

It does not appear that our Lord's words, "My kingdom is not of this world," and the words of Paul, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God," entered deeply into the thoughts of the early Church. These strong denials of the secular power as a defender or a servant of the bride of Christ never seem to have been comprehended. While persecution continued, Christians only thought of the State as an enemy. They could hardly contemplate the possibility of its becoming a friend. Quite unfamiliar with actual danger from that source, not accustomed to anticipate insidious perils on grounds of Scripture warning or

deep self-reflection, full of childlike simplicity, and absorbed in the evils or joys of the passing hour, exceedingly deficient in that wisdom which, even after long time and much discipline, the Christian mind is slow to gain and exercise;—when the old Pagan warfare with Christianity came to an end the harassed ones were only too glad of tranquillity, too pleased with any apparent kindness from a quarter whence had come before only violence and oppression, or at best coldness and neglect. Looking at their circumstances and habits of thought, we cannot wonder at what took place.

And beyond a willingness to accept, some ante-Nicene Christians, as early as A.D. 269, had shown a disposition to crave imperial help in the matter of the heretical Paul of Samosata. He refused to quit his Church: they applied to the civil power to turn him out. Whatever may be said of the rights of property, it is pretty clear the appellants did not distinguish between them and the rights of conscience. And the courtly behaviour of the Nicene ecclesiastics, the style of Eusebius, and the commonness of episcopal flattery, are quite sufficient to show how ripe Christendom was for the change, through its incapacity to understand its own independence, and to guard the crown rights of its Divine King. Even the Donatists, who subsequently became anti-State churchmen, and were perhaps the first to ask, "What has the emperor to do with the Church?" were taught to put the question only by the oppression they suffered; for, at the beginning, they eagerly besought Constantine's help on a religious question, and appealed, in reference to it,



from a clerical to a civil tribunal.\* And I would add, that though the Donatists, as advocates of a purer communion, had a decided advantage over their opponents, yet the former, as much as the latter, identified the spiritual family with the ecclesiastical organization; and while the so-called Catholic was driven by this principle into the utmost laxity of fellowship, the so-called schismatic was drawn by it into narrowness and bigotry—each at the time unchristianizing the other—the Catholic the Donatist for want of ecclesiastical succession, and the Donatist the Catholic for want of ecclesiastical discipline.

2. Clerical power gradually absorbed congregational power—episcopal power went on absorbing both. The veneration for Bishops, inspired by their ecclesiastical authority, came to be blended with another kind of deference, produced by their magisterial prerogatives. The spiritual empire took its form from the political. Over metropolitan sees there grew up patriarchates. A visible head was wanting. The East could not furnish one, for between Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem there was, for a while, something like a balance of power; and when the three last paled before the first, oppressed patriarchs were glad to ask succour from the only Bishop of the West who was without a rival. The Latin genius for rule, as characteristic as the Greek genius for metaphysics, fitted the prelate of Rome to govern his

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\* NEANDER, *Hist.*, iii. 253.

brethren,—the importance and associations of the city were obviously in his favour. The orthodoxy of the men who filled the see—the union of the clergy under them—the appeals they received from an Athanasius and a Chrysostom, in support of orthodoxy, and from others with a view to secure a friend in clerical litigations—the absence of emperors from the palace of the Cæsars—and the relics of Peter and Paul in the Churches that bore their name\*—all tended to give the highest prestige and rank to the Roman chair and its occupants. Gregory the Great rebuked the Constantinopolitan patriarch for assuming the title of Universal Bishop. His successor, Boniface III., used that very title on its being conceded by the Constantinopolitan Emperor. Perhaps there is not so much importance to be attached to this circumstance as some suppose, yet the title conceded did certainly present the outline of Papal power; it impressed and familiarized Christendom with the idea of oversight and command in that quarter whence, afterwards, both came in the fullest degree.

It has been observed, that the secret of Rome's supremacy lay in its complete impregnation with the genius of the age. I cannot go so far as to say that policy had nothing to do with this sympathy, but I am satisfied that Rome became mighty not only, and not so much, through designed aggressions of her own, as on account of the immense deference which, through-

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\* Chrysostom compares the city of Rome with the sun, on account of its possessing "as two glistening eyes the bodies of these holy men."—*Hom. Rom.*, xxxii., c. xvi., v. 24.

out Western Christendom, was voluntarily paid to her, from her being eminently imbued with the spirit of the times.\*

In connexion with this growth of hierarchical dominion, of which the supremacy of Rome was but the topmost bough, we see what constituted its roots, without which this upas-tree had not grown up at all—namely, a mediatorial priesthood and an organized catholic Church. Had the clergy remained merely congregational teachers, and pastoral rulers of congregations—had they never become a sacerdotal caste, and a graduated ruling order, neither patriarch nor Pope would have been possible.

When Chrysostom† spoke of priests as exercising an angelic ministry in mortal bodies—as intercessors crimsoned with the blood of Christ—as receiving a power given neither to angels nor archangels; a power without the exercise of which on their behalf, men cannot hope for salvation—as regenerating them in baptism, and feeding them with the body and blood of Christ, so that, apart from sacerdotal help, there was no escaping hell and obtaining a crown in Heaven,—he was only amplifying and adorning notions of the priesthood current in the ante-Nicene age.‡ When Augustine declares that by

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\* “The sympathy of the Popes with the general mind of Christianity (as it then existed) constituted their strength; from their conscious strength grew up, no doubt, their bolder spirit of domination; but they became masters of the Western Church by being the representative, the centre of its feelings and opinions.”—MILMAN’S *Latin Chris.*

† See his book on the *Priesthood*, vol. i., 121.

‡ See CYPRIAN, *Epist.* lix., lxvi. It is scarcely possible to speak more extravagantly about the deference due to the priesthood than Cyprian does in the first of these epistles, especially § 5, 6.

Baptism men are cleansed every whit—that our little ones are renewed by the grace of Christ—that the weight of ancient sin is laid aside, and the former offences of ignorance effaced, and the old man with his inborn guilt put off, and hidden grace poured into the soul,—he only walks in the steps of Cyprian.\* And when Cyril of Jerusalem tells his hearers that they may be fully assured, without any misgiving, that in the Lord's Supper there is really vouchsafed to them the body and blood of Christ—that what seems bread is not bread, though bread by taste, but the body of Christ—that what seems wine is not wine, but the blood of Christ,—this Father is only a little in advance of Tertullian and Cyprian.† The same remark applies to Chrysostom, when he tells his hearers not to look at the consecrated elements as though they were bread and wine, that they were not subject to the common law of other elements, but were absorbed, without waste, into the body of the participants.

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\* See WICKHAM'S *Synopsis of Baptism*, and compare the passages cited from Augustine with those from Cyprian, p. 288—542. It is proper to add, that while Augustine used the strongest language on the efficacy of baptism, and contrasted Christian sacraments as saving ordinances with Jewish rites, as mere signs, he held that visible sanctification might be present without the concomitant of invisible sanctification; after all, he says, Love alone constitutes the distinction between the sons of God and the sons of the devil.—WICKHAM, 558.

† CYRIL, *Cat. Lect.*, xxii. I do not mean that Tertullian or Cyprian believed in transubstantiation, or that Cyril, with even his strong language, would have defined the Lord's Supper as scholastic divines afterwards did: but Tertullian, Cyprian, Cyril, and other Fathers, were incautiously advancing in that line, and preparing for the Lateran decision.

The Basilica turned into a temple, the Lord's table into an altar, and the place where it stood into a holy of holies, with the richly-robed officiator amidst wax tapers and incense, and the mitred Bishop *in cathedrâ*,\* were by no means fundamental innovations upon Antenicene ideas, but the bold material impression of them. The priesthood of believers was forgotten—the common right of Christians to enter the holiest was denied—the spiritual worship of the Father through the Son was obscured by human mediatorship, mysterious sacraments, and ceremonial splendour. Priestism is essential to the Papacy; we may add that the archpriesthood and the supreme power of the Roman prelate had something done for it, though unwittingly, by the incautious language of Cyprian, when he talked of Peter's chair as the foundation of the Church, and the centre of episcopal unity.

3. The Nicene age saw the growth of monachism. Those who fled from persecution to Egyptian deserts were fathers of the hermit and monk. Some spent solitary lives in caverns, or among ruined sepulchres, on the sandy Nile bank, under the shadow of the pyramids, surrounded by memories of departed grandeur, with symbols of the infinite in nature filling their senses and overawing their souls,—the boundless waste, the ever-flowing river, and the hot yellow sky—these dreamy and half-crazed anchorites spent their days in what they

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\* These points receive illustration upon reference to Bingham or to RIDDLE'S *Antiquities*, B. vi. *Sacred Places*, and B. iii. *Ministers of the Church*.

deemed communion with heaven and victory over earth. At night their slumbers were broken by the blast of a trumpet stealing over the silence of the desert, the stars betokening that the appointed hour of prayer was come. Rigorous austerities, of Indian origin, were practised, but Simeon on his pillar in Mesopotamia, with hands outstretched and a rope girdle eating into his flesh—alternately burnt and frozen, shaggy and weather-stained, a lump of human filth, outpeered his brethren of the Thebaid. Paul was a lonely hermit; Antony gathered the solitaries into groups; and Pacomius united the groups into a grand confederation. Basil placed the hermit below the monk; Cassian reversed the order. Athanasius introduced monasteries into Italy;\* and Martin of Tours into France. The practical character of the Latin mind modified monachism, as it did everything else, checked its extravagances, and turned it to useful purposes. Work, such as basket-making, had been in some cases practised in the East to preserve the victims of ennui from disease, madness, and suicide; but the honour of encouraging literature and art in monastic institutions belongs to the Italian Benedict and his followers. The monks were a distinct body from the common clergy, and favoured by Rome, they, in their turn, became its supporters. In the profession of celibacy,

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\* Athanasius, in his *Life of Antony*, gives a discourse by that illustrious hermit, in which he represents heaven as obtained by a life of asceticism. "If we persevere," he says, "for eighty or a hundred years in an ascetic life, for that period we shall reign not an equal time, but for ever. Having laboured on earth, we shall receive our reward in heaven."—*Opera Athan.*, T. ii., p. 809.

however, they were not peculiar, though this remark must be confined to the West, as the eastern inferior clergy lived in wedlock, a practice defended by no less an authority than Chrysostom.

The rigours of the anchorite were not founded on the self-denial of Christ and His apostles, but sprang from the ascetic principle of the Antenicene Churches. If celibacy, fasting, and mortification, were such virtues, it was natural for men to feel that the more who practised them the better; and if the literal avoidance of contact with the world, if getting out of the way of its palpable temptations was so desirable, then was it not also natural for people to believe that a good place for a Christian to live in was the haunt of the jackal and the pelican? If social instincts revolted at a life of perfect solitude, then the scheme of monachism, properly so called, borrowed from the Essenes of Palestine and the Therapeutæ of Egypt, came in as a convenient ally of asceticism; and we cannot wonder that it was thought wise for celibates, whose purity was daily imperilled (who, unbound by vows, and unguarded by a wall of partition, had been so defiled in the days of Cyprian) to come under definite and stringent regulations, and gather within the precincts of some holy house. The Post-nicene ages only employed such methods as they thought best for promoting the life of Antenicene holiness. Indeed, asceticism must have given way before the utter licentiousness and corruption of the Empire, but for the barriers of systematic monachism. What was done by Antony, Martin, Benedict, and the rest, was only in

defence of what Tertullian and Cyprian counted as the treasure of the Church. The Divine philosophy, so lauded by Sozomen,\* was but the fruit of the mistaken piety of these African fathers. They struck the key-note to those praises of a celibate life so loudly chanted by Ambrose and Augustine.

4. We can but mention the veneration paid to martyrs and relics, the doctrine of purgatory and the system of confession, which, between the beginning of the fourth and the middle of the eighth century, were in a state of luxuriant growth.† They were congenial grafts upon an ancient stock. Superstition was strong in Christendom within three hundred years of the death of Christ, and that brought the men of the next ages into a temper of mind which prevented their being shocked by thoughts and usages borrowed from paganism. It is true that there were in the fourth century, not only sects thirsting for a purer discipline, but individual teachers and leaders aiming at a more spiritual worship. Aerius and Jovinian were of this class. Vigilantius, more eminent, severely denounced the popular paganish ceremonies of the Church; but had not the religious spirit of the times been steeped in error, surely the number and influence of these reformers would have been incomparably greater than they were!

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\* *Hist.*, lib. iii. c. 14.

† These points are abundantly illustrated in Bingham and Riddle. Pope Gregory was the first to unfold the doctrine of purgatory with decision and fulness. He intimated that in his time many things began to be clear about souls which were before hidden.—*Dial.* iv. 40.



Instead of one Vigilantius there would have been a thousand. Beyond a few scattered disciples there would have appeared a multitude resisting the development of early mischievous innovations. The errors we have noticed formed such a development. Festivals in honour of martyrs took their rise in Antenicene times.\* Prayers for the dead were offered in the third century,† and Tertullian's speculations leaned in the direction of some kind of purgatory.‡ Cyprian also, one infers, thought with his admired master.§ There were penitentiary priests as early as the Decian persecution,|| and though no doubt a distinction may be made between public and private penitentiary acts, between confession with a view to restored communion, and confession with a view to Divine forgiveness, and also between the intercessory and the declarative forms of absolving, and though, therefore, a line may be drawn between the earlier and later customs in this matter; yet no one acquainted with human nature, and the temper of the times when the change was proceeding, can feel surprised at the one leading to the other.

5. A remarkable change took place in the Nicene age in the feelings of Christians with regard to art. It

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\* See BINGHAM'S *Antiq.*, B. xiii. c. ix. § 5. "We offer oblations for those who are dead, on their anniversaries, as their birthday commemorations."—TERTULLIAN, *De Coronâ Mil.*, iii. The day of death was counted the true birthday.

† BINGHAM'S *Antiq.*, B. xv. c. iii. § 15. Tertullian says every woman prayed for the soul of her deceased husband.—*De Monog.*, cap. x.

‡ See Bishop KAYE'S *Tertullian*, 348.

§ See *Epist.* lv. *Ad Antonian*.

|| RIDDLE'S *Antiq.*, 600.

had been eschewed by the early believers; it was now adopted—at first, with fear and trembling, as if sacred things would be defiled by the artist's touch. The approach to what is most solemn in Christianity was timid. Letters—then symbols—then typical events—were employed to indicate the Redeemer.\* More bold afterwards, the painter and worker in mosaic represented Christ himself. At the beginning, he only treated the more cheerful incidents of His life; in the end he ventured on the awful sorrows of the crucified One. Art was also employed in representing the saints; and the image followed the picture, but at a considerable distance.† The adoption of pagan forms in early Chris-

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\* KUGLER'S *Handbook of Painting. Italian Schools*, Vol. i. 7—12. The mystical method of interpreting the events of the Old Testament is strikingly illustrated by the pictures in the Catacombs and other early works of Christian art. "Rome seems to have adopted from the first, and steadily adhered to a system of typical parallelism; of veiling the great incidents of redemption and the sufferings, faith, and hopes of the Church under the parallel and typical events of the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations; admitting no direct representations from Gospel history but such as illustrate the kingly office of the Saviour, and the miracles by which he refigured the illumination of the spirit and the resurrection of the body."—Lord LINDSAY'S *Christian Art*, Vol. i. 47.

† The Council of Elliberis (A.D. 305), in its Thirty-sixth Canon, declares, "Placuit picturas esse in Ecclesiâ non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur." Bellarmine, Buonarotti, Bottari, and Rochette have recourse to miserable shifts for explaining this away.—*Tableau des Catacombes*, 106. Dupin is more candid, and remarks (*Ecc. Hist.*, iv. c. 243), "Many explications have been given of this passage; but to me it seems better to understand it in the plainest sense, and to confess that the Fathers of this Council did not approve the use of images no more than of wax candles lighted in full daylight." This is forbidden in the thirty-fourth Canon. "Pictures were gradually introduced into Churches at the close of the fourth century."—RIDDLE'S

tian art has been clearly shown by Rochette :\* a fact in keeping with sentiments expressed by Theodoret, who spoke of God putting the dead saints in the room of heathen deities, and who alluded to the feasts of Jupiter and Bacchus as being exchanged for those of Peter, Paul, and Thomas.† The pomp of priestly worship stimulated the use of art, and the use of art reacted on worship. From the fourth century, the Basilica increased in magnificence. Paintings adorned the walls; mosaics were set in the apse and the arches; afterwards the windows glowed with coloured glass. Gold, silver, bronze, and embroidery appeared more and more conspicuously in the house of God.‡

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*Antiq.*, 706. Images were of later date. See passages from Gregory.—RIDDLE, 781.

\* *Tableau des Cat.*, c. iii.

† THEODORET, *Hom.* 8 *De Mart. Adv. Gent.*, l. viii. 39, 89. In connexion with this, however, it may be noticed that, according to the Oxford annotator on Athanasius—Basil, Theodoret, and Origen say that we are not to pray to angels, nor to seek access to God through them, but through Christ.

‡ Of the early introduction of mosaics and paintings every one is aware. As to *stained* glass, it is not so generally known that it was certainly used in the sixth century. Some detect its introduction as soon as the fourth, on the authority of the lines in Prudentius, respecting the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura,

“Tum camuros hyali insigni varie cucurrit arcus;”

but I am inclined to think this refers to the mosaics of the apse.

Of the use of *stained*, not *painted*, glass in the sixth century, Gregory of Tours, and Fortunatus of Poitiers, are witnesses.—LABARTE'S *Handbook of Art*, 66. In the same work it is stated that in the *Liber Pontif.* of Anastasius mention is made of a quantity of bronzes among the gifts of Constantius to the Church. Works in gold and silver are enumerated in the next century. Donations of embroidery are recorded as early as the fourth century.—LABARTE, 39, 89.

The whole Church system and worship of the seventh century was greatly in advance of what obtained in the fourth ; but Christendom was only proceeding along a path on which she had started before. The road did not bend, except with a gentle curve. The development was not of Christian ideas, but of innovations, Antenicene priestism, asceticism, and secularity. It was not of healthy, but of diseased, life. Tested by the Divine ideal, the professed human realization of Christianity was corrupt and false.

## LECTURE VII.

THE THIRD AGE CONTINUED.—A.D. 325—787.

### DEVELOPMENT.

THE earlier part of the age of development was intensely polemical. Two questions especially agitated the minds of theologians. The first respecting the nature of Christ; the second respecting the salvation of man.

1. There is a great deal very repulsive in the history of the Athanasian controversy. It involved much speculation on subjects which lie beyond the reach of human faculties. The interference of Constantine was far less that of an earnest searcher after truth, than that of a shrewd statesman, seeking to reconcile contending parties, with the hope of managing both for his own ends. His speech at the famous banquet of bishops bespoke a thorough acquaintance with human nature, but savoured of the politician rather than the theologian. He was more anxious for uniformity than orthodoxy: for a concordat than a creed. If the Athanasians were impatient of contradiction, certainly the Arians made the controversy a personal affair; seeming chiefly anxious to damage the character of Athanasius. It is really wearisome to read, in tracts written at the time, accusations and replies relative to

alleged circumstances not having the smallest connexion with the main question at issue. Political intrigues were included in the strife from beginning to end. The court party espoused the Arian side in a spirit of cabal; and some of the councils proved themselves willing tools in the hands of statesmen. Moreover, the intolerance of both parties was extreme, and they showed no regard for each other's reputation. Yet in the bandying about of hard names, they were behind Tertullian, as he again was surpassed by the orators of paganism. But the mutual anathemas of Athanasians and Arians were worse than abusive epithets. Error was pronounced impiety, and the zealot on either side branded his opponents as enemies of God, thus abandoning the mild and charitable spirit of Justin, Irenæus, and Origen. Finally, civil disturbances occurred amidst the polemic strife, and the piazzas of Constantinople were stained with the mingled blood of the orthodox and the heretical.

Looking closer at the disputants, we see that they were exceedingly like the controversialists of other ages, not excepting our own. Some were dishonest men, wickedly using words in a sense which they did not wish their opponents to understand; some were conscientious men, scrupling to use certain terms, which they suspected were a covering for error, but were not sure; some were stern men, apt to be dogged; some rash men, apt to be changeful; some peace-loving men, apt to seek quietude at the price of truth, and to prefer a hollow compromise to the inconvenience of an earnest war. And all of them in the heat of argument, were

went to burden their antagonists with inferences which the latter were quite unprepared to admit.

Yet, to take no higher view, there is something to redeem the controversy in the thought of that which has been counted its reproach. "What a strife about ideas!" is the taunt of the gross utilitarian, who seems to imagine that dogs fighting for a bone are better employed than beings of intelligence contending about what belongs to the world of thought. Though associated with violent tempers and acts, controversies of this kind, so reproachfully treated, indicate much that is noble at the bottom of the natures so employed, with whom, even though the struggle may be for power, yet it is for power through principle. The supremacy of ideas, more than aggrandizement, is, after all, the prize of battle, else the ideas might be abandoned, and aggrandizement attained in another way.

But they ill understand the Nicene controversy, who see in it a question of mere ideas, much less do they perceive what it is who call it mere logomachy. Whenever the Trinitarian controversy may be renewed, the same ground, in a great measure, will have to be gone over again, and thoughtless bystanders will once more call the disputants word warriors, or at best idealists. Yet, if there can be a question about facts, this surely belongs to one of infinite importance.

Arius said that Christ had not existed from eternity—that there was a period when He was not.\* He

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\* See how Arius explains himself.—THEODORET, *Hist.*, l. i. c. v.

“perceived, beyond all question, that from the very conception of a creature, an infinite distance must be inferred between him and the Creator; nor did he shrink from expressing it.”\* Whether consciously or not, Arius was paving the way for something far beyond this; for, if Arianism had been able to gain ascendancy, men would not have rested content with such half-way doctrinal opinions as could satisfy neither the demands of the understanding nor the heart. Many of the Nicene Fathers saw this. The true and proper Deity of our blessed Lord, constituted in their thoughts, the central fact of Christianity; and Athanasius stood forward as the assertor of that truth. While Arians maintained that the Son was essentially inferior to the Father, Athanasius maintained that he was essentially equal—to express which he used the word *ὁμοούσιος*. That term became the watchword and badge of the orthodox party. It seems to us uncouth; it is not found in Scripture; it looks like an attempt to define the indefinable; but, taking it as a symbol of the Deity of the Redeemer, we recognise under it a truth which, apart from metaphysical refinements and dialectic disputes, is written on the pages of the New Testament, in connexion with his mediation and sacrifice. Gibbon, and others, may talk flippantly of the controversy as being about a scholastic term; but that only shows how very unphilosophical some philosophers can be; for what he calls a dispute about a scholastic term, is really no

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\* NEANDER, *Hist.*, vol. iv. 28.



less than the solution of the inquiry, was Christ a creature, or was he uncreated? was he God, or only one of the works of God? This is anything but a mere logical subtlety—a whole universe lies between the two views.

The scripturalness of that view which was indicated by the peculiar Athanasian term appears from the writings of the Fathers who advocated it. Athanasius was ever appealing to his Bible, and made good his main point, though sometimes his citations were inappropriate,\* or he philosophised a little, or became the mere dialectician. Some, too, will think that this great divine clogged his argument by his theory of the generation of the Divine nature of the Son.† But whatever might be the use made by Athanasius of philosophy as an ally, philosophy was treated by Arius as a master. It was a philosophical objection to the orthodox notion which was the groundwork of his whole scheme.‡ His creed was essentially rationalistic, as opposed to the mysteriously supernatural. Much more do we value the doctrine of Athanasius for its opposition to the mere creatureship of Christ, than for any logical definition which he could give of the Divine nature; inasmuch as we know better what that nature is *not*, than what it is. At the same time, our remark in favour of the

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\* See KAYE'S *Council of Nice*, p. 12, 276.

† The Arians drew an argument from the Athanasian doctrine of the generation of the Son in favour of their own scheme.—SOCRATES, lib. i. c. vi. See also first discourse of Athanasius against the Arians.

‡ Newman has ably shown this in his *History of the Arians*, c. ii. § 5.

negative side of Athanasianism applies only to the *defining*, not the *asserting*, of Christ's equal divinity; for that truth is no mere negation, but a thing most positive and absolute.

There was a third class of persons concerned in the controversy—if, indeed, that may be called a class which was composed of persons having very different characters and opinions. We refer to the Semiarians, as they are commonly called. Their only bond was a negative one. They disapproved of the course pursued by Athanasius; but they were far from being all opposed to his doctrinal views. Some of them, indeed, seem to have been mainly anxious for a compromise between the extreme contending parties, without holding earnestly any principle of their own. Eusebius of Nicomedia was chief among these middle-men; he first subscribed the Nicene creed, and then he adopted the word *ὁμοιοσιον* (*like*) as his symbol, in distinction from the Athanasian *ὁμοουσιον* (*the same*). His namesake of Cæsarea, the courtly historian, was also classed among the Semiarians; though he signed the Nicene creed.\* There were probably other shades of difference among those of them entertaining anti-Athanasian views; for, altogether, the Semiarians were very numerous. There were also men bearing that appellation who differed from Athanasius

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\* In NEANDER'S *History*, vol. iv. p. 34, reference is made to a passage in the *Preparatio Evang.*, iv. 3, to show that Eusebius did not believe the Son was eternal. The reference should be to the *Demonstratio Evangelica*, iv. 3. There Eusebius so speaks of the Son as to *imply* the opinion, since he speaks of the Father as in some sense preceding him.

only in their objection to the word *ὁμοούσιον*, from its supposed Sabellian tendency.\* They were afraid of error creeping in under cover of truth—of its being “brought in privily.” Basil of Ancyra, Cyril of Jerusalem, Mark of Arethusa, and others, were of the number whom both Athanasius and Hilary excepted from severe censure. Athanasius called them brothers, considering that however necessary it was that the Homoousian symbol should be enforced on the clergy, yet that the privileges of Christian fellowship were not to be denied to any who stumbled at the use of it.† Semiarians of this class afterwards joined the Athanasian party; a circumstance which greatly contributed to the triumph of the Nicene creed. The pure Arians were never numerous. Their strength arose from their allies.

This great controversy was a development of previously existing tendencies. The Logos had long before been the central subject of theology. The Greek Fathers, who had speculated and argued upon the matter, and attempted to define with exactness the nature of Christ, had leaned, some to one mode of expression, some

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\* Some of the Semiarian creeds contain the strongest terms affirmative of the Divine glory of Christ, only omitting *ὁμοούσιον*. The Greek and Latin creeds of Sirmium are remarkable in this respect—the Latin far less metaphysical than the Greek, and without any damnatory clauses.—Soc. *Hist.*, l. ii. c. xxx. The term *ὁμοούσιον*, as opposed by later Semiarians, really became a different symbol from what it had been at the beginning of the controversy, when employed in opposition to Arius. Socrates, l. ii. c. 45, gives a striking example of the dishonest subterfuges of some of the Arians.

† NEWMAN'S *Arians*, p. 321. See also SOZOMEN, *Eccl. Hist.*, lib. iii. c. xiii.

to another. In opposing Sabellianism, Dionysius of Alexandria strongly distinguished between the Father and the Son, and some of his words became Arian mottos.\* Origen maintained the eternity of the Logos, but used also language expressive of inferiority, such as an Arian might approve.† Yet both Dionysius and Origen employed the term *ὁμοούσιον*.‡ Of the two, Origen approximated nearest to the Arians, though his inconsistent maintenance of the eternity of the Logos marks an important difference between him and them.

Historians have connected Arianism with Origenism; but it is remarkable that the Arian party did not affiliate themselves to the great Alexandrian teacher, and plead his authority, till thirty years after the rise of their heresy; and Alexander, at the outset of the controversy, calls Arius an imitator of Paul of Samosata.§ Yet Arius, though taught in the school of Antioch, when he came to Alexandria, would be open to the influence which Origen had exerted there; and whatever the independency of his course of thought, still he might be strengthened in his own views by points of concurrence in Origen's system.

The doctrine of Athanasius was a development of Christ's Divinity as believed by *many* of the Fathers.|| According to our convictions with regard to Scripture

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\* NEANDER, *Hist.*, vol. ii. p. 369.

† See passage already noticed, p. 82.—GIESLER, *Eccl. Hist.*, i. 35.

‡ NEANDER, *Hist.*, vol. ii. 370.

§ THEODORET, *Hist.*, lib. i. c. iv.

|| Bishop Bull has certainly proved as much as that in his *Defence of the Nicene Creed*.

teaching, that teaching was followed in the main by most of the Antenicene Fathers on the subject of the Divinity of Christ, though we by no means approve of their speculations and their fondness for defining—a fondness, however, indulged in by their opponents more than by themselves.

Further, on this subject, there is a great difference in the form of the three principal creeds of the Church, illustrative of the progress of theology and the new spirit which had entered it. The Apostles' creed is a simple affirmation of faith *in* the personal nature and work of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Nicene creed is also personal, but it is also most elaborately definitional, being a laborious effort to fix the difference between the Father and the Son. The Athanasian creed—certainly not the composition of Athanasius, yet reflecting the mind of Athanasians in the fifth century—drops the expression of faith *in* the Divine persons, and becomes a series of cold logical propositions. The creed is taken out of the sphere of simple Christian religion, and placed in the sphere of scientific theology. The exercise of childlike faith in facts is succeeded by the busy activity of the understanding among the deepest mysteries. Both Nicene and Athanasian symbols have damnatory clauses—a most significant addition, showing how religion was now confounded with theology, how Christian faith had come to be regarded as the acceptance of certain propositions, and how Church teachers had lost the mildness of the earlier Antenicene theologians, and had arrived at the terrible conviction of

having a right to launch the sentence of damnation against those who differed from their opinions.

It was a natural pendant to the controversy upon the relation of the Son to the Father, that attention should be turned to the relation of the Son to humanity. One (Apollinaris) said, that man being composed of body, soul, and spirit, the Logos occupied in the person of Christ the place which belongs to the spirit in man.\* Another (Nestorius) replied that this was confounding the Divinity and humanity, and proceeded to distinguish between them by sharp lines, calling the relationship between them an indwelling.† This, it was rejoined, did by no means sufficiently express the intimacy of the union; that it made two persons out of one; that it was reducing Christ to a level with believers, who are all partakers of the Divine nature. Hence the first view was carried further by a third theologian (Eutyches), and the idea of a human mind being wholly dropped, Christ was regarded as the Divine nature in a human body.‡ Between the two extreme views there was at length a decision at the council of Chalcedon, to the effect that in Christ there are two natures and one person, as it is expressed in the Athanasian creed.§

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\* NEANDER, iv. 119.

† *Ibid.* 141.

‡ NEANDER, *Hist.*, iv. 223. HAGENBACH, *Hist. of Doct.*, i. 270—279.

§ Vincentius Lirinensis thus expresses the orthodox doctrine, *Commo-nitorium*, c. xiii. "In Deo una substantia sed tres personæ—in Christo duæ substantiæ sed una persona. In trinitate alius atque alius (a distinction of persons), non aliud atque aliud (a unity of substance), in salvatore aliud atque aliud (twofold substance), non alius atque alius" (unity of person).

The question was revived in a different form, and produced a lasting schism. The disgraceful scenes and the bewildering distinctions connected with the controversy, may well have disgusted many. But it is a pity to shut our eyes against what was really interesting in this notable discussion. It was really a conflict of the inquisitive understanding on the one side, with uninquiring faith on the other. The understanding, busy with logical definitions, was met by faith, representing mysteries so as to make them appear, not only above reason, but contrary to it. The two tendencies lie deep in the minds of men, and account for many theological phenomena; and in this controversy, as in many since, the men of faith, who gloried in the mystery, and rebuked the men of understanding for their logical definitions, did themselves attempt to bring the mystery within the bonds of their own logical formulas, and then to bind them on the consciences of their opponents. And it should also be recollected that both the dividing of Christ into two persons, and the confounding of the distinction between the Divine and the human, tended to obscure the true doctrine of the Incarnation of the Word. There was not, however, a total want of wisdom and moderation in this strife. It was said by one distinguished ecclesiastic, that the only important thing was, that the union of the two natures should be maintained without being confounded. The remark, however, belongs to a practical Roman, Leo, not to a metaphysical Greek.\* The whole was a development of earlier modes

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\* NEANDER, *Hist.*, iv. 249.

of thinking. The party which dwelt most on the mystery appealed to the language of faith in the Fathers before any theological controversy had arisen. The party which strove scientifically to explain the nature of the union carried out the intellectual speculations of Tertullian and Origen, who clearly distinguished between the human mind and the human body of Christ.\*

2. If the controversy relative to the nature and person of Christ ought to be regarded in connexion with the speculative genius of the Greeks, no doubt the next grand controversy of the age, respecting the state of man, and the origin and process of his salvation, must be connected with the practical bent of the Latins. That the questions—what is the condition of humanity? and what is the exact relation to it of the redeeming love of God? should engross the thoughts of Christian people of Roman habits was perfectly natural; but the manner in which the questions were answered was influenced by causes infinitely deeper than the character of races and the idiocracy of souls. These questions presented themselves to one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived, and received their reply in substance, before any controversy arose, save that which went on in his own agitated soul. Augustine's system was formed, and the conclusions identified with his name reached, before Pelagius appeared as a preacher of

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\* NEANDER, *Hist.*, iv. 112. SOCRATES, *Hist.*, lib. iii. c. 7, Irenæus, Clemens, Apollinaris of Hierapolis, and Serapion, assure us that it was a general opinion that Christ, at his incarnation, received a human soul.



heresy.\* Polemical discussions tended to bring out his principles in sharper relief: such is ever the effect of counter-argument, and too often what in the process is gain to science is loss to piety. But Augustinism was no creature of polemic strife. It is impossible to estimate the theology of the Bishop of Hippo without studying the history of his heart—that history which he has written in his *Confessions*. His opinions, like Luther's, grew up amidst his spiritual conflicts. Read the account in the 6th, 7th, and 8th books of the *Confessions* of his bitter anguish for sin—of his longings for deliverance—of his rejection of Manicheism and his trial of Plato—of his appreciation of the beauty of the philosophy of the Greek sage, and his keen sense of its great want—of his conversations with friends about his soul—of his prayers and cries under the fig-tree in the garden at Milan—and of the child's voice from the neighbouring house, saying "Tolle, lege," as his eye fell on the epistles of Paul (from the reading of which he saw that the putting on of the Lord Jesus was the secret of salvation). Study all that, and ponder his conviction that he had been guided, through darkness and war, into light and peace, by Him who leadeth the blind by a way that they know not—and then, clear as the sun will the connexion be seen between Augustine's experience and Augustine's doctrines, and the latter will be recognised as no mere scholastic theory, but a heart

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\* See *Ad Simplicianum*, lib. i. *Aug. Opera*, xi. 412.

conviction, born in a struggle between life and death.\*

He began with sin. He saw how it cleaved to man, and pronounced it not *natural*.† To that term he objected. He preferred the term *original*, and spoke of sin commencing with Adam, and descending to his posterity, carrying with it eternal death, and a vast burden of temporal evils. Augustine's idea of grace was, that it effected a liberation of the will from the bondage of the fall—that it was a new beginning for the soul, coming before faith, as well as before all kinds of moral goodness, and therefore as bestowed on no meritorious grounds whatever. He ascribed the bestowment of it to an eternal purpose, not based on the foresight of anything human, but arising out of a Divine sovereign pleasure. He connected the atonement of our blessed Lord with the idea of predestination, and confined the efficacy of that atonement to the elect.‡ Pelagius, whose history was very different from Augustine's, having been from his youth correct in morals—a man of respectability, but a stranger to the deep experimental

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\* As to the order and time of Augustine's development of doctrine, see WIGGERS' *Augustinism and Pelagianism* (translated by Emerson, with notes), p. 235.

† In avoiding the dualism of the Manichees, he held that original sin was not of man's substance, as created by God, that being essentially good. Augustine calls original sin an accident of nature. He says there is no *nature* of evil, but the loss of good has received the name of evil. Also, he admits that a trace of the Divine image is still left after the fall of Adam in the rational soul of man.—WIGGERS, p. 101, 102.

‡ Wiggers copiously illustrates all these points. Also HAGENBACH, i. 300, *et seq.*

life of the African divine—had come to very different conclusions. He believed that men were born in the same state in which Adam was created, and that Divine grace only assisted men's meritorious endeavours. Such conclusions, of course, militated against predestination; but it does not appear that Pelagius went at all into that subject.\* When he propounded his theory, Augustine came forward as his chief opponent, and in the course of the controversy evolved his previous opinions in a more decided and definite form than ever.

The theology of Augustine was a development of tendencies which appeared in Tertullian and Cyprian, and afterwards in Hilary and Ambrose.† They dwelt more on human depravity and Divine grace than did some, though they broached no theory of predestination. Yet not to the study of those Fathers—though Ambrose's influence on him as a *preacher* should not be overlooked—should the actual origin of Augustine's views be traced, whatever effect those great divines might afterwards have had upon his mind. For in this, as in many cases, certain habits of religious thought might lead to certain opinions without any borrowing, or even any conscious imitation, in the thinker last in the order of time. The subjective views of Augustine considered in the main, apart from some of the consequences to

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\* WIGGERS' *Augustinism and Pelagianism*, p. 258.

† HILARY, *Tract. in Ps. lviii.*, *Ps. cxviii.* AMBROSE, *Apol. David.*, c. xi. HAGENBACH, *Hist. of Doct.*, i. 295. It was in the Western Church, especially the later Gallic, that the strongest opinions prevailed in reference to human sin and Divine grace.

which he pushed them, appear to have been a conviction of his own lost state as a sinner, and his conscious need of salvation ; while the objective basis was the revelation of efficacious grace under the administration of sovereign wisdom, especially as unfolded by the apostle Paul, between whose order of intellect and Augustine's there was strong affinity. The works of the Bishop of Hippo show how much he studied the epistles of that inspired instructor. He had been prepared by his own experience to see the suitableness of a free salvation ; but only in the Divine announcement of such a salvation did he find the proof of its truth, and the grounds of his own faith.

Many who concur with Augustine in his general views of grace will shrink from his predestination theory ; but others, and I confess myself among the number, will see involved in such views of grace an election which is the primal cause of faith and obedience, and not any effect arising out of faith and obedience being anticipated. Notwithstanding, I should decline to adopt Augustine's mode of presenting the doctrine of Divine decrees,\* as well as object to some of the dogmas he blended with his system. Independent a thinker as Augustine was, and guided to a great extent, as I believe, by the word of God, yet he was

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\* It is a pity that the word "decrees" should be used to signify the secret purposes of God ; for a decree is a thing published and known. It ceases to be a secret purpose by becoming a decree : properly speaking, the Gospel is the Divine decree. What is unrevealed is his secret purpose.

open to extraneous influences, which considerably modified his theology. More than a touch of that philosophy which produced the realism of the middle ages may be seen in his representation of the essence of humanity, as enfolded in Adam, without, (to use his metaphysical phraseology), the forms of the essence being distributed.\* In his occasionally confounding what is purely natural with what is really sinful may be detected the working of the spirit of asceticism; † and the great defect in his theological system—his leaving the pardon of sin after baptism dim and indistinct ‡—shows how decidedly the notion of sacramental efficacy ruled in his mind. And we do not believe that he would ever have maintained the frightful opinion which he did, that infants who die

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\* A writer in the *British Quarterly Review* (vol. vi. 250), observes of Augustine,—“He conceived of the relation of Adam to his posterity as an actual incorporation of that posterity in his person, in consequence of which his acts became theirs; and the results of his acts were regarded as belonging as much to each of them singly as to him.—Thus in the *City of God* (xiii. 3—14), ‘When that pair received the Divine sentence of condemnation, the whole human race were in the first man, which by the woman were to pass into posterity. We were all in that one, as we were all that one who fell into sin. Not as yet was the form created (here we see the Aristotelian), and distributed to us singly in which we were individually to live; but the nature was now seminal from which we were to be propagated.’” See also *De Peccatorum Mer. et Rem.*, lib. i. c. x. *Retract.*, lib. i.

† See WIGGERS, 94, 117. Augustine says—Sensual desire belongs to the *nature* of brutes, but is a punishment in man. It is a disease, a wound, inflicted on nature, through the treacherous counsel of the devil—a vice of nature, a deformity, an evil that comes from the depravity of our nature. Before the fall, and before there was any necessity of dying, concupiscence had no existence.

‡ “Augustine discussed, to very good purpose for himself, as well as subsequent ages, the connexion between faith and love, and the doctrine of faith too, in some of its immediate relations to the repenting sinner,

without baptism are unsaved,\* unless he had been driven to do so by the tyranny of the same principle. If there ever was a man who, to devout feeling and habits of mystical contemplation, united the utmost logical consistency† and intrepid courage in avowing conclusions, it was the Bishop of Hippo. With an unflinching step he could walk down into the darkest mysteries, even as with an eye unblenched he could gaze up at the most dazzling wonders. Calmly he stands in the midst of the universe, and points to objects most awful, believing them in harmony with the righteousness of God—a harmony which the endless resources of his logic are employed to establish. Sometimes the saint is stronger than the dialectician, and,

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—his *free* pardon, through faith, of all sins then past, for instance, while the need and reception of an equally free pardon of *subsequent* sins in the believer, was at best but more dimly and transiently seen. And I may just add, that it was in consequence of this dimness that the flood-gates were left wide open to errors and papal impositions, such as the merits of holy faith itself, and of repentance in those who have once believed, and then penances, and purgatory, and popish pardons—all for doing away the sins committed after baptism.”—WIGGERS, 206.

\* “As nothing else is done for children in baptism but their being incorporated into the Church—that is, connected with the body and members of Christ—it follows that when this is not done for them they belong to perdition.”—*De Pec. Mer.*, iii. 4. He says unbaptized children are condemned because they believe not. In baptism, the Church believed for the children, or the children themselves believed by the hearts and mouths of those who presented them.—*C. Tul.*, vi. 3. WIGGERS, 72.

† Augustine expressly directs the Christian student to acquaint himself with the discipline of disputation, the logic or dialectic of those times, characterizing it as available for the penetration and solution of all kinds of questions in sacred literature.—HAMPDEN, *Bampton Lect.*, 58. It is interesting to compare this with Clement’s use of Platonic philosophy.

appalled in his ratiocinations by what he feels to be opposed to the character of the holy and perfect One, he retreats with horror from the edge of the abyss of impiety; and turning his face to the effulgent throne of wisdom and goodness, exclaims, with filial love, "Let God be true and every man a liar."\* To other themes besides the Trinity would he apply, as a check, his beautiful story of the child with a shell striving to empty the sea into a cavity dug with its tiny hand.†

Pelagianism was the development of an opposite tendency; presages of what Pelagius taught respecting nature and grace were given by some of the Greek Fathers, Clement and Origen for example;‡ but Pelagianism, as a system, was quite opposed to the general current of Christian sentiment, which had ever looked toward Christ as the author of salvation, not at man as the preserver of himself. The lack of spiritual feeling, of humble, hearty trust in God, as the only fountain of good—the lack of that filial reliance upon a Father in

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\* NEANDER, *Hist.*, iv. 384.

† It is curious to notice that a similar story is told of the renowned scholar, Alanus de Insulis, of the eleventh century. As he was going to preach on the Trinity, he saw a boy trying to empty a river with a shell, who told him he should fulfil his task before Alanus had explained the Trinity. It shows how the legends of one age were turned into facts by another.

‡ WIGGERS, p. 333. HAGENBACH, i. 298. Chrysostom, in his *Ep. on Rom.*, c. v., expounds the 9th verse as simply referring to our mortality. His views of obedience also have a leaning in the direction of Pelagianism. As it is important to remark, that none of the earlier Fathers adopted an entire system like that of Pelagius, it should also be remembered that neither did any of them propound views resembling, in all respects, those of Augustine.

heaven, through the incarnate Son of his love, and the presence of a hard, rigid, formal righteousness, as a ground of hope—these are but too evident in the character of Pelagius. Nor did Pelagius escape the epidemic error of baptismal salvation; he believed in it as firmly as did Augustine, and therefore, though he did not believe with Augustine in the utter ruin of unbaptized infants, yet he allowed that they failed to receive the full redemption of the Gospel.\* The tenet, in its more monstrous or more modified form, was solely a birth of the Church system of sacraments, and was by no means the result of the Augustinian theory, either of election or of grace. Augustine might, consistently with that theory, have believed in the eternal blessedness of infants; Pelagius, though he did not receive that theory, could not admit that blessedness. These antagonist minds were both victims of the common delusion about baptismal salvation, and were driven by it to allow what was repulsive to humanity, at variance with Christ's love to little children, and dishonourable to the Father of spirits.

It should be added, that Augustine's teaching was utterly remote from Antinomianism. He earnestly insisted on Christian holiness, and, viewed as moralists, there can be no comparison between him and Pelagius, for the ethics of Pelagius were most narrow and superficial; he was constantly looking at virtuous *acts*, at the outward *doing*, while the deeper-souled Augustine was

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\* WIGGERS, chap. iv.



ever digging down to the lowest roots of good and evil in the disposition and principles of the heart. There are also passages of deep thought in the writings of the latter, on the immutable nature of rectitude in connexion with its varied practical forms and applications, proving how profound a moralist was this great divine.\* Clearly and thoroughly was the sentiment ascribed by Joséphus to the Hebrew sages apprehended and maintained by this eminent advocate of Divine grace; "While others," says the historian, "made religion part of virtue, they made virtue part of religion."

Between the two conflicting systems just noticed, the minds of thoughtful men, since the days of Augustine, have been much engaged; and if only few have adopted

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\* Augustine says, in his *Confessions*, l. iii. c. 7, *Opera*, tom. i. 109: "I knew not that true righteousness, which judges not according to custom, but according to the most rightful law of Almighty God, by which were disposed the manners of different times and places, agreeably to those times and places, itself being the same always and everywhere, not one thing here and another there. By it Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, were righteous, and all who were commended by the lips of God, but were judged unrighteous by foolish men, judging according to human judgment, and measuring by their own habits the morals of the whole race." "Some are troubled to find what was once lawful for righteous men is not at present so, and that God, for temporal reasons, enjoined then one thing, now another; but yet they see in the same man, the same day, the same house, different things, and a thing formerly lawful not lawful still; and what is permitted in one corner forbidden in another. Is justice, therefore, variable and mutable? No; but the times over which it rules do not flow evenly, because they are times." "I perceived not how that righteousness, which good and holy men obeyed, far more excellently and sublimely contained in one, all things which God commanded, and varied in no part, although at different times it prescribed not all things at once, but distributed and enjoined what was fitting."

his views entirely, fewer still have embraced those of his adversary; most have traversed something of a *via media*, and the majority of these have inclined very much nearer to the Augustinian than the Pelagian theology. Through the middle ages, Augustine was the great authority with Divines: since the Reformation, his influence, transmitted to Protestants through the writings of Luther and Calvin, has been immense; and it is to be remembered that his views of grace, in substance, have been welcomed and cherished by many who have recoiled at his predestinarian opinions. As to Semipelagian schemes, a noted one was broached by Cassian. He considered man as not morally dead, but only diseased, as having in him naturally a debilitated spiritual life, which only needs health-giving grace and revival; and he further ascribed to free-will the commencement of man's spiritual ascent to God and heaven.\* His views prevailed for a little while, and then died, as all such views ever must, for want of inward vitality, as well as for want of those strong resting places for the soul, to which men earnestly devout, and accustomed to spiritual conflict, will—in spite of all attempts of the argumentative faculty to dispossess them of their hold—most resolutely cling, from a spiritual instinct which tells them clearly that safety and strength are to be found *there* alone.

The development of theology in the Nicene age did

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\* HAGENBACH, i. 306. AMPÈRE, *Hist.*, lib. ii. 19. The controversy was warmly carried on in the Gallic Church, not without considerable erudition and power.

not embrace some important topics which in later times have largely occupied the thoughts of Christians. Not that vital truths, in their simply religious and elementary form, were absent from the hearts of pious men; but they had not become subjects of scientific reflection, with a view to their place and relations in systematic divinity. The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction,\* and of a sinner's acceptance with God through faith, were not yet stated with precision. We read much in Augustine of the grace of justification, and of justification by faith. Some of these passages may bear an interpretation harmonious with what we hold to be truly evangelical views of the great subject.† But then he also speaks of the grace by which we are justified as identical with the infusion of the love of God.‡ He contends, in opposition to Julian, who had explained justification as the pardon

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\* HAGENBACH, i. 355. The purpose of Christ's advent is thus stated by Cyril, in his *Catechetical Lectures*, a course of popular theology. 1, That God might be manifested; 2, That Christ might sanctify baptism; 3, That since through a virgin came death, through a virgin might also come life; 4, That idolatry might be destroyed; 5, That the devil might be vanquished.—*Lect. xii.* The next lecture, *On the Crucifixion*, is chiefly historical. There is a brief statement of the substitution of Christ in § 16.

† See a collection of these passages in FABER, *On Justification*, 164, 183. I have examined them all carefully, and while some support the admission I have just made, others will, I think, by no means bear the sense which the learned and respectable author puts upon them. I would just add, that the method he adopted, that of taking certain detached passages from a writer, without looking at other passages pointing a different way, and without noticing his views on divers connected and correlative points, can never lead to a correct apprehension of any one's opinions.

‡ *De Gratia Christi*, 31. *Opera*, xiii. 303.

of sin, that God justifies the ungodly person, not merely by pardoning the evil he commits, but also by imparting love, that he may turn from evil and do good through the Holy Ghost.\* Speaking of the thief on the cross as believing with his heart unto justification, he immediately explains it by saying that his faith wrought by love, by producing it in the heart, though there was no time for its manifestation in the conduct.† He says, we are justified by the grace of God—that is, we are *made just*, “*justi efficitur.*”‡ Once more he speaks of justification as imperfect in common Christians, and perfect in the martyrs.§ Further, in the canons of the council of Carthage, in 418, against Pelagius, it was decreed that “whosoever shall say that the grace by which we are justified through Jesus Christ our Lord, avails only to the remission of sins already committed, and is not also an aid against their commission, let him be anathema;” and again, in the same decrees, the grace of justification is alluded to as the grace by which we fulfil divine commands.|| While all this was quite consonant with a doctrine of justification by faith, and with the doctrine of salvation by grace, such statements show that there could be no clear perception—no consistent maintenance of the very distinguishable connexions of faith, first, with our Divine forgiveness and acceptance,

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\* *Opus Imperf. contra Julianum*, lib. ii. c. 165. *Opera*, xiv. 1254.

† *Sermo* iii. *De Agar et Ismael*. *Opera*, viii. p. 9.

‡ *Retract.* ii. 33. *Opera*, i. 61.

§ *Sermo* clix. *Opera*, vii. 765.

|| *Can.* iv., v., vi. WIGGERS' *Augustinism*, 172.

and secondly, with our own renewal and sanctification.\* While one side of salvation was early unfolded in the thoughtful consciousness of the church ; while regeneration, albeit connected with the error of baptismal efficacy, was luminously exhibited by the Nicene and earlier teachers ; the other side of salvation was but dimly and confusedly discerned. Man's position towards that law which is the standard of rectitude, and towards that Judge who is the fountain of righteousness and the foundation of order, as well as the change of that position in the believer's history, so that his guilt is put away and he is counted righteous, were not more clearly apprehended by the Latin, with his definite notions of law and government, than by the Greek, whom we might have expected to be more slow in appreciating the evangelical view of man's legal relations. There cannot be found in the Nicene authors any statements formal and sustained, relating to the doctrine of justification, either in harmony with the definitions at Trent, or in strict accordance with Protestant formularies.† Isolated

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\* See CYRIL'S Lecture on Faith, *Catech.* v. It is the experience of faith, and its moral effect on the character, on which he mainly dwells. The only decided passage in connexion with a sinner's acceptance is where he says, "If thou believest that the Lord Jesus is the Christ, and that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, and translated to paradise. Do not disbelieve the possibility of this, for he who, in the Holy Golgotha, saved in one hour that believing thief, will also save thee if thou wilt believe." Yet there is nothing here which might not be said by a person who confounds justification with sanctification.

† The question is not, did they believe in a justification by faith, but what did they mean by that justification? Did they distinguish between

passages may be culled, some looking one way, some another, but no full, consistent, thoroughly worked out views on the subject have yet been discovered by controversialists, who, since the Reformation, have made the Nicene literature their battle-ground, and on both sides have eagerly sought for patristic weapons of defence and assault. There are sentences in Basil and Ambrose which come nearer to the Pauline doctrine, as we apprehend it, than any other we are acquainted with; yet these sentences are found amidst a mass of matter abounding in what an evangelical Protestant would deem inconsistent with just views of the Gospel.\* One

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the forensic and moral view? Did they apprehend the former as we do?

\* "For this is the true and perfect glorying in God, when a man is not lifted up on account of his own righteousness, but has known himself to be wanting in true righteousness, and to be justified by faith alone in Christ." BASIL, *Homil. de Humil.*, xxii., quoted by Faber; but then, as Taylor says, "if the context be duly considered, it must seem very doubtful whether Basil was actually intending any such thing as to advance the doctrine of justification by faith alone." Some strong passages on justification by faith may be found in Chrysostom, *Hom.* viii., on *Rom.*; yet in connexion with those comments you must also look at that Father's *Homilies on Repentance*.

Ambrose states plainly, that through faith alone an impious person is justified with God.—In *Epist. ad Rom.* iv. But he also speaks of covering our errors with good works and confession. "Beati quorum remissæ sunt iniquitates et quorum tecta sunt peccata: alia enim sanguine Filii tui abluis, alia donas nobis ut bonis operibus et confessionibus nostros errores tegamus."—*Ep.* lxx.

Jerome says, "Then we are just when we confess ourselves sinners, and our righteousness comes not of any merit of our own, but of God's mercy; for the Scriptures say, God hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all; and this is the highest righteousness of man, that whatever he has of virtue he should not think it his own, but God's, who gave it."—*Hieron. adv. Pelagian.*, lib. i. c. 3. Here the first

cannot help seeing here the effect of the Church system. That system did not prevent the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of certain views of Divine grace; but a full consistent view of a sinner's acceptance through faith, and a clear distinction between this and heart-renewal by the Holy Ghost, must ever be impossible where the Nicene ecclesiastical dogmas are upheld. An exclusive human priesthood, a new birth by baptism, and the meritoriousness of fasting and celibacy, must supply a dark and distorting medium, through which the light of salvation can struggle only in subdued rays, or in fitful flashes. The imprints of the grand corruptions of Christendom are visible further in the volumes of the Nicene divines, when we consider their choice of subjects, their treatment of texts, and the proportions in which they exhibit doctrines. It is instructive to look over lists of the works of the Fathers. Take Chrysostom for example. We have copious commentaries and homilies; we have also *A Book on the Priesthood*; *A Treatise against the Opposers of a Monastic Life*; *On Virginity*; *Against the Clergy and Virgins living together*; *On the Incomprehensible against the Anomæans*; and panegyrical discourses on virgins and martyrs. It may be

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part of the passage seems to contain the forensic view; but the second part glides into the experimental, without any clear distinction between the two.

On reading such a book as FABER'S *On Justification*—where an attempt is made to shew the harmony of the evangelical doctrine with patristic teaching—we ask whether as many passages of the same kind, extracted from the writings of modern divines, would be deemed sufficient to establish a title to the epithet *evangelical* in the sense now used?

further noticed, how slightly he touches on great evangelical truths in the course of his comments, and how he enlarges upon subjects connected with asceticism, when they come in his way. For example, he has very little to say upon the wonderful words, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."\* And he dilates on God's "kindness towards us through Jesus Christ,"† chiefly to show that martyrdom might well be endured for his sake. Where a modern evangelical writer would glow and burn, Chrysostom sometimes appears quite unexcited, and says but little. As to the citation of texts in the Fathers generally, they will be found to be taken more from the Old Testament than the New—more from the gospels than the epistles—more from the didactic than the doctrinal portions.‡

Throughout the doctrinal developments of the period, appeal was ever made to the Sacred Oracles. The open Bible at Nicæa was so far not without meaning, and accordingly the writings of the age contain frequent and earnest exhortations to the study of the Scriptures. Sometimes we find assertions of their exclusive authority. And it should also be remembered that the Syrian school

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\* Eph. ii. 4.

† *Ib.* ii. 7.

‡ See TAYLOR'S *Ancient Christianity*, vol. i. 228. "Those noted passages, which to Protestant ears are the most familiar, and to the well-taught and spiritually-minded are the most clear, such bright passages are in some of these lists (indexes to patristic volumes) altogether wanting, and in most are the least frequently cited, or, where cited, it is in a sense or for a purpose very unlike, as we must think, their true intention."



of commentators, of which Chrysostom and Theodoret were such illustrious ornaments, devoted themselves to Biblical criticism, without being seduced by the allegorical method of interpretation which bore such sway over the Alexandrian Fathers. Yet the remarks we now make would tend to mislead, were it not added that these very writers sometimes showed a reverence for tradition, assigned reasons for their faith, and assumed, especially in council, a power over human belief utterly inconsistent with the exclusive authority of the Inspired Volume. It is very true that Cyril says—"Concerning the divine and holy mysteries of the faith, we ought not to make the least statement without Scripture authority; or be influenced by mere probabilities and the artifices of argument. Do not trust me because I tell you these things, unless you receive from the Holy Scriptures proof of what is stated. For the safety of our faith is not dependent on ingenious reasonings, but on proof from Holy Scripture."\* Equally strong and much more beautiful passages to the same effect may be found in the writings of Chrysostom. But, on the other hand, we find Augustine rashly saying that he should not believe in the Gospel were he not led to it by the authority of the Catholic Church.† Basil, in his work on *The Holy Spirit*, remarks that we receive the dogmas transmitted to us by writing, and those which have come down under the covering and

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\* CYRIL, *Cat. Lect.* iv.

† *Cont. Epist. Man. Opera*, T. x. 184. "Evangelio non crederem nisi me Ecclesiæ Catholicæ commoveret auctoritas."

mystery of oral tradition. In the *Codex* of Theodosius we notice tradition coupled with the faith of the apostles.\* Also, Councils were believed to be inspired, and Constantine told the Church at Alexandria that what seemed right to three hundred bishops could not but be the mind of God, since the Holy Spirit inhabited and enlightened such men.† Lastly, the principles laid down by Vincent of Lerins were quite fatal to the independent authority of Scripture; for, after admitting its perfection and sufficiency, he goes on to maintain that the Church is its authoritative interpreter, and to place tradition by the side of the Bible.‡

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\* *Grat. in Cod. THEOD.*, l. xvi. tit. vi. 1, 3. "Nihil aliud præcipi volumus quam quod evangelistarum, et apostolorum fides et traditio incorrupta servat."

† *Soc. Eccl. Hist.*, lib. i. c. ix.

‡ *Commonitorium*, § ii.—"Atque idcirco multum necesse est propter tantos tam varii erroris anfractus ut propheticae et apostolicae interpretationis linea secundum Ecclesiastici et Catholici sensus normam dirigatur." Then comes the grand canon, "In ipsâ item Catholicâ Ecclesiâ magnopere curandum est, ut id teneamus, quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est."

## LECTURE VIII.

THIRD AGE CONTINUED—A.D. 325—787.

### DEVELOPMENT.

**WE** now arrive at our third point of inquiry respecting the age of development—What was the state of religious society?

The history of Constantinople during the episcopates of Gregory Nazianzen and Chrysostom, furnishes abundant illustrations. Founded by a Christian Emperor—unpolluted by pagan idolatries—peopled by citizens and courtiers professing the religion of the Redeemer—this new metropolis of the East nevertheless retained the vices, even as it rivalled the luxuries, of the old metropolis of the West. The love of the circus and the theatre, of public shows and imperial processions—the mockery of things sacred as well as of things profane—caricatures of bishops on the stage, and ecclesiastical riots in the streets—were as common on the shores of the Bosphorus as on the banks of the Tiber. The habits of the wealthy were gay and dissipated, and multitudes of the lower classes spent their time in beggary and idleness. When Gregory came, in A.D. 379, the greater part of the people were Arians or Semi-arians. The Novatians, Sabbatarians, and Apollinarians had also their places of worship; so that the orthodox

preacher had, at first, but a handful of hearers, the remnant of a flock foldless and pastureless, scattered and torn.\* From the sermons he delivered, we learn how his righteous soul was vexed by the horse-racing, the play-going, the betting, and the hunting of the Constantinopolitans—their theatrical taste in religious services, their fondness for florid declamation, their dislike to simple, artless discourses—and the tone of moral sentiment, which had sunk to such a degree, that, with comparatively few exceptions, the citizens were composed (so Gregory said) of “the bad who wore a mask, and the bad who appeared without one.”† Notwithstanding all this, a keen temper of theological disputation extensively obtained. At the street corners were knots of people discussing incomprehensibilities: in the markets, clothes-sellers, money-changers, provision-dealers, were similarly employed. When a man was asked how many oboli a thing cost, he started a discussion upon generated and ungenerated existence. Inquiries as to the price of bread were answered by the assertion, that the Father is greater than the Son. When one wanted a bath, the reply was, the Son of God was created from nothing. Gregory of Nyssa draws this picture in one of his sermons.‡

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\* “Even the little band of orthodox at Constantinople, oppressed as it was on all sides, was not perfectly united together, but took part in a division which had diffused itself from Antioch over almost the whole of Eastern and Western Christendom.” This was the Melitian schism.—ULLMAN’S *Gregory of Naz.* Translation by Cox, 177.

† *Orat.*, xxii. 13.

‡ *Opera*, tom. iii. 466. NEANDER, iv. 61.

The doctrine of the Trinity was the constant theme of Gregory Nazianzen's preaching, who, on account of his skill in that respect, rather than for the comprehensive range of his instructions, was named the Theologian.\* The accession of Theodosius to the throne, did more than anything to subdue Arianism in Constantinople; but no doubt the preaching of Gregory produced some sincere converts. In one of his discourses, he alludes to the impression he had made on his hearers—how, while some were provoked to contradiction, and some to noisy applause, there were others whose silent thoughts only concealed the struggles of their souls.† He enables us to see him in his Church of the Anastasia, by the river near the bay—the Shiloh, as he calls it—where was set up the ark of the Covenant after a forty-years' wandering, seated in his episcopal chair, with his head almost bald, his form bent, his beard long, his eyes downcast, his expression gentle and thoughtful, with his presbyters seated on either side, and the deacons in white standing round.‡ When he preaches, the people cluster about the pulpit like bees—the virgins and matrons look down from the galleries—crowds come flocking in from the market, towns, and highways. In his farewell sermon he says, “Lift up thine eyes and look around, thou who wouldst test my preaching here. Observe this glorious wreath that has already been

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\* ULLMAN, 187.

† This he describes in a poem.—*Carmen ix. Insomnium de Anastasia Templo. Opera*, ii. 78.

‡ ULLMANN, 297. The description of the audience is taken from *Carmen ix.*

woven: see the assembly of presbyters, venerable for their age and intelligence—the modest deacons—the excellent readers—the inquiring, docile people—the men and women alike respected for their virtue. This goodly wreath—I say it not from the word, but still I say it—this wreath have I in a great measure, helped to construct—this crown is, at least in part, the result of my preaching.”\*

The state of the times is still more vividly reflected from the pages of Chrysostom. At Antioch he rejoiced to see, on fast days, the circus closed, the shops shut, the forum deserted, and the churches filled. But anon, he mourned that the house of God was empty, and the hippodrome crammed from the floor to the topmost benches. The people could not bear the heat at church. In the circus they would sit bareheaded, to be broiled. They made all manner of excuses for not attending worship, but old and young flocked to the amphitheatre.† Numerous are the allusions in Chrysostom’s homilies to the corrupt state of society. Though it is not always

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\* *Orat. xlii.* The conclusion of this discourse is very affecting. He alludes to his Church—to his episcopal chair—to the choruses—to the homes of his people—to his hearers—his pulpit—to the palaces and forum—to the city, the Christ-loving city—to eastern and western lands—and finally, to the angels, protectors of the Church—and he formally takes leave of each. Less oratorical, but still more affecting, is the series of farewells by Ridley, when at Oxford, under sentence of death.—*Works of Ridley*, 395.

† *Hom. ad pop. Antioch. iv. Sermo de Anna, Ep. 1 Cor. Hom. v.* NEANDER’S *Life of Chrysostom*, 132, 185, 219. It would appear, that notwithstanding the laws enacted by Constantine for the observance of Sunday, business was transacted on that day.

clear how far he intended his description to apply to those who heard him, and though allowance must be made for the exaggeration of rhetoric, and the flights of zeal in an imaginative, eloquent, and earnest preacher like Chrysostom—one receives from his sermons a very unfavourable impression of the state of Antioch and Constantinople. It is remarkable that fourteen out of the twenty-one homilies on the statues, preached at Antioch, conclude with strong exhortations against the use of oaths and common swearing.\* Chrysostom was more popular than Gregory. His energy, as well as his office, made him at Constantinople a sort of spiritual tribune of the people. They came especially on festal days to hear this preacher of “the golden mouth”—this Joshua of the Greek orators, who stayed the sun of eloquence from going down a whole day. Pickpockets availed themselves of the press to ply their trade: and, according to the fashion of the age, the auditors generally, as though in a theatre, clapped their hands and waved their handkerchiefs in applause of the orator’s appeals. By this means, also, after the manner of a modern *encore*, the admirers of the bishop sought to prolong the entertainment. Not that he approved of this sort of commendation, but severely condemned it; yet it would appear that his rebukes only provoked a repetition of the light-hearted offence. Ladies came to hear him in gilded chariots, drawn by mules richly caparisoned, and attended by eunuchs and slaves. They

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\* The latter is expressly noticed in *Hom.* v. c. 7.

were dressed in tunics of silk and gold, and were adorned with costly jewels, their robes displaying Scripture scenes wrought in embroidery.\*

The confusion in the place of worship at times equalled the hubbub of the bath. Chat, joke, witty repartee, mingled with laughter, went on even during prayer time; and the orator sarcastically told his congregation that if they wished to talk of trade or the army, their families or the nation, there was greater freedom for them in the church than in the market, the court, or the doctor's shop. Woe to any unpopular preacher who "supplied" for Chrysostom, for he was pretty sure to be hooted out of the pulpit.† And such was the character of the people who came to the communion, especially on Easter-day, that among them were those who practised augury—who used incantations and charms,—who were addicted to fornication, adultery, and drunkenness, to say nothing of envy and vainglory, malignity and avarice. The chief offices of the church had become saleable, and other evils were rampant for want of a power of discipline to repress them.‡ In the streets the Christian of rank might be seen with servants carrying

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\* "In the fifth century, the art of weaving stuffs, and enriching them with subjects in embroidery, was carried to a high degree of perfection: the whole history of Christ was embroidered on the toga of a Christian Senator."—See THEODORET, *De Provid.* Orat. iv. t. iv. p. 361. *Handbook of the Arts*, by LABARTE, p. 87. The Dalmatica di papa San Leone, in the sacristy of St. Peter's, Rome, is a late example of this kind of embroidery.

† *Ep. 1 Cor. Hom. xxxvi. Hom. in illud Pater meus, &c.*, tom. xii. 528.

‡ *Ep. ad Ephes. Hom. vi.*



fascēs before him, while a horse was led at his heels in state.\* On horseback, or lolling in his carriage, he had also his waiting-men to clear the way, as though he would put the whole population to flight—"no wolf or lion so unsociable" as he. Especially does the preacher descant on the luxury of his hearers in the matter of shoes, that part of dress being costly in the extreme; and as some seemed afraid to touch the pavement lest they should soil things so precious, the preacher bluntly advised their wearers to hang them round their necks or put them on their heads.† With this foppery abroad there was gluttony at home, and it is terrible to read Chrysostom's invectives against the common indulgence of this vice.‡ Weddings were scenes of dissipation and revelry, theatrical singers and dancers being hired for the occasion. There the ladies particularly endeavoured to set off their charms with cosmetics: in general, too, paint was in abundant requisition by the fair sex, till their eyebrows were "black as kettles," their mouths "like bears' stained with blood," and their cheeks dusted like "whitened tombs."§ Into the innermost secrets of home life does the great preacher lead us, showing us mistresses beating their maids, stripping and binding them to the bed-post. And further, we hear how religious wives in the fourth century could upbraid their unfortunate husbands as cowards and dolts, because they did not get money, while some neighbour was rolling in

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\* *Ep. ad 1 Cor. Hom. xl.*

† *1 Ep. ad Corinth. Hom. xxxix.*

‡ *In Matt., Hom. xlix.*

§ *In Matt., Hom. xxx.*

riches, thus enabling his spouse to wear jewels, to have her pair of white mules, and ride through the city with troops of eunuchs and slaves.\*

It is far more easy to illustrate the vices than the virtues of that age, because faithful preachers, from whose sermons we gather them, were intent on probing the consciences of their hearers by rebuke, and never thought of pleasing them by flattery—scarcely of encouraging them by commendation. Yet we have indications of the existence of faith, devotion, self-denial, and charity; of true piety in the cloister, “of men who strove to live before God silently and ever conscious of His presence, but whose hands were not idle, nor forgetful of labour for the sake of prayer;”† and of women too, such as Olympias the friend of Chrysostom, who laboured with him in the gospel, and whose name we cannot doubt is in the Book of life.

Such unfavourable details as have been now given, illustrate the effect of secularized ecclesiasticism. The distinction between the Church and the world had been broken down. Courtiers as a matter of etiquette adopted the faith of their royal masters; still deeply engrained with pagan habits, they gave a careless assent to Christian dogmas. Ausonius, in the West, whose writings are of such a *bizarre* description, who was so truly

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\* *Epist. ad Eph., Hom. xv. xx.* For some of the foregoing references I am indebted to VILLEMMAIN, *Tableau de l'eloq. chrét. au IV. Siècle*, and an article in *Quart. Rev.*, vol. lxxviii. p. 346. A few of the passages noticed are from homilies preached at Antioch; but they are all no doubt applicable to Constantinople.

† *Life of Chrysostom*, by T. M. PERTHES, p. 10.

Janus-faced, that critics have raised the question—was he a heathen or a Christian,\* may be fairly taken as the type of a large class, including many in the East. The multitude followed their superiors—Christianity was the general profession; and soldiers and tradesmen, and idlers and peasants, wandered into the marble Basilicas, to sign themselves with the mark of the cross, and partake of the holy mysteries. Except among the Novatians and Donatists, the puritans of the age, who stood apart from the great Athanasian sect, not in doctrine but only in discipline, there was no such thing as congregational order, no line of ecclesiastical demarcation between Christ's disciples and the ungodly.† Elsewhere Church life was at an end, through the influx

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\* AMPÈRE, *Hist. Lit.*, i. 246. Literary society in the fourth century is compared by Ampère to French society in the sixteenth.—*Hist. Lit.*, i. 256. Ausonius carried on a correspondence with Symmachus, the champion of Paganism against Ambrose. The correspondence between Ausonius and Paulinus is deeply affecting—the one a literary trifler, the other an earnest Christian.—AMPÈRE, i. 285.

† The office of penitentiary presbyter was abolished, because of its abuse, and the scandal it occasioned. Every one afterwards, says Socrates (*Ecl. Hist.*, L. v. c. xix. 1) was left to his own conscience as to participating in the mysteries; and Sozomen (L. vii. c. xvi.) observes that the performance of penance declined, and that extreme laxity took the place of former severities. The strict principles of the Novatians prevented them from receiving back to communion heinous offenders, and therefore no penitential system existed among them. Their method was a reaction occasioned by the laxities of the age. The orthodoxy of the sect is acknowledged by Sozomen (L. ii. c. xxxii.), who also speaks of their great numbers. They lived on the most friendly terms with the Catholics in Constantinople, the latter making use of their churches in times of persecution.—SOCRATES, ii. c. xxxviii. The church of the Anastasia, in which Gregory preached, was a Novatian edifice. The Donatists were more sectarian than the Novatians, and were guilty of displaying a very bitter spirit.—LARDNER, iii. 556.

of unconverted men to the rights of Christian membership. The confounding of Church and State, the incorporation of the empire as an ecclesiastical commonwealth, completely destroyed the possibility of Christians discharging the functions of their office as proper congregational worshippers—as united witnesses of truth—as servants of the Redeemer chosen to protest against all falsehood and evil. And in the facility with which men became nominal Christians—in the open gateway to the broad area of the Church—we see the effect of that ceremonialism which had usurped dominion over the chief minds of Nicene Christendom—for popular religion had become, to a large extent, a religion of sacraments, that is, a religion of charms.

The influence of asceticism is further manifest. Gregory was an intense lover of nature; and to his social disposition witness is borne by his loving attachment to Basil—their friendship forming a charming episode, a sheltered and grateful bypath for which one is glad to leave the beaten ways of secular and polemic history.\* But this large-hearted man was the victim of a system

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\* Basil deeply sympathised with his friend in his taste for natural beauty, and gives in his works some charming descriptions. They are among the most sparkling passages in patristic literature. See his *Epistles*, xiv. ccxxiii. Villemain, in his *Tableau de l'Eloquence Chrétienne*, compares Basil to St. Pierre, and the *Hexameron* to the *Etudes de la Nature*, 123. Humboldt, in his *Cosmos*, (vol. ii. p. 26) refers largely to Basil, as illustrative of the influence of Christianity upon our love of nature. Another beautiful instance of Christian friendship is furnished in the story of Paulinus and Sulpicius Severus.—AMPÈRE, *Hist. Lit.*, vol. i. 298. The effect of asceticism in breaking the nuptial bond, and of the bitter melancholy consequent on this, may be seen in the *Epistles* of Paulinus, ii. n. 3.—AMPÈRE, i. 276.

which brought him to look on the constitution of nature as evil; and though his ascetic habits could not prevent him from taking pleasure in the songs of birds, and the colours of flowers, the magnificence of the mountain, and the grandeur of the sea, yet it seemed in one, taught as he had been, more like a stolen delight than a God-given inheritance. As to marriage, for which he was so eminently suited, whose praises he so eloquently celebrates,\* and which would have formed the stay, and corrected the weakness of his character—from that he was debarred; and it is affecting to hear him deplore his loneliness—to hear him lament that he knew of no hand to close his eyes.† And in the lines which express this sentiment, one recognises the sympathies of the God-made soul writhing under, while it blindly yields to the man-made system. The good and holy Chrysostom, too, of stronger make and sterner cast, would doubtless have been softened without being enervated by emancipation from ascetic bondage, and while his chronic maladies would have been lessened by the abandonment of austerities,‡ I fancy he would not have wanted so many of those plasters and bandages which, in his unrighteous exile, we find the Christian ladies sent him from Constantinople.

Chrysostom lifts up the veil from monkery, and though an advocate of the theory, he is unsparing in the condemnation of what he deems its practical abuses—we

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\* *Epistle* 171.

† *Carmen* viii. *Opera*, ii. 77.

‡ The constitution of Gregory Naz. was undermined from the same cause.

should call them its natural fruits. Some of the monks were idle and vicious, their cells being hung round, he says, with girdles and caps and combs, the signs of fair companions sharing the solitude; and to such an extent was this kind of thing carried, that Chrysostom confessed even marriage to be preferable to monachism. The excellent man could be satirical on this theme, and he describes the poor monk as worried out of his life by the tongues of women, as running about the streets to silversmiths and hairdressers and drapers and upholsterers, to buy looking-glasses and bottles and frills and perfumes for holy ladies, “nymphs of paradise, brides of Christ.”\* The effect of the Church system is also apparent in Chrysostom’s excessive laudations of the priesthood, and in the imperious and harsh tone which he was wont sometimes to assume in the exercise of authority. He would have been equally faithful had he never regarded himself as one of the Lord’s high priests. His piety would have been less stained, and the effect of his ministry more beneficial, had he never learned—as he and Gregory and the rest had done—to glorify martyrs as a circle of secondary mediators, as a choir of spirits ministering to mankind, defending cities and guarding homes, and sharing, in some degree, with Christ and God, the honours of dependence, thanksgiving, and prayer.†

Rome was the mirror of western Christendom, and, as

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\* See article on *Chrysostom*, in KITTO’S *Journal of Sacred Lit.*, i. 231. The monks near Antioch, among whom Chrysostom was brought up, were a different class of men; but their severities had a bad effect upon them.—*Life of Chrysostom*, by PERTHES, p. 11.

† See ULLMAN’S *Life of Gregory*, p. 227.

to its religious state, closely resembled the cities of the east. Jerome imbued many of the citizens with his own ascetic spirit, and revived in their bosom something of their fathers' sternness, engrafting on it a stoicism surpassing Cato's. And ladies flocked to the monkish preacher, and were filled with admiration, as with a rough countenance and a rude garb, he declaimed against the world's vanities. But his letters intimate the gross immorality of the Romans in general, and present pictures of society like those of Juvenal. The monks were quite distinct from the secular clergy. Many of the latter were gay and frivolous—perfect coxcombs in fact, walking on tiptoe in loose sandals, with crisped hair and golden-ringed fingers. Monkery produced a reaction. At the funeral of an illustrious matron, said to have shortened her days by her austerities, there was a popular tumult; and the cry was, "Why do we tolerate these accursed monks? Away with them, stone them, cast them into the Tiber."\*

In connexion with this, it is proper to notice the prevalent belief in miracles. Chrysostom evidently regarded them as having ceased,† so did Vigilantius.‡ Athanasius and Augustine considered the power of working them a continued heritage of the Church.§

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\* MILMAN'S *Latin Christianity*, vol. i. 71, 73. It would be easy to cite illustrations of the Gallic and African Churches, from the writings of Salvian and Augustine, showing the contemporary extremes of dissipation and asceticism.

† *Hom. in Corinth.*, vi. 4.

‡ *Hieron. adv. Vigilantium.*

§ It is sufficient to refer to the *Life of Antony*, by Athanasius, and the story of the miracle at Milan, in Augustine's *Confessions*.

Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Evagrius record plentifully wonders so absurd, that if we believe them we can have no difficulty in accepting those of the middle ages. Chrysostom and Vigilantius—such different men from each other—are certainly formidable exceptions to the prevalent belief, and conclusive witnesses against any reality in connexion with the pretence to miraculous gifts. It was not miracles at the time which produced the faith; the faith imagined miracles. That faith was the growth of a delusion existing in the third century—a fond conceit coming over the Church, the shadow of a departed power.\* Such a fancy, succeeding true belief, is at first feeble; in time it gains vividness and effect. In the fifth century, an impression of the continuance of signs and wonders attained its height. Miracles every year grew more numerous, especially in honour of ascetic aspirations. The pagan Plotinus had blushed that he had a body. Nicene saints, more deeply crimsoned from that cause, had miracles wrought to spare their shame, even upon so slight an occasion as when to swim through a river it seemed at first necessary that they should pull off their clothes.†

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\* Origen speaks of surviving gifts as *vestiges* of former powers.—*Con. Cels.*, l. 2, c. 46.

† Socrates relates of Ammon that he used to say it was unbecoming in a monk to see himself naked; so when he came to a river, being unwilling to undress, an angel appeared and carried him over.—*Hist.*, lib. iv. c. xxiii. I may add, that sometimes fanaticism in those days took an opposite turn. Serapion, 'a perfect monk,' advised a virgin, to show how dead she was to the world, to strip herself, and carrying her clothes on her shoulders, follow him through the city.—*ROSWEYDE, Vitæ Patrum*, lib. viii. 762.



When reports were circulated, there was no sifting of evidence ; a greedy appetite for the supernatural devoured the strangest stories. Supposed interpositions, which would startle the sober, came to be recorded as common circumstances. In writing a narrative the author presumed on the reader's fanatical credulity as equal to his own, that being fully up to boiling-point. What effect would such a state of mind, commonly indulged, have on Christendom? How it must have fostered spiritual pride in those who thought themselves such favourites of the Almighty as to be delegated with the power of setting aside the courses of Nature! In what a world of enthusiastic imagination, prompting to idolatry, must they have lived who were ever waiting for some Thaumaturgus to bind the pliant laws of Heaven for their rescue, their honour, or their convenience! How could calm submission to the Divine order of the universe have place amidst the feverish hope of its interruption whenever it was thought desirable? Could the mind keep its balance, and the spirit walk humbly with God, while surrounding itself daily with a blaze of signs and wonders? Could faith help being frenzied by habitual visions of devil troops and angel choirs? Were not the simple and guileless inviting victims of deception? and had not the craftsmen, cunning at getting up scenes of the marvellous, ample scope for driving a successful trade?

The Nicene church system developed itself in the fifth century more than in the fourth. To be religious was to be a monk. Conversion was the abandonment of

secular life. The line between the Church and the world showed itself only in this way. The ecclesiastic, the hermit, the monk, the virgin—those who burst from all common social bonds—were the select community. Others were altogether reprobate, or considered as standing upon a lower step of the threshold of salvation. Earnest Christians, not devoted to a celibate life, were “so few a child might write them.” Almost all religion was cooped up in cells or imprisoned in cloisters. Let there be a distinction made as clear as possible between the social state of the empire upon which monachism had to work, and the social state of it as produced by monachism itself. Yet, while we see the previous corruption with which Nicene Christianity had to struggle, while we must admit that this corruption contributed to stimulate the ascetic spirit—the vices of great cities, the want of pure hearths and happy homes, the licentiousness and injustice of all ranks, driving devout minds to seek refuge from the storm and protection from the filth in congregated seclusion or perfect solitude—while we allow all that, we cannot but observe that the method taken by individuals to escape the evils, served to increase them in society at large. Of course, the world became all the darker by the withdrawment of its lights, all the more corrupt through the gathering away of the salt scattered over it.

We have endeavoured faithfully to give the dark side of the Nicene age. It had another side. The wonderful facts of Christ’s Deity and incarnation, his love and sufferings, of God’s mercy to man through him, and

of Divine power for the renewal of hearts, were recognised and proclaimed by the preachers of the age; and there is power in these truths to break through and rise above the surface of superstitious ceremonies and opinions encrusting them. Though divines did not distinguish, as we have learned to do, between the two sides of salvation; though they had no clear and consistent notions of *forensic* justification; though they encumbered every thing with the ritualistic, and the ascetic;—yet, it is unjust not to remember, that after all, many of the peculiarities of the Christian revelation were asserted and enforced. In happy inconsistency with much that was taught—in the very teeth of their Church system, they maintained that salvation was of grace and not of works—that works were fruits of grace, that grace could not be earned, but was a gift freely given, preceding all true virtue, and infused into the soul before any goodness could appear.\* The Son of God, as a Divine person, was seen, trusted, and loved; for His sake men denied themselves, and sacrificed their lives. And in that age of confusion, God's providence was earnestly maintained. Faith in that precious fact shines as a

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\* It is refreshing to turn to passages in *Chrysostom*, such as in the *Hom. in Epist. ad Eph.*, 1. Extolling the riches of grace, he says, “It is as though one should take a miserable leper, and transform him into a youth of surpassing beauty, with lustrous cheeks, and eyes like sunbeams, and then in the flower of his age to clothe him with purple, and crown him with the diadem of royalty.” Again (*Hom. in Epist. ad Rom.*), he observes,—“Far more than we sinners owe, Christ hath paid, as much more as an ocean exceeds a drop. Doubt not then, O man, when thou seest these stores of good things; nor inquire how the spark of death and sin is extinguished when cast into such a sea.”

stream of light through the descriptions by Augustine, and Salvian, as each of them, with all the fidelity of a Tacitus, exhibits the darkness of the times in which he lived.\* In sermons by the Fathers, and also in the rude paintings of the period, there comes out a noble tone of triumph in Christ.† Believers extolled Him as their Samson who had broken the gates of their prison-house, and as their David who had conquered the Neros and Domitians—giants that insulted and oppressed the Church. And, again, there were Christians who rejoiced as they described in the pulpit, or as they saw figured on the wall—Elijah in his typical ascent mounting to Heaven, dropping his mantle on Elisha. They felt and thankfully proclaimed that the Spirit of the Lord had fallen upon them, even the spirit of light and love, of wisdom and sanctity.‡ Proofs exist that Christ's spirit of forgiveness was cherished, while his cross was loved and his name adored.‡ We visit the Catacombs of Rome, and in the

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\* The *Civitas Dei*, and the *De Guber. Dei*, are both noble treatises on God's providence.

† The following quaint lines also indicate love to Christ:—

Spes, via, vita, salus, ratio, sapientia, lumen,  
 Index, porta, gigas, rex, gemma, propheta, sacerdos,  
 Messias, Zeboot, Rabbi, sponsus, mediator,  
 Virga, columna, manus, petra, filius, Emmanuelque,  
 Vineæ, pastor, ovis, pax, radix, vitis, oliva,  
 Fons, paries, agnus, vitulus, leo, propitiator,  
 Verbum, homo, rete, lapis, domus, omnia Christus Iesus.

ST. DAMASUS, *Biblioth. vet. P. P. Carm. xx. t. 8.*

‡ See *Histoire des Catacombes*, par l'Abbé Gaume, 329, where are references to *Aug. Serm.*, 107, *S. Gregory Mor. Job*, c. 42, *Maximus of Turin, Fest. de SS. Martyr.*

rude frescoes of that age we notice the absence of all signs of a retaliative temper towards the memory of persecutors. No pictures emblazon their cruelties to provoke indignation. We find only the simple and divine stories of Holy Writ.\* We also discover in the liturgies and hymns of the period a fervent spirit of devotion. The "Te Deum," the most magnificent of all mere human expressions of praise, belongs to the fifth century, most assuredly redeeming its religious character from indiscriminate censure.† I should pity the man that could not appreciate the piety of Gregory and Chrysostom, who, in spite of their errors and failings, loved Christ, and devoted to him their lives. And who but must reverence Augustine? With asceticism not unchecked by good sense—with Churchmanship not selfish—with an absorbing love for ecclesiastical unity (not indeed scriptural, yet that which he takes to be such), for which he has ever lived, and for which, at any moment, he would rejoice to die; there he is at Hippo, toiling and preaching and praying,—hospitable to strangers, generous to the poor, a hater of oppression, and a healer of strife. And while he folds up in

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\* Rochette, in his *Tableau des Catacombes*, illustrates this fact, and dwells on it with eloquence.—192, 195.

† "The most ancient allusions to its existence are found in the *Rule* of Cæsarius, Bishop of Arles, who lived in the fifth century, and in that of his successor, Aurelian. It has been judged from this that the *Te Deum* may probably have been composed by some member of the celebrated monastery of Lerins, which was not far from Arles; or perhaps by Hilary of Arles, who seems to have composed the *Athanasian Creed* in the fifth century."—PALMER'S *Orig. Lit.*, i. 256.

himself much of the mediæval spirit, there dwells in his heart that evangelical life which, transferred to his writings, can quicken the piety of the devout and prepare for the overthrow of the corruptions he has heedlessly countenanced and promoted. His grasp of the doctrines of grace brightens all his works, and those works so popular, could not but be a rich blessing to many who read them. In his *Confessions*, we see the spiritual captive set free by Christ—the healed man talking of his healer—we have a Cardiphonia addressed to God by a heart broken but made whole. In *The City of God*, we hear the chant of a victorious soldier in honour of his Lord. It is a pæan of triumph of amazing swell and power—the organ-like music at last rising into a burst of melody as the sound of many waters. Throughout his life, we have a practical echo of the words, “Why am I in the world but to live in Christ Jesus?—This is my passion, my honour, my glory, my joy, my riches.”

And if there was a Cyril of Alexandria, imperious and selfish, cunning and cruel, there were a Hilary\* and an Ambrose, both humble, generous, honest, and kind. If there was a council of robbers at Ephesus, there were synods of faithful teachers at Carthage; and though

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\* Hilary was led, through philosophical reflection, to feel the insufficiency of reason, and to seek truth in the Bible, where he found Christ, as did Augustine. The history of his conversion is given by him in the first chapter of his book on the *Trinity*. It strongly reminds us of the experience of the Bishop of Hippo. His spiritual life made him the opponent of Arianism, as Augustine's made him the foe of Pelagianism.

civilization was corrupt in Africa, and many who called themselves orthodox were immoral, yet, under the persecuting Vandals, the martyr roll of Christendom received an accession of names; and there were furnished instances of faith and hope, of love and devotion, of patience and charity, such as showed that the spirit of the Lord had not left the earth, but was still raising up witnesses to His power, monuments to His praise.

I do not know, I do not wish to know, who was the mother of Cyril of Alexandria, but I know Arethusa, the mother of Chrysostom, who devoted the years of her widowhood to the education of her boy; and I know Nonna, the mother of Gregory Nazianzen, whose character is so lovingly painted by her son, and who died in church with her hand on the altar; and I know Monica, the mother of Augustine, who, for many long years, prayed for her child's conversion. I love to listen to that last conversation between them by the garden window of the house in Ostia, where they talk of Heaven as if already there, and she says, "Once there was a reason why I might wish to live long, even that I might see you a Christian before I died, but God has granted me my desire, in your devotedness to his service and abandonment of the world."\* These insights into maternal hearts at once illustrate the connexion between a mother's character and a son's distinction, and the existence in a corrupt age of womanly faith, devotion, and patience.

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\* *Confessiones*, L. ix. c. x. Rarely has Christian eloquence equalled the passage relative to their conversation.

After Augustine's time—the last theological name of note, except that of Gregory the Great, who in theological opinion closely followed him—there was little development of doctrine—the development was mainly on the side of the Church system, which advanced rapidly enough. Where the truths, dear to the African Father, were still cherished, there, in spite of associated errors, they bore holy fruit; but where only a barren Nicene orthodoxy with its ceremonial appendages existed, as was the case in the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, there was found little but spiritual death—nothing but spiritual barrenness; so that, when Mahomet came with his fleet hordes, and his cavalry swept through the gates and filled the streets of Antioch and Alexandria, there was nothing to resist the edge of the Saracen scimitar; and in the fall of ancient Christian Africa and the East under Mussulman rule, do we not see the Nemesis of providence on the corrupt system born out of the innovations of the Nicene age, and bred up under the hierarchy which came in after Constantine?

The invasion of Western Europe in the fifth and sixth centuries had a different issue. The division of Christendom existing there fulfilled a nobler destiny. It requires our attention. The story of the Latin Church must be carefully separated from the story of the Greek.

Roman civilization, in the latter days of the Empire, was thoroughly corrupt. It was saturated with oriental luxury, idleness, and vice. There was little, if anything, to choose between Greek cities and Roman ones. While



East and West were very much on a level in point of corrupt civilization, there was a great difference between the invaders who came down on Italy, Gaul, and Spain, and those who afterwards subdued Syria and Egypt. The Teutonic races were of a different order from the Saracenic. Fierce and brave as the men of the East, they possessed two qualities the opposite of their swarthy brethren. Whatever exaggerations there may be in the statements of Tacitus and Salvian, there can be no doubt that the Teutons honoured female chastity and were lovers of freedom—virtues pre-eminently contributing to social purity and power. And while in this respect they were superior to their corrupt neighbours, we may add that, in point of intellect and of sensibility, they were at least different from them, exhibiting a type of thought and sentiment perhaps even fuller and richer than that of their rivals. If the influence of Teutonic soldiership be seen in some of the mediæval bishops, who carried the sword as well as the crosier, and wore the helmet over the mitre, we must not forget the influence of Teutonic morals upon the purer domestic life which grew up in the middle ages, as well as the influence of Teutonic independence upon the struggles and reforms which enliven and elevate the story of mediæval Christendom. Nor must we overlook the influence of Teutonic intellect and sensibility on the poetry, the art, and the philosophy\* of mediæval and modern times. The bar-

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\* It is a curious fact that the schoolmen were almost all of Teutonic blood. Even Aquinas, though born in Italy, was no exception. In Italy, pointed architecture and scholasticism were "exotics never thoroughly acclimated."

barian invasion was, on the whole, more of a good than an evil. It was a scourge of God, but Roman society needed scourging, and the rod was sent in mercy as well as wrath. A worn-out and effeminate race required strengthening by the infusion of fresh vigorous blood. Christianity works on nature, and renews it, yet the renewal is modified by the condition of the nature on which it operates. The history of Christianity in Western Europe could not have been what it proved but for the new elements infused into European society.

But there was another and still more important difference between the East and West. The Christian element was strongest in the latter. It had more of gospel light and a deeper consciousness of spiritual truth. Metaphysical orthodoxy as to the nature of Christ was the chief treasure of the Greek theologians. The Latins, with their sound orthodoxy on that point, had much more that was better. In the writings of Gregory the Great, the principal ecclesiastical author of the period, with all the dross, there is much gold dug from Scripture mines. Evangelical truth, exhibited, of course, after the fashion of the day, may be found in his great work on the Book of Job, coupled with earnest devotion and a deeply practical spirit. No such an author could be found in the East at that period. And as to the Gallic prelates, these were not only semi-warriors and political rulers—not only men affecting classical studies, such as Avitus, Ennodius, and Sidonius Apollinaris,\* but

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\* AMPÈRE, *Hist. Lit.*, ii. 192, 232. *Etudes sur les premiers Temps du Christ.*, &c., par CHASLES, 108—130. Avitus was the most remarkable

men spiritually enlightened, possessing piety and zeal—Germanus of Auxerre, Lupus of Troyes, Cæsarius of Arles, Eligius of Noyon, and the abbots Euroul and Loumon, are names shaded in part by the Church system, yet retaining a lustre which struggles through it.\* And as to Gallic society in the decline of the Empire, though it exhibited a strange and confused mixture of luxury, mysticism, and Paganism, of literary recollections and declining philosophies, yet Christianity had begun to trace its outlines, to inspire some with its moral sentiments, to create beneficence and charity, to bind scattered souls into one, to kindle devotion, to teach the love and worship of Christ, and to satisfy the mind and heart of man, which had been so long mocked by empty conjectures and vain superstitions. Of course such a state of society might be expected to re-act on experimental Christianity to its injury and perversion; but in those worst of times, as in all others, the life of the

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man of the three. He wrote poems on the Creation, Original Sin, and the Expulsion from Paradise; and Guizot remarks, in his *Lectures on Hist. of Civil.* (ii. 147), that the triad ought to be called Paradise Lost. "It is not by the subject alone," he adds, "that this work recalls to mind that of Milton, the resemblance in some parts of the general conception, and in some of the more important details, is striking." Guizot gives very copious extracts. Hallam (*Int. to Lit.*, i. 13) excepts Avitus and Cæsarius, when expressing an unfavourable judgment of the intellectual character of the period. Avitus was certainly a man of poetic genius—the last golden-fringed cloud which lingered in the horizon after Rome's sunset. The letters of Avitus do little credit to his piety. In writing to Clovis, the Christian is lost in the courtier.—AMPÈRE, ii. 203.

\* Neander dwells on their virtues and piety in his *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Geschichte des christlichen Lebens*, of a part of which there is an English translation, entitled *Light in the Dark Places*. Guizot gives specimens of the sermons of Cæsarius.—*Lect. on Civil.*, ii. 108.

Gospel was not crushed amidst the confusion, but wrought as the power of God unto salvation.\* The Church system was strong in the West, but a distinction must be made first between the system itself and the Scripture truths associated with it; and then, secondly, between that system and its individual administrators, some of whom had the pernicious consequences of their errors and superstitions held in check by the spirit of genuine religion which the Gospel and the grace of God inspired in their hearts.

To the deeper and more earnest piety of the West is to be attributed, in no small degree, the different issue of the Teutonic as compared with the Saracenic invasion—the adoption of the religion of the conquered by the conquerors, instead of the imposition of the religion of the conquerors on the conquered.

There was abundant confusion, cruelty, and licentiousness among the Teutonic people, which the Christianity they came in contact with failed to subdue; yet that Christianity conferred on them important and invaluable benefits. No doubt the power of the priesthood became immense and overbearing; but it must be remembered that the dissolution of the old bonds of society was such as naturally to throw a rude and ignorant people into the hands of a class of men much more intelligent

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\* To the sixth century belongs the writer known as Gildas, who lived in Britain, and described its desolations. The long Epistle subjoined to his *History* abounds in Scripture quotations, and is remarkable for the pious, faithful, and earnest manner in which he reproveth and exhorts both rulers and priests.

than themselves, and united by the sympathies and organization of their own order. Moreover, looking at the condition of the Frankish kings and people, who can wonder, amidst such a state of affairs, at the interference of ministers of religion, after a manner which would be perfectly intolerable in tranquil times? I fully agree with an eloquent writer, "that in Gaul the early Church was the one great antagonist of the wrongs which were done upon the earth; that she narrowed the range of fiscal tyranny; that she mitigated the overwhelming poverty of the people; that she promoted the accumulation of capital; that she contributed to the restoration of agriculture; that she balanced and held in check the imperial despotism; that she revived within herself the remembrance and the use of the great franchise of popular election;" and that in the same age and country, "the Church commenced her warfare against domestic and prædial slavery.\*"

In another way, the Christianity of the age came in contact with the new races. Missionaries carried it from churches already established. Missionaries from Rome went to the Anglo-Saxons. Missionaries from Scotland went to Germany. Their history is instructive. No doubt, they took the Church system with them wherever they went; but the two classes just mentioned did not convey it in equal measures. Crosses and images preceded Augustine the monk, as he preached to the King of Kent. He brought these objects of ornament and

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\* Sir JAMES STEPHEN'S *Lectures on the History of France*, vol. i. 37.

veneration with him from Rome. We have not noticed that the northern missionaries used any such paraphernalia. This was an important difference; another there was more important still. The Scotch, with the British and Irish brethren, repudiated dependence on Rome.\* They professed love to all believers in Christ, to the bishop of the great Latin city among the rest, but they would not acknowledge his supremacy—they did not like to hear him called a pope, the father of fathers. Augustine came into conflict with the monks of Bangor, who held these views. They resisted him in the spirit of Christian liberty. There, at the foot of their Welsh hills, they planted the standard of ecclesiastical independence, with a dash in them of that noble manhood seen afterwards in reformers and puritans. Clement, who went from the same school into Germany, was imbued with the same spirit, and there he opposed Boniface as his brethren had done Augustine.† Boniface—not of the British church but of Augustine's church—took the system Augustine had brought, and planted it among the Germans, at the same time avowing his dependence upon the pope, and seeking from that dignitary, as supreme, the investiture of the bishopric of Mentz. But Clement would not submit to Rome, nor admit its law of priestly celibacy, and he plainly told Boniface that the Holy Scriptures, without ecclesiastical laws and ancient fathers, were the supreme authority for all Christendom.‡ In the Irish Columban,

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\* NEANDER, vol. v. 21, 29.

† NEANDER, vol. v. 76.

‡ *Ibid.*

and his compatriot St. Gall, whose name is so renowned in northern Switzerland, there was much of the same free spirit, though they were zealous monastics, and were not brought into collision with Roman authorities.

It is plain that there were two classes of missionaries in those days—the one free, the other fettered; the one class independent of Rome, and sometimes opposed to it, the other class acting as its emissaries and crouching before its throne; the one asserting the rights of conscience, the other upholding intolerance; the one for freedom, the other for persecution; the one Protestant, the other Popish. When they came in contact in Britain and Germany, had the Scotch and Irish brethren developed their principles, and had they also succeeded in overcoming resistance, so as to establish independent churches here and on the Continent, how different had been the current of history through the middle ages. As it was, who but must remark, that from the lands where Boniface and Augustine's successor, Theodore, accepted their mitres as dependents on the great Italian see, there came upon that very see, in an after age, the heaviest blows and the worst discomfiture. Little did the third Gregory dream that a German monk would one day shake his throne to its foundations; or Vitalian either, that the coveted pallium (the woollen tippet he sent to Canterbury) was to be afterwards so defiantly torn in pieces.

Looking at the application of the Christianity of the age, as a whole, with its corruptions and its truths, to the races which God had brought down on Western

Europe, to cover it as with a new stratum of social life, we see amidst much to deplore, much in which to rejoice. Seeds fell into the soil and became germs of precious after harvests. The Germany of to-day gathers fruit out of the toils of Boniface; Switzerland from those of Gall; England from those of Augustine. The monastery became a mission-house for the surrounding heathendom, and a homestead amidst barbarous wilds. Schools, episcopal and monastic, opened their doors for man and boy. The Church preserved relics of art; priests cultivated literature, framed laws, and promoted civilization. Enough was preserved of the gospel to humanize the savage, to subjugate passion, to conquer lust, to stifle revenge, to inspire forbearance, to make the drunkard temperate and the robber just, to curb kings who knew no power but their own will, and to put an end to the despotism of pagan priesthoods who rioted amidst incantations and blood. Enough, too, was preserved, in the name and history of the Son of God, to make men feel something of the worth of humanity, through the knowledge of its redemption; to raise the soul out of a death in sin to a life of righteousness—to lift it up to a Father in Heaven, and to show its pardon through His mercy. Enough was preserved and communicated in the proclamation of eternal life through Christ, to give moral bravery to the heart, amidst sorrows and woes such as that age knew, but ours does not; and to shed a serene hope over mortals who felt, amidst the social strife, as if the very world itself was cracking and gaping under their feet.



We have no space for details, else we might paint lives and labours, holy and beautiful. One individual of that age—as late as the eighth century—is known to all, and dear to Englishmen—the monk of Jarrow. The Christianity which produced the Venerable Bede had not lost all its life.

## LECTURE IX.

THE FOURTH AGE.—A.D. 787—1215.

### TRADITIONALISM.

IN the latter part of our last Lecture we briefly compared the destinies of the Eastern and Western Churches. Those destinies were seen to be different. We cannot pursue the subject—neither our space nor our object will admit of it. We are henceforth to confine our attention wholly to Western Christendom. To that belongs the tide of influence, which we are anxious to trace, flowing as it does towards the Reformation, serving to produce that momentous issue; and therefore powerfully, though at a remote distance, affecting our own times.

The second council of Nicæa was held in 787. It forms a conspicuous figure in the history of image worship. In that connexion we shall notice it presently; in the meantime we point to it as symbolizing the spirit of the age, that spirit which wrought so powerfully upon mediæval Christendom, and whose name we have employed to give a title to this and the following Lecture. There was an open Bible laid on the table at the first council at Nicæa. It really was not a signal together inconsistent, for although influenced as the Fathers were by the opinions and feelings of an earlier age,

their *professed* standard of judgment was the written Word of God. They developed some things not there, but its contents avowedly they also sought to develop. Though fettered, in certain respects, by tradition, they did not openly set up tradition as an authority co-ordinate with the Holy Writings. But the second council of Nicæa did so set up tradition. I do not know whether there was any Bible laid open on the occasion; if there was, for consistency's sake, the tomes of the Fathers should have been laid open around it. For to them, chiefly, appeals were made; their authority was held decisive.

Appeals to them, indeed, had been made in council before. At the sixteenth council of Toledo, in 693, not only were the decrees of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon endorsed, but also the decision of all venerable Fathers, orthodox in sentiment and pure in life. "Not a speck of doubt," to use the terms of the decision, "was for a moment to be allowed."\*

The principle of traditionalism is here very obviously *involved*; though reference is not made to tradition in so many words. The second council of Nicæa is of more importance than the sixteenth of Toledo, because it was professedly œcumenical, and therefore, the spirit it expresses may be more fairly taken as the spirit of a very large portion, at least of Western Christendom; for, though held in the East, the council was thoroughly occidental in opinion and feeling. This council went

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\* *Acta Conciliorum*, HARDUIN, tom. iii. 1794.

far beyond an acknowledgment of the principle of traditionalism by implication; it *expressly* named tradition, and claimed for it decisive authority. The purpose of these later Nicene Fathers is declared to be the confirming by solemn enactment of the traditions of the Catholic Church. And it is expressly said, "We preserve and maintain all the ecclesiastical traditions, whether *written or unwritten*."\* Whatever distinction there may be between forms of tradition, whether floating in the Church or embodied in customary practice—and forms of tradition, whether existing in synodical decrees or patristic writings, the whole range of generally admitted tradition was covered by this Nicene decree; authority was attributed to it all, and the principle on which deference was paid to each part is one and the same. No doubt there is a difference between what is well proved to have been the faith and practice of an early age, and what is only said to have been so, without any proof whatever; but the spirit of submission to what is thus established, or what is thus assumed, remains. It confounds the ideal with the actual, the divine with the human, and indiscriminately and ignorantly worships both.

The working of this spirit of obedience to the authority of tradition, in the most unqualified way avowed at Nicæa, it is our purpose now to illustrate by examining the condition of mediæval Christendom. To preserve order and to leave landmarks indicative of the scope and

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\* *Acta Conciliorum*, t. iv. p. 454.

progress of our inquiries ; we shall divide what is to be said under the headings of mediæval politics, mediæval Churches, mediæval schools, mediæval monasteries, and mediæval society. They will furnish illustrations of the state of the ecclesiastical system, and of personal religion, and also of the influences affecting both the one and the other.

### I. MEDIÆVAL POLITICS.

It is needful to glance at the history of Church power—at its relations to secular governments—and at the grounds of it during this period.

We have seen Church principles adopted, protected, and enforced by emperors. The idea of Constantine's imperial Church, though never perfectly realized, was that of a grand catholic unity. So far as it was reduced to historical fact, it became one vast ecclesiastical organization covering both East and West, yet still presenting a broken surface. The Churches of great cities differed somewhat in forms, habits, and temper ; yet, with the two exceptions of Constantinople and Rome, these Churches ceased to play any very conspicuous part in the great politico-religious drama after the fall of the old empire. The former became head of the Eastern union,—a stiff, mummy-like preservation of the work of Constantine.

It was different in the West. National Churches were rising there—Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, German, Spanish ; while one city-Church, Rome, remained predominant. Growing in power and influence, it climbed

to the highest of thrones, and would not be content with any state of subjection for itself, however dignified or however adorned. Here, then, are two forms of ecclesiastical power—the *National* and the *Papal*—episcopacy and the Roman see—distinct aristocracies and one autocrat. The secular power is related to both; the history of the three must be studied together; it is confused, and presents difficult problems.

1. There was a national Church among the Franks before the time of Charlemagne; and by the national Church we understand the national clergy, especially bishops. Congregational life had expired. There might be, here and there, a shadowy recognition of it, but where people were ignorant, and ecclesiastics alone possessed some scanty learning, congregational power, in the form of public opinion, was not felt, and could not exist. Clerical power was supreme, and in national Churches the episcopal form of power controlled every other. The Church of the Merovingian monarchs, however, was not mistress of the State. The State was decidedly in the ascendant, through the reigns of those rude kings—much more so under the illustrious Charlemagne. It is not enough to call him the second Constantine. As the German Kaiser, Emperor of the West, bringing under his sway so many people—struggling with the confusions of his age—conscious of an innate power above his contemporaries, and beyond his times—civilizing the barbarian—establishing schools (not boys' seminaries, but people's colleges)—bringing order out of European chaos—this wonderful man was not only in

political rule higher than French kings, but in moral influence immensely superior to Roman emperors. His Church was his subject. He ruled it as only a great man could; but as his sceptre crumbled when it fell from his hand, politico-ecclesiastical relations were revolutionized under his wretched descendants, in France, Germany, and Lombardy. What was secular might now and then resist, curb, or direct what was spiritual, but the Church, on the whole, gained the upper hand, and kept it. Priests could "bind kings with chains, and nobles with fetters of iron," as is attested by the story of Lothaire.\* Anglo-Saxon history exhibits a parallel succession of Church supremacy to State supremacy. Alfred, the Charlemagne of England, but a better man, was master of the priesthood. A hundred

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\* "Charles the Bald and Louis of Bavaria, having driven their brother Lothaire from his dominions, held an assembly of some bishops, who adjudged him unworthy to reign; and after exacting a promise from the two allied brothers to govern better than he had done, permitted and commanded them to divide his territories."—HALLAM. The spirit of such proceedings is expressed by Jonas, Bishop of Orleans, in the following passage:—"In the Church there are two powers—the sacerdotal and the royal—the former is superior to the latter, and it is responsible to God, even for kings themselves."—*De Institutione Regid.* D, ACHERY *Spicileg.*, i. 327. These divines searched into the grounds of kingly authority, and asked, What is a king? This question is the title of one of Jonas' chapters. In a curious vision of one Bernhold, "God summoned before him all the heads of the Church. They came and worshipped; and after having blessed them, he said, 'Dear brothers, wherefore is the heritage which my father purchased with the price of my blood, thus trampled under foot?' And some among them answered, 'It is the fault of the kings.' But God said, 'Who are the kings? I have not appointed them, nor do I know them.'"—*Recueil des Hist.*, t. vii. 289.

years afterwards, and we have the story of the great Dunstan and the imbecile Edwin. William the Conqueror took care to set the crown above the mitre: his descendants did not find it easy to keep it there.

2. The Church of Rome was continually interpenetrating these national powers, and complicating their relations. As it regards the State, sometimes the Papacy was with it, sometimes against it; now beneath it, then above it. Stephen II. wrote an Epistle, as from St. Peter, to Pepin,\* implying claims to indefinite authority: yet it betrays conscious weakness; it is the prayer of the priest that the soldier would help him with the sword. It conjures the king, with all the hierarchy, nobles, and people, in the name of the Mother of God, to save Rome from the hateful Lombards. It promises protection in this world and the next, as the reward of obedience, and threatens the torments of hell if help be not given. The odd mingling of assumption and entreaty would be simply ridiculous, if an absorbing indignation were not aroused by the use made of the name of the apostle Peter as author of the epistle. The Pope was debtor to Pepin for the exarchate of Ravenna; and when Charlemagne knelt before the pontiff to accept at his hands the iron crown, the emperor, by enlarging and confirming the grant made by his father,

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\* *Cod. Carol.*, No. iii. Extracts from the original are given by GIESELER, *Period* iii. § 5. With regard to the Pope's assuming the name of Peter the apostle, FLEURY remarks, "that it shows the genius of the age, and to what extent the most grave of mankind may carry fiction when they consider it useful."—*Hist. Eccl.*, B. XI. iii. 17.



bestowed quite as much honour as he received. Charlemagne was the protector of Adrian I.; Adrian was Charlemagne's political viceroy and spiritual father. Under Otho the Great, the popedom was in more humiliating subjection to the empire than under Charlemagne. In these instances we have the Papal see *with* the secular power, and *under* it.

Casting our eye back again, we see Nicholas I., if not executing, at least threatening the excommunication of Lothaire of Lorraine, and Adrian II. seeking to exclude Charles the Bald from succession to his brother's throne.\* We also find Gregory V., in a council of bishops at Rome, issuing a command to Robert of France to put away his wife, because she being a relative, though four degrees removed, her marriage came within the scope of canonical prohibition. The Pope supported the prelates of France in their excommunication of the monarch; and it is related by historians that he was left with only two attendants, who threw into the fire all the meat that had passed his table, as too polluted to be eaten or touched. In these cases the papal see opposed temporal sovereigns, and aimed at mastery over them.

3. Relations also vary at different times, and in diffe-

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\* About fifteen years after his contest with Pope Nicholas, he condescended to accept the vacant empire as the donation of John VIII. The immediate result of this act was that the government of Italy and the imperial throne were for some years afterwards placed, in a great measure, at the disposal of the Pope, who shamelessly abused his influence.—WADDINGTON'S *History of the Ch.*, p. 248.

rent places, between the papacy and the national Churches. In the ninth century, the Gallican Church, represented by Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, came into collision with Rome. The power which had helped bishops to depress the State was against them when they asserted their independence. Yet it may be observed, that though in this conflict one's sympathies go with the French prelate, as the opponent of papal tyranny, his spirit and purpose, so far as the interests of Christendom were concerned, deserve our censure no less than the spirit and purpose of the Popes themselves. He was as much a spiritual despot as they. The simple fact is that despotism at Rheims was doing battle with despotism at Rome. The extraordinary champion of the French clergy, the Bossuet of his age, of inferior eloquence, but of more ambition—of greater power, but of less principle—altogether a politician rather than a divine—a statesman rather than a Christian pastor—presents in his career an epitome of the varied struggles of his age. This great bishop, being now opposed to the Pope, then to the king—changing his alliance with the one for the other—and even daring, at the same moment, to beard both.\* Italy also, through the

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\* Speaking of ecclesiastical politicians, AMPÈRE observes:—"Such above all was Hincmar, the great Archbishop of Rheims, who took part in everything, in the overturning of thrones, in diplomatic intrigues, in theological contests, who was now in opposition to the King, now to the Pope, saying one day to Charles le Chauve, who had tolerated pillage, 'What right have you to demand of your subjects a part of their possessions, if you do not know how to protect the other part?' and saying on another occasion to Pope Adrian, 'You cannot

Archbishop of Milan, struggled to shake off the yoke of its master. The Spanish bishops, moreover, resisted attempts to force upon them the Roman liturgy. But the pontifical power was victor in the end, and, with a view to its exaltation, was as ready to combine with kings against clergy, as with clergy against kings. Also by the withdrawal of monasteries from episcopal jurisdiction, the Popes established an immediate dominion throughout the Church,\* and by spiritual excommunications struck terror into the State.

A very large proportion of the population of Europe was composed of monks and nuns, so that the empire directly ruled by the court of Rome was enormously extensive; while, on the one hand, abbots and their dependents were drawn toward it by bonds of interest and gratitude, and, on the other hand, the power of bishops and metropolitans was seriously reduced. Excommunication, of which the Pope's immediate subjects were the officers, not the victims, deprived men of the rights of citizens, going further than any common outlawry—for while the latter left men open to the commiseration of friendship and the offices of humanity,

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be both King and Bishop, and you cannot command us who are Franks.' Such was his undaunted character, when it was not to the interest of his politics to appease; in the case of Hincmar and some of his contemporaries, the part which the man played, gives a singular relief to the physiognomy of the writer."—*Hist. Lit.*, pref. xxiii.

\* In the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey* we have another change of position. Here the Abbey and the King together oppose Bishop and Pope. The Bishop denied the right of the King to interfere in spiritual matters, p. 101.

the former cut him off from assistance and sympathy, separated husband from wife, and child from parent, and drew a charmed line around the sinner which none might cross. He was shunned as if infected by leprosy or plague; for to hold intercourse with him was to share in his punishment. As under the Jewish law a corpse could not be touched without pollution, so contact with the excommunicated produced a taint. The culprit condemned by ghostly sentence stood isolated amidst his fellows—a Cain with a curse on his brow.

The conflicts of Hildebrand and Henry IV. of Germany supply one of the most exciting chapters in mediæval history. The claim of the secular power to confer crosier and ring, as an assertion of sovereignty over sees, and the counter claim of the bishop of bishops, on behalf both of them and of himself, to place Churches above temporal potentates, show the magnitude of the controversy. Moreover, acts of pride and conquest on the one side, and acts of pride and mortification on the other—Hildebrand summoning Henry to his tribunal, and Henry threatening Hildebrand with dethronement,—the Pope excommunicating the emperor, and in the Castle of Canosa requiring him to do penance without the gates,—the Emperor, obedient to the Pope, because deserted by his own subjects, shivering in the snow, and clothed in sackcloth, till he is allowed to kiss the holy foot;—these incidents constitute, perhaps, the master story of romantic wonder recorded in the annals of a romantic age. Intense personal feeling became blended with the controversy. Whatever there might be of

principle in it, there was as much, if not more, of passion. Henry was as haughty as Hildebrand, and though we may pity the royal penitent at Canosa, and denounce the arrogance and inhumanity of the pontifical despot, it must be confessed that here, as in the case of Hincmar and the Pope, there is little ground for sympathy with either party. If Henry was right in resisting the tyranny of the Church over the State, Hildebrand was also right in resisting the tyranny of the State over the Church; but they were both far more wrong than right. Only on the negative side was either right—on the positive side they were equally wrong. We cannot blame their resistance, but we must condemn their aggressions. Henry wanted to enslave the Church to the crown,—Hildebrand, both to the popedom: which of them was not an enemy to the liberties of men, a conspirator against the prerogatives of Christ?

Hildebrand obtained a virtual dictatorship over national Churches, and his successors no more waited for an imperial confirmation of their title to the tiara; nevertheless, until the accession of Innocent III., no man appeared of ambition and ability competent to carry out what was indicated by the broad and lofty-minded Hildebrand. Innocent dispensed from legal obligations, granted indulgences in case of marriage within the degrees of consanguinity, absolved from oaths, claimed the right of *electing* bishops, made himself an universal patron, taxed the clergy in general, and while thus grasping at supreme spiritual rule, he

also clutched at supreme political dominion. Being, as he said, "the greater light to rule the day," he must needs have dominion over the lesser light which rules the night. "The sun is above the moon, the pontifical power above the kingly;" so he phrased it. He was not a man of idle words; so he made our King John his vassal—assumed umpireship between the kings of Castile and Portugal—exactd an oath of fealty from Peter II. of Arragon—claimed to decide an imperial election disputed by Philip and Otho—and even made Auguste of France submit to his power. Interdicts, threatened or executed, were the instruments of his despotism; and these curses came over kingdoms as if falling from a hand in Heaven. A whole people was excommunicated—no religious services were performed—the churches were closed—bells were silent—the Eucharist was refused—the nuptial bond could not be tied—penitents in vain applied for absolution—men were not allowed to shave their beards—the use of meat was forbidden—even the courteous salutation of friends was prohibited—the rites of sepulture were suspended—the corpse was left exposed to the dog and the vulture, or was irreverently flung into some common hole.

The doctrine of the saving efficacy and indispensable-ness of Church sacraments—sacraments made sevenfold, and entwisted round all the seven ages of man—was the secret of the fell enchantment. But for the superstitious fears aroused by the mediæval belief in sacraments, interdicts would have rolled harmlessly over the heads of kings and people, and nations would have laughed at

the proud fulminations of an angry but impotent old man.

The papacy could assume different forms; it could be suppliant or tyrannical, as suited its purpose; it could worship and persecute; it could be very pious and very sanguinary; it could institute devout orders, and then send armies against Vaudois and Albigenses. The Crusaders, as we are told, when they approached Jerusalem, sprung from their horses, bared their feet, and entered the holy gates as pilgrims—but then drew their swords, and plunged them in the hearts of Saracens and Jews. The Crusades—outbursts of Church zeal guided by Popes—illustrate the spirit of their patrons. The warrior of the red cross was typical of the wearer of the threefold crown. The latter, like the former, could kneel and pray, and then go and dip his hands in blood. Popes have resembled the Church with which their fortunes were linked, and she has been a Niobe and a Medea by turns.

Such was Church power, such its relations to secular governments. Reviewing the whole history—watching the struggles and the counter-struggles—marking the advance both of the Church hierarchy and of the Church autocrat—what do we at last find was the ground of ecclesiastical assumptions? No doubt various causes contributed to the ultimate result, but to what did bishops and Popes appeal in support of their authority? Traditionalism was at the bottom of the whole. Church principles had been at work for ages. The papacy was impossible but for the broad corner-stones, laid unwit-

tingly, no doubt, by the Nicene fathers. Then priesthood, hierarchy, and sacraments (with the primacy so soon assigned to the Roman see) made the papacy possible; the seeds of it were thus scattered all over Christendom. Was there one thing *essential* to spiritual despotism in the mediæval age that can be pronounced a fresh innovation upon what obtained long before the eighth century? The mediæval Church was but the fruitage of the Nicene. The papal throne could not have stood, nor could national hierarchies have flourished but for the support they found in the minds of men, so largely impregnated for ages by Church teaching. It would be an utterly false view of history to imagine that episcopal and papal aggressions were made on liberties, prized, valued, defended. Superstitious hearts were in alliance with the invaders of their freedom and peace; nor were the treasures missed when they were lost. There can be no question that, in spite of occasional discontent and opposition, the Church system was, on the whole, popular. The clergy, in the contests with kings, generally carried the people with them. Hildebrand, in his war with Henry, had public opinion on his side.\* It was the old Hebrew story over again: "the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so."

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\* Henry acknowledges this in a letter to the Pope. "In quorum conculcatione tibi favorem ab ore vulgi comparasti." MANSI *Con.* xx. 471.—RANKE'S *History of the Popes*, i. 30. Hardwick in his *Church History*, referring to Urban II. placing Philip I. of France under a ban, observes, in this case as in others the papal fulmination was a popular act.—p. 264.



It is true the *definite* temporal claims of Innocent were novelties. But if no one before had plainly asserted the right to dispose of crowns, the enormous height which ecclesiastical power had previously reached was an elevation on which the enthroned occupant might plausibly claim to wave a sceptre over the earth. Let it be once granted that the Church is the world's mistress, who can dispute the corollary that the Church's lord is the world's king? Before Hildebrand's time, Popes had begun to canonize; and if they could dispose of seats in Heaven, why not appoint to the high places upon earth? If all the nations of the West looked on Peter as a god (Θεὸν ἐπιγείον), as Gregory III. (A.D. 731) said they did,\* then might not His Holiness practically assert a Divine providence over the nations? The papal spiritual dominion rested on hierarchical pretensions—the papal temporal dominion on both.

A direct appeal was made to tradition. The Scriptures failed the Popes—grounds of expediency did not satisfy; but the Church of former days, they said, was on their side. Documents were produced as vouchers. Dionysius Exiguus published a collection of decretals in the sixth century which had some influence on the growth of the papacy; but much more remarkable and influential were the gross fabrications put forth under the name of Isidore in the ninth century. They were concocted, perhaps, at Mentz,† the city of Boniface, who chained

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\* *Epist. ad Imp. Leonem.*

† It is attributed by some, in part at least, to Benedict, a Deacon; by others to Autcarius, Bishop of Mayence.

Germany to Rome. We have no space for illustrating their character—their wide scope and minute details—their reference to the whole compass of Catholic superstitions—their relation of incidents and their expressions of devotion—their flattery of bishops in the face of metropolitans—and their tendency to raise Rome by encouraging appeals from the former against the latter. But we would just say, they were not so much cunning contrivances to dupe the age, as creations in harmony with the spirit of the age—the very creations of that spirit, so that, while welcomed by bishops and used by Popes, in spite of gross anachronisms and palpable falsehoods, they were blindly revered by men in general steeped up to the lips in superstitious reverence for the past.\* Our chief reason for mentioning the decretals is, that though they supplied no real traditions in support of papal supremacy, their invention showed a craving after authority of that kind. The Bible alone was not the recognised standard. No matter what Christ and apostles left unsaid; if an ancient bishop said anything, that was enough to carry with it the faith of Christendom. There was no distinction between the revelation of the ideal and the history of the actual, neither was there any sound critical knowledge of either. The acceptance of the decretals was characteristic of the times. The decretals only systematized the principles of a former age, gave substance to floating shadows in the past.

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\* Even Hincmar admitted their genuineness, though he disputed their authority.

Another forgery there was of earlier date, but the same in spirit. Certain works were ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, and that Dionysius was confounded with St. Denis of France. They included two books on the Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchies. One treats of the Church in Heaven, and shows a hierarchy of angels; the other treats of the Church on earth, and exhibits a hierarchy of clerical orders—a very suggestive combination of subjects. The heavenly, it was said, is just the antitype of the earthly. Deacons, priests, bishops answer to the three grades of angelic dignity.\* And the forgeries of the fifth century were but followed in spirit by the monstrous dreams of later times—when Michael was believed to say mass in Heaven on a

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\* *De Eccl. Hier.*, c. i. The names applied in Scripture to Angels are arbitrarily divided into three classes. The first includes thrones, cherubim, and seraphim; the second powers, dominions, and virtues; and the third angels, archangels, and principalities. With the three main celestial orders are made to correspond the three main ecclesiastical orders: Deacons, whose office is to purify—Priests, whose office is to illuminate—and Bishops, who perfect what has been commenced and carried on by the other two. The subdivision of the celestial orders into nine ranks is a favourite theme with old writers on Heraldry, who also treat of the nine precious stones, the nine degrees of dignity, the nine articles of gentleness, the nine virtues of chivalry, &c.

Ozanam connects the mystic speculations of the Pseudo Dionysius with DANTE'S *Commedia*. He observes, in his *Dante et la phil. Cath.*, 220, that these magnificent visions have often visited the anchorites of the desert and the sages of the cloister in their meditations, but, rapid and fugitive, they have passed away like lightning. Dante has seized them, and made their brightness to descend for ever into the marvellous edifice of the *Divine Commedia*. D'Arbois, in the introduction to his French translation of *Dionysius*, illustrates the great influence of his writings. They gave the main impulse to mysticism in the middle ages.—*Œuvres de S. Denys*, Int. c. xliii.

Sunday, and Raphael was painted with tonsure, chasuble, and stole. In the forgeries which bore the names of Dionysius and Isidore, Church principles sought strength in tradition, under cover of the worst kind of fiction.

There is a spot near the old city of Worms to which history has given the name of the *field of lies*. The spirit of traditionalism led mediæval churchmen into a region which deserves no better name.

## II. MEDIÆVAL CHURCHES.

1. Image worship was established at the second council of Nicæa. From that time it spread over the West in spite of transalpine opposition, Caroline Books, and the Frankfort Council of 794. Images, mosaics, and paintings were placed not only in churches, abbeys, and oratories, but over gateways, and at the corners of streets. Incense was burnt, lights were set, prayers were said, and votive offerings presented before them. If this did not constitute divine worship, neither did that which Pagans rendered before their idols. The distinction made in the decree at the second Nicene council was idle.\* It has always been found practically useless. What have the multitude ever cared for the shadowy line between *douleia* and *latreia*? And as to the separation of the image from the person represented, the attempt so to evade the charge of idolatry was antici-

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\* These are the words of the decree:—“ἀσπασμὸν καὶ τιμητικὴν προσκύνησιν ἀπονέμειν οὐ μὴν τὴν κατὰ πίστιν ἡμῶν ἀληθινὴν λατρείαν ἢ πρέπει μόνῃ τῇ θεῖα φύσει.”—HARD. *Concil.*, t. iv. 455.

pated by the later heathen.\* If worshipping the invisible through a material figure be not idolatry, then the charge is inapplicable to the more intelligent Pagans. And if the ignorant among the heathen did not distinguish between the marble and the God, no more would the ignorant of the mediæval Romanists between the stone and the saint, the picture and Christ. To honour images without falling into idolatry, some one remarks, is as difficult as for Mohammedans to walk into Paradise along the edge of a scimitar. We do not doubt that the heads of the council made in their own minds the distinction they express, and that an earnest but misguided piety, in some cases, was connected with the advocacy of images,—images of Christ being regarded as a symbol of belief in his true humanity, his incarnate life; but then we are constrained to concede

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\* “They are but earth and wood and stone curiously wrought. But this I know is granted by some who readily allow that they are in themselves but mere images, but will have them to be representations of the gods, and thence argue that all worship paid to them, all supplication offered before them, is ultimately referred to the represented gods.”—*Apologetics of Athenagoras*, by D. HUMPHREYS, p. 174. Arnobius alludes to the opinion as existing among heathens that the gods are only manifested in images, and as it is not granted to behold them personally, they may be thus worshipped and honoured.—ARNOBIUS *Adv. Gentes*, lib. vi. c. xvii. Passages to the same effect are found in Plutarch, Maximus Tyrius, and Julian, and are given at length in the curious Introduction by Thomas Taylor to his *Six Books of Proclus*, I. xxxiii. A Brahman remarked to Mons. Bernier, “the statues the Indians worship are not Brahma, &c., themselves, but only their images and representations, and we only give them that honour, on account of the beings they represent.”—BERNIER, *Memoires*, tom. iii. 171. See also the third part of the sermon against Peril of Idolatry in the *Homilies* of the Church of England.

just as much to the later as to the earlier advocate. To neither does it avail as a vindication of conduct in breaking the laws of Christianity, Judaism, and enlightened reason.

On what grounds did the divines of the Council base their decree? They certainly did make an attempt to answer the eastern Iconoclasts by referring to the cherubim and the brazen serpent, but the main stress of their argument was upon tradition. They said the worship of images was an ancient custom of the Church; they read passages from the Fathers; they repeated legends; they prepared an anathema for any who would not submit to patristic authority; they rapturously hailed their own decision on images with the shout, "We keep the decrees of the Fathers, we hold to the laws of the ancient Church."\* Gregory III. took the same ground. Hence, whatever might be the bearing of the testimony to which they appealed, it is clear that tradition was deemed a competent authority for deciding the case. Reverence for tradition was the sentiment of the Council. That it was the sentiment of the age is further seen from appeals to the same standard by those who were opposed to images, or who qualified their use.† What had been developed in foregoing centuries was by general consent a guide for posterity.

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\* *Acta Concil.*, HARD., iv. p. 470.

† In Agobard's book, *De Picturis*, as well as in what are called *The Caroline Books*, the Fathers are deferred to as authorities, though Agobard says, after Augustine, that human writings are to be read not with a necessity of believing, but with a liberty of judging.

But how far was the voice of tradition actually in favour of the decree? As to the exact image-worship which it authorized, even Dupin admits that the citations did not establish it. Upon reading the transactions of the Council, we see the case breaks down. But, as to *some religious use* of images for three hundred years before, that could be abundantly established, though no doubt the number of images at first was few compared with the multitude of them afterwards, and they enormously increased after this second Nicene council. We observed in the last Lecture that images were used in the fourth century. *That* use prepared for *this* worship. It had countenanced a reverence for art-representations tending to idolatry. Logical distinctions could not arrest the progress of superstition. Flood-gates were opened; what availed a few reeds against the rush of water? The use of Christ's image created the worship of that image, and was going on to produce in the end idol adoration the most debased. Yet it is remarkable, that the use of Christ's image was of later date than that of the images of saints and martyrs. They, in full form and brilliant colours, might be seen in the churches, while he was still only symbolized by the lamb and cross. Antiquity had more to say for images of Christian heroes than for those of Christ. Thus had men been trained for the worship of such images as most shock our sensibilities. They had long gazed in the house of God with awe on the faces of Mary, the apostles, and elder witnesses of the faith: to kneel, to worship, to adore—how naturally the first of these acts merged into the others.

In looking at the history of mediæval art, it is instructive to notice how the imaged forms illustrate the growth of superstition. The Virgin first appears only as a historical personage in connexion with others; then she is seen alone with the infant Saviour in her lap; then she is placed between the cherubim; and finally she is enthroned on the right hand of her Son, who crowns her.\* This progress in the pictorial honours paid to the Mother of our Lord, indicates the enlarging space she occupied in religious thought,† and the higher and still higher position which she gained in the human heart.

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\* See plates in AGINCOURT'S *Hist. of Art*. The parallel history of relics is also curious. At first, they were placed under the altar. The basilica was built over the tomb; and where no tomb existed, a crypt was prepared for the reception of saintly remains. Then, enshrined in a chest, they were placed eight or ten feet high; next, they rose above the altar itself.

† I may be allowed to add here, that, as upon other important points connected with the religion of the middle ages, so upon this of the honour paid to the Virgin, the history of the *Breviaries* throws much light. While there is more of Scripture in the earlier than the later breviaries, — a curtailment of passages from the Bible, to make room for legends, being very noticeable in the breviary introduced by Nicholas III. — there is also a great addition made in the later breviaries to offices in honour of the Virgin. The Ave Maria, it is said, first occurs among forms of popular prayer, in the statutes of Otho, Bishop of Paris, in 1195. Another space, of at least fifty years, intervenes before the introduction of rosaries and crowns in honour of the Virgin. — *Oxford Tracts*, No. 75, p. 11. But then all this had been prepared for by much earlier innovations and developments. One is glad that in mediæval times there were exceptions to the common rule of Mariolatry. Its absence in DIETRICH'S *Life of Elizabeth of Hungary*, is remarkable. KINGSLEY, in the Introduction to his *Saint's Tragedy*, observes, — “The business of those who make Mary, to women especially, the complete substitute for the Saviour—I had almost said for all three persons of the Trinity—is to explain, if they can, her non-appearance in this case.”



The Teutonic reverence for woman widely spreading over Europe, and an instinctive longing for some divine *maternal* care (forgetful of the completeness of his parental relationship, who says, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you") were better feelings, perhaps, entwined round the deep and far-struck roots of the middle-age Mariolatry.\*

But, beyond the early religious use of imaged saints, and tending to their worship, was the homage done to their memories by such preachers as Chrysostom. They were lauded to the skies, and inaugurated as successors to the pagan gods. Their relics were counted priceless, and were pompously conveyed from place to place as the Church's treasure and the city's palladium. So mad after relics were Christians in the age of Theodosius, that he made a law against carrying away or selling a martyr.† The multitudes that crowded round the

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\* We may add that at first there were no figures of the Father or the Holy Ghost; a hand symbolized the one, a dove the other. The earliest instance of the Father in human form belongs to the twelfth century; that of the Spirit occurs in the tenth. It is also curious to notice that when the saints, who had not been the companions of Christ, received an increased veneration, it became a common practice to dedicate churches to them, and even to change the names of existing churches in their favour. Thus the Church of the Saviour at Florence, became Santa Reparata. The first cathedral at Genoa was originally dedicated to the twelve Apostles; it is now San Siro. G. KNIGHT'S *Italy*, Vol. i. p. 3.

† In the *fourth* century the relics of the true cross were so marvelously multiplied, that Cyril of Jerusalem, after referring to the loaves and fishes which miraculously fed the five thousand, says that the holy wood, through the faith of those who have taken thereof, now fills the whole world.—*Cat. Lec.* x. § 9.

As to the homage done to saints, Mr. I. Taylor justly observes—"It does not, then, appear that any distinction more important can be made

illuminated tomb of St. Peter, in the twelfth century, had been preceded by almost equal crowds at the brilliant shrine of St. Felix, in the fourth. Mediæval monks, too, as they kindled lamps in honour of patron saints, might quote the example of Paulinus, a prelate nearly of the same age: and even modern Neapolitans, as they clasp their hands and devoutly gaze on pictures, statues, and tombs, may find prototypes of their idolatrous fervour in the congregation of that same ancient and famous Bishop of Nola fifteen centuries ago. If tradition in the sense of a history of ancient usages was not exactly on the side of the Church of the eighth century and afterwards, that Church might plausibly enough contend that it was on the side of tradition in the sense of imbibing the spirit of the past, and only altering its form of expression.

2. Altars were exceedingly magnificent. They were centres of worship; upon them was laid the oblation of the body and blood of Christ, the sacrifice of the mass.

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good between the piety of the second Council of Nice and that of the first, than what may be thought to attach to the difference between the skeleton of a saint and the image of him."—TAYLOR'S *Ancient Christianity*, Vol. ii. 221.

It is instructive to read, in connexion with all this, the following passage in the *Mahawauso, or Great Buddhist History of Ceylon*:—"The chief of the Devos Sumano supplicated of the Deity worthy of offerings for an offering. The vanquisher passing his hand over his head, bestowed on him a handful of his pure blue locks from the growing hair of the head. Receiving and depositing it in a superb golden casket on the spot where the divine teacher had stood, he enshrined the lock in an emerald dagoba, and bowed down in worship." The relic-shrine, erected by King Devenampiatissa, about 250 B.C., contained the right jaw-bone of Buddha. Another was erected to cover a hair that grew on his forehead. The most famous is the tooth-relic.—FERGUSSON'S *Handbook of Arch.* i. 9, 43.

The ceremonial in the twelfth century did not differ much from what we now witness in continental cathedrals. During the period under review alterations were going on, fresh observances were added, but the highest pitch of ritual splendour in celebrating mass was but an ingenious elaboration, a gorgeous adornment of the liturgy of Gregory I.\* Originally the Lord's Supper was an eucharistic feast, commemorative of Christ's expiatory sacrifice, and expressive of the Christian's thankful one. The bread and wine were placed on a table—president and co-presbyters, in common with the faithful, partook of it. Traces of that original usage remain still; they may be detected in the position of altars and other arrangements in the old Basilican churches of Italy. The high altar stands at a considerable distance from the apsis, or upper end

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\* Until the ninth century the altars were destitute of ornament; it was not until the tenth century that the cross began to be placed upon them. Before the fourteenth century neither the candlesticks nor the cross were stationary upon the altar. When mass was about to be celebrated, two acolythes carried the candlestick, and the officiating priest the crucifix, which they placed on the altar or behind it, those tabernacles or "contre-retables" which were in the fifteenth century, and particularly in Germany, as high sometimes as the roof of the church. The reason was this, that until the thirteenth century, the bishops presided at the services of the church upon a throne placed at the end of the apsis, and so the addition of an altar-piece would have intercepted the view of the clergy and the congregation. But when, in the fourteenth century, altars were multiplied in the churches, and the seat of the bishop displaced, it began to be the custom to carry with the crucifix and candles portable retables, which were placed upon the altar during mass, and afterwards carried away with the other ecclesiastical utensils that had been employed in the ceremony.—LABARTE'S *Hand-book of Arts*, p. 14.

of the building. There it is with the bishop's chair behind it. At Torcello, near Venice, the original seats of the presbyters remain on either side. It is obviously a traditional form with its meaning exhausted. Every one knows that the high altar of St. Peter's at Rome is under the dome, with the pope's throne in the rear of it, so that, when saying mass, he stands *behind* the altar with his face to the people.\* In this rigid adherence to traditional arrangements one may recognise a testimony to the primitive celebration of the Lord's Supper on a table, with the pastor sitting in his chair behind. But while adherence to antiquity is shown in the position of the table now turned into an altar, and in the position of the chair now turned into a throne, both the altar and the throne betoken a wonderful change in the temper of the times—the one that congregational episcopacy had expired, the other that an eucharistic supper of brethren at a common board was forgotten. The true and full import of the Lord's Supper was lost in Gregory's canon of the mass.† The oblation of the service of the faithful, found in the

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\* Ecclesiologists cannot say with any force that, as St. Peter's Church orientates to the west, (*i.e.* is built with its upper end to the west,) the altar is thus placed that it may correctly orientate, *i.e.*, face the east: because the same arrangement obtains in other churches which orientate differently, that of San Clemente for example, which faces the north-west, SS. Nereo ed Achilleo which faces the south-west, and St. Lorenzo and St. Pietro in Vincoli, both facing the east. These I particularly remember, and I could add others. In fact, the various positions of the oldest churches in Rome show that when they were built the law of orientation was not there observed.

† This is copiously illustrated in Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, vol. iv. 212.

earlier Greek liturgies, is there turned into the oblation of an *immaculate sacrifice*, the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. The terms of the two oblations in Gregory's canon are the same as those in the Tridentine canon. The commemoration of Virgin and saints is the same. The prayer for protection, through their merits and intercession, is the same. Supplications for the dead are the same.\* These elements of the Popish mass, the sacrifice, the celebration of saints, and intercession for the departed, are also elements of the religion of the Nicene age. All the early liturgies show how much Christendom was then penetrated with the spirit of that worship which we call Roman. The east did not hold the sacrifice of the mass so distinctly as the west; † but as to dramatic effect in their ritual, the Byzantines

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\* Compare the text of the Canon Gregorius, in the fourth volume of Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, first edition, with the *Missal*. "The canon commenced with commending the people's gifts and offerings to the acceptance of God, and prayers for the king and the bishop, with a commemoration of our Saviour's deeds and words in celebrating the eucharist, followed. After which came an oblation of the sacraments, as a sacrifice of bread and wine, and a petition that they might be presented by the angels on the altar in heaven. Then followed a commemoration of the departed faithful, and prayer for communion with them."—PALMER'S *Orig. Lit.* i. 123.

The text of the Gregorian Canon is restored by Bunsen in the fourth volume of *Hippolytus*, and the seventh of *Christianity and Mankind*. It has been thought by some impossible to ascertain the text, but Bunsen gives satisfactory grounds for his own decision. Palmer remarks that a distinction is to be made between the missal and the liturgy or canon, and that while Gregory's missal cannot be ascertained, the canon preserves the same text in all MSS.—vol. i. 112.

† The following is an extract from the ancient liturgy of Constantinople :—“We offer thee this reasonable and bloodless service, and call on thee, and supplicate, and entreat ; send down Thy Holy Ghost upon

were before the Romans. Chrysostom's choristers as they sung the Trisagion wore linen wings that they might look like cherubim.\* The chasuble, the cope, the alb, the stole, all belong to Chrysostom's time.

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us, and on these gifts which are spread before us, and (breaking the bread) *make this bread into the precious Body of Thy Christ, changing it through Thy Holy Spirit: Amen!* And what is in the cup into the precious Blood of Thy Christ, changing it through Thy Holy Spirit: Amen! *And that they may become to those who partake of them a cleansing of the soul, a forgiveness of sins, a communion of the Holy Spirit, a fulfilment of Thy Kingdom, a joyful confidence towards Thee, a judgment not a condemnation.*

“We offer thee this reasonable service for the fathers who have fallen asleep in faith, the patriarchs, the prophets, apostles, heralds, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, abstainers, and every just one who has finished his course in faith, especially for the holy, unspotted, all glorious, blessed, Our Lady, the Mother of God, and perpetual Virgin, Mary.”

If the idea of a sacrificial offering in the sacrament be not so boldly expressed in this service as in the Gregorian canon, its unscriptural character is obvious, while the germ of transubstantiation is plain enough in the first of the prayers.

\* Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, iv. 198. The learned author refers to a Russian embassy sent to Constantinople in or about the year 987, and then proceeds, “The accounts both of Nestor and of a Greek chronicler, published by Bandini, mention this occasion, that the Russian ambassadors were particularly struck by the sight of people falling upon their knees, when the deacons and subdeacons rushed out with torches, or as they said, young men with wings, clad in brilliant robes scarcely touching the ground, and singing, Holy, Holy, Holy. The sly Byzantine grandees, or the interpreters who served as guides, said that mystery was easily explained, for when their priests celebrated the divine service the angels themselves descended from Heaven.” Now, this account seems to me to receive a striking illustration from a passage in the Homily on the Prodigal Son, printed in the works of St. Chrysostom, but the author of which was probably Severianus, Bishop of Sabala in Syria, a contemporary of Chrysostom. This passage, which, as far as I know, has never been adverted to in connexion with the account of that important embassy, most clearly states, that the choristers of the Holy, Holy, Holy, had on their shoulders flying wings of linen, in imitation of

Those who said mass before the altars of the twelfth century, could plausibly appeal to traditions handed down respecting the developments of the fourth, fifth, and sixth.

3. In the ninth century private confession and private penance enjoined by a priest were common. But it was reserved for the schoolmen to introduce the doctrine of its absolute necessity. By them it was decided that, unless sacerdotal absolution was obtained, a communicant would eat and drink damnation to himself. The fourth Council of Lateran, in 1215, required that all the faithful who had reached years of discretion, should, at least annually confess, on pain of being excluded from the pale of the Church, and in case of death, being debarred the rites of Christian burial.

Various were the modes of self-mortification adopted by penitents during the middle ages. In the ninth century seven years of abstinence from certain kinds of food, and other privations, restored criminals to ecclesiastical communion. When fastings were prescribed for any long period, the observance of them might be redeemed by reciting a number of psalms, and giving money to the poor; and even, in the case of penitents

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the angels, which proves that the expression in the liturgy of St. Chrysostom respecting these choristers, "they who mystically imitate the cherubim" is to be literally taken. The eucharistic liturgy ascribed to Chrysostom details elaborate ceremonies, such as piercing with a spear the eucharistic bread, which was in the form of a cross—censing, lifting, kneeling, bowing, kissing, &c.—but that liturgy is of a later date than the time of Chrysostom, and the antiquity of the rubrics uncertain. Still, there was at an early period much pomp in Byzantine worship.

guilty of murder, who were sentenced to fast for years, exemption on certain days during a journey, in sickness, or at festivals, might be purchased by giving a penny to the poor, and maintaining three poor people. In the eleventh century a crusade to the Holy Land to deliver Jerusalem from the infidels, served instead of every kind of penance; penance not only was commuted but transferred, and it was no uncommon thing for one man to do it for another. Peter Damiani, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, in the eleventh century, advises monks not to engage too readily to expiate the faults of others, as he knew of a monk who suffered great punishment in the other world for having neglected the obligations which he had too hastily incurred on behalf of one of his brethren. Purgatory is intimately connected with penance. It is penance performed in another world. It is penance prolonged after the term of this life. It is distinct from eternal punishment. It is the last part of the temporal penalty to be paid for human transgression. As penitential acts here were held to purify the soul for ecclesiastical communion, so purgatorial pains were supposed to cleanse the spirit as a preparation for celestial communion. Imagination became most active in reference to this utterly baseless dream, and orators, poets, and legend-mongers lent their aid by fictions grossly vivid, to the deepening and extending of the superstitious belief.

In the middle ages it became a practice for archbishops and popes to send written absolutions in return for written confessions. Absolutions were often surrep-



titiously obtained from Rome by those who had been excommunicated by their own bishops; but these, even in the eleventh century, were by many deemed unlawful, and it was held in a French council of that period that the Pope could not absolve an excommunicated person without consulting the diocesan. When the priest was invested with the power of forgiving sin, no wonder that in a corrupt age this should lead to the most shameful traffic, and that pardons should be bought like articles of merchandize. The practice became common. There were, however, those to whom this appeared revolting, who declared it utterly unlawful, and, as late as 1237, the Council of London, held in that year, denounced those who required money for giving absolution.

With regard to the Confessional, like the Image and the Altar, there were, it is true, certain changes during the age now under consideration. Confession to a priest, with a view to restored communion, passed into confession to a priest with a view to Divine forgiveness; the deprecatory form of absolution was followed at the end of the period by the declarative form. There were alterations in the laws of penance, and new inventions in the treatment of the doctrine of purgatory; but these were developments far more than innovations; the natural growth of customs, principles, and imaginations of an earlier age. Between the third and eighth century, the practice of penance and the dream of purgatory went on unfolding themselves. The publicity of penance was dispensed with in the case of the clergy as early as the fifth century, and Gregory the Great adopted and ex-

panded the hints of Tertullian, and so supplied a reason for the ancient custom of praying for the dead. In the further development of these superstitions, the eyes of theologians were fixed on traditional sentiments, and they regarded themselves as only proceeding in harmony with them. Passages in Chrysostom, Augustine, and others, gave countenance to certain of these opinions.

But the main basis of the whole system of the confessional, even in its relation to purgatorial penance hereafter, is to be found in the great difficulty of the Nicene and Antenicene Church, in reference to sins after baptism, and in the power of absolution which the clergy were supposed to possess. The mediæval usages and notions were but the consistent elaborations of what crudely existed in minds of an earlier age. And looking deeper into the subject still, one sees that a preparation was made for the whole of these evils in the early principle of baptismal salvation, and the recognition of a Christian mediatorial priesthood.

Gross practices, like the selling of pardons, may be deemed by some as excrescences rather than offshoots, as far as their relation to the Nicene age is concerned; and yet, on reflection, it must appear that the difference between a man's *giving* pardon and *selling* it is small, compared with the difference between the belief that only God can pardon, and the idea that man is invested with such authority in any degree. For a mortal to maintain, or insinuate, that he has control over Divine forgiveness, is to take the first step in the path of superstition, after which the progress to traffic in indulgence is straight-

forward and easy. And when one human being arrogates this superiority over others—when an absolving power is asserted by a priesthood—some remuneration for its exercise will be sure to follow, and to be expected, first in delicate and circuitous, then in the directest and most vulgar ways.

## LECTURE X.

THE FOURTH AGE CONTINUED.—A.D. 787—1215.

### TRADITIONALISM.

THE subject of our present lecture is Mediæval Schools, the third general topic which we proposed to consider as illustrative of the traditionalism of the fourth period of Christendom. The chief change in the theology of the middle ages, as compared with that of earlier times, is found in the adoption of a systematic form, and the arrangement of doctrines in a comprehensive logical order.

The substance of belief was avowedly based on the writings of the Fathers. They were deemed authoritative expounders of Scripture, men gifted with extraordinary illumination. Had the reverence which the mediæval theologians showed for the blended Divine ideal and human actual been reserved for the former alone, the temper of their theological pursuits would have been a model for after ages. The confidence, too, of the mediævalists in what they believed is often very noble, and standing on the rock of Scripture it is glorious for us in this nineteenth century to say with Peter the Venerable—“Monstrous would it be at this period to dispute about the faith now that the prince of this world is cast out,

now that Christ reigns from sea to sea, now that, according to Isaiah, the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord, now that Satan after pagan and heretical assaults has exhausted his quivers, so that there is not an arrow left.”—*Epist.* Lib. ii. 1. The customary appeal made to them conjointly with the apostles, the shouts of the Fathers at the second Nicene Council, coupling them both together, certainly implied some sort of supernatural light vouchsafed to the former, approaching to, if not equal with that possessed by the latter. John Damascenus, at the commencement of the period, declared in his *Manual of Orthodoxy*, “I state nothing of my own, I set forth only what I have collected from men divine and wise.” Anselm maintained, as the high proof of his doctrinal soundness, that nothing could be found in his writings but what agreed with the Catholic Fathers, especially the blessed Augustine. Peter Lombard, at the close of the period, distinctly expresses his belief that the Holy Spirit spake through Augustine, Hilary, and Ambrose.\*

It would be easy to supply citations showing the profound deference paid to the early teachers; how they were acknowledged as both explaining Scripture and adding to it—how they were deemed the medium through which the original lights of truth were to be looked at—how they were counted themselves as additional lights. Nor are assertions of the authority of

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\* These passages are cited by Hampden in his *Bampton Lectures*, p. 44, 431.

the Fathers in the thirteenth century stronger than those of the eighth and seventh. How could anything exceed the preamble of the decrees of the sixteenth council of Toledo in 693, A.D., in which there is no reference to Scripture at all, but whoever receives not the decisions of former councils, and of all the venerable Fathers (*absque aliquo dubietatis nœvo*) is doomed to burn forever with the devil and his angels. The age of development was a standard for the age of traditionalism. It was accepted as a whole. There was no sifting of it. No distinction was made between the Divine ideal and the human actual. The very thing to be judged was confounded with the rule of judgment. If an "intense subjectivity," an inveterate "meism" be the characteristic of the age in which we live—some appearances of which subjectivity may be found, as we shall see, in the latter half of the mediæval age—the very opposite spirit marked the earlier portion of that period: personal subjectivity was merged in united submission to the objective teaching of the Fathers and councils. The *meism* of the individual was totally lost in the *tuism* of the Catholic Church.

In exposition the bondage was evident. Original investigation was pronounced presumptuous, and the student was confined to the fountains of antiquity. Mediæval commentators were merely compilers of *catenæ*—private judgment was at an end. Nothing was to be taught or believed which had not the sanction of the Church, either as expressly developed, or seminally

contained in ancient documents.\* She was supposed to be possessed of the mind of God. That mind was, of course, still regarded as being in the Scripture, but it was also regarded as having entered into and pervaded the intellects of the Ambroses and the Augustines. Streams, not having their rise in the same way as Scripture truth, but struck by God's hand out of other rocks, were believed to be poured into the reservoirs of the Church. Not to the sacredest fountain at once were the faithful to come. That fountain, indeed, was seen in the distance, but it was from the magnificent vessels placed before it, that the faithful were to draw the waters of life. Nevertheless, though an independent and immediate appeal to the Bible was virtually forbidden, though the exercise of thought upon it, according to Protestant notions, was unallowed, there was scope left for the mental activity of theologians; first, in discovering metaphysical grounds for the ideas handed down by the Fathers; secondly, in the further illustration of what they had taught. Any conclusion *against* them was heresy, an appeal to Scripture in support of such conclusion was futile: but reasonings on behalf of what they had taught, and the unfolding of their oracular decisions,—while, on the one hand, they gave play to active intellects, on the other,

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\* The contrast is striking between the dead traditionalism of this mediæval theology and the originality, freshness, and vigour shown in letters and pamphlets relative to politics and diplomacy.—AMPÈRE, *Hist. Lit.* i., Pref. xxiii.

they were within the landmarks of the strictest orthodoxy.\*

It is a grave mistake to imagine that the mediæval divines were all mere passive recipients of what they found in the parchment volumes on their scanty shelves. It was not a photographic process only which went on, when some of them opened their minds to receive rays of light. No philosopher ever examined a sunbeam with more care than did they the sentiments which were to them as heavenly as any sunbeams. The amount of thought they expended on their studies far surpasses what is commonly supposed. Many, no doubt, were barren copyists, tracing line for line, like the merest drudge in the abbey Scriptorium—a few others, however, could, as in calligraphy so in their glosses, illuminate what they copied. The mediæval Latins in this respect form a contrast to the mediæval Greeks: from the latter the busy, thoughtful habits of their fathers had departed; their literature, like their art, was stiff, stereotyped Byzantine; but both Latin literature and art gave signs of budding life, though spring was held back by biting frost. We are apt to confound the different centuries

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\* Richard St. Victor described the true character of the theological philosophy of the middle ages, when he said, "we should endeavour, as far as it is practicable, to comprehend by reason what we hold by faith." And, again, Anselm, "Nullus quippe Christianus debet disputare quomodo quod ecclesia catholica corde credit et ore confitetur non sit, sed semper eandem fidem indubitanter tenendo amando et secundum illam vivendo humiliter quantum potest, quærere rationem quomodo sit." ANSELMI *Opera*, 42. Truly has the Abbé Blanc remarked of this age, "Il n'était nullement question des preuves, des titres, des droits de la foi, le moyen age ne doute pas."—*Cours d'Hist. Ecc.* 501.



and countries of the mediæval period. Dark enough they all of them were compared with the former sunset and the following sunrise, but not so dark as to be without stars, or even the "auspicious gleam" of a summer midnight in northern latitudes. There was considerable active thought in Ireland in the seventh century. An intellectual revival occurred in England and France in the eighth and ninth. Germany had learning in the tenth. The eleventh was the dawn of scholasticism. A good deal of intellectual vigour gleams out of the correspondence and pamphlets of these successive centuries; but as to formal study, theology took the lead, and to works on that subject it is our business to refer. Some of those who were magnates, who would not deviate a hair's breadth from the traditional faith, showed considerable acuteness in unfolding their views, and much dexterity in answering objections.\* It is curious to see how, in the limited space allotted them, they managed to perform such evolutions; how, without breaking bounds, they contrived to take so much laborious

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\* Both Plato and Aristotle stood high in the estimation of mediæval theologians. In a letter which attests, as well as many other documents, an animated literary and philosophical correspondence between the learned men of different countries, a clerk of Novara asks the monks of Reichenau if they are for Aristotle, who denies the existence of universals, or for Plato who admits them? He adds, with the timid docility of his age, "Both enjoy such authority, that one scarcely ventures to prefer one to the other." In an ancient painting in the Church of St. Catherine, at Pisa, Thomas Aquinas is represented surrounded by his disciples; Plato and Aristotle appear on each side looking up to him, and presenting their works; while the volumes of other philosophers, as well as of heretics, are torn in pieces.

exercise. Paschasius Radbert, the first to give a rigid definition of the real presence in the sacrament; Rathe-rius of Verona, and Herigar, writers on the same subject in the ninth century, were all subtle thinkers in their way; while Anselm and Bernard were men whom any age would hold in honour. Most faithful to the church, most obedient to her teaching—the former notwithstanding anticipated Descartes, Malebranche, and Leibnitz; and the latter abounds in forcible statements of evangelical truth, and in eloquent appeals to the soul, reminding us of Richard Baxter.

Leaving the men for a moment on whose orthodoxy the Church throws no suspicion, we light upon some bold thinkers, who came into virtual antagonism with the authority of tradition, though they did not dare, perhaps did not wish, to question its claims. Gottschalk, who involved himself in trouble by his views on predestination, and on the limits of the atonement; and Rabanus Maurus, who assailed Radbert for *his* doctrine of the real presence, were of this class; but the men of greatest intellectual ability, anti-traditional in spirit, though still traditional in form—restive under authority, though they never openly challenged and exposed it, were John Erigena and Abelard.

The former was no cloistered monk, but a thorough man of the world, the boon companion of Charles the Bald, who could crack jokes with the merry monarch at table. Erigena read Greek and studied Plato, and built up a pile of transcendental philosophy. He excogitated a theory of the universe—a grand Pantheistic system of

existence, in which God appears first and last, the fountain whence all flows, the ocean into which all rolls. He grappled with the problem of God and nature, and the relations between them, very much in the Neoplatonic fashion, reviving the dreams of the Alexandrine school. The main doctrine of Alexandrine Neoplatonism, as held by Plotinus and his followers, is Pantheism, the identity of subject and object, the resolution of personal individuality into a phenomenon of the absolute.\* And the connexion of Erigena's ideas with those of Neoplatonism, appears from the nature as well as from the history of those ideas. Links may be traced between the Irish Platonist and the philosophers of the second century; and, further, there may be noticed an approach in his theory to Indian speculations on the absorption of

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\* John Erigena, in his *De Divisione Nature*, a work in five books, containing a dialogue between a master and his disciple, divides the universe into what creates, and is not created; what is created, and creates; what is created, and does not create; what neither creates nor is created. By the first, he means God the Creator; by the second, the principles or primordial causes of things; by the third, the effect of those primordial causes; and, by the fourth, God, as the end of all created being. With regard to the object of John Erigena, Matter remarks that "it is to prove created natures will return one day into those not created; and, that at the end of the world, there will remain nothing but God, and the principles of all things in him, as, before the creation, there was nothing but God and those principles."—*Hist. du Christianisme*, ii. 280. The English reader may see a pretty full account of Erigena's *Division of Nature* in SHARON TURNER'S *Anglo Saxons*, iii. p. 418. Also Guizot's *Hist. of Civ.*, Vol. ii., 383. For the information of those who may wish to procure the original works of John Scotus Erigena, and to save them the trouble in that respect which the author has had, it may be stated that they form Volume cxxii. of the *Patrologie Coursus Completus*, published in Paris, 1853.

the world in Brahma.\* All this is very remarkable. Worthy of much more study than it has yet received is this man, in the heart of the middle ages, speculating upon the universe in a tone of mystic Rationalism not unlike certain speculatists of our own age. Yet while Erigena's book on the *Division of Nature* is full of thoughts such as have long agitated Germany, and are now agitating England, there is after all the mediæval stamp on this curious work. The Irishman never openly and plainly re-

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\* AMPÈRE *Histoire Lit.* iii. 138. M. Saint-Rene Taillandier, in his work entitled *Scot Erigène et la philosophie Scholastique*, p. 189, endeavours to defend Erigena against the charge of pantheism, and to show a material difference between his views and those of the Alexandrian school, but the very passage to which he chiefly refers for that purpose is one which asserts the doctrine of a final divine absorption, such as is quite inconsistent with the proper continuance of created personality. Thus writes the French critic:—"When Erigena refers to final union with God, and the deification of the soul, he always maintains the permanence of human personality in the bosom of the divine soul, which receives and embraces it. One may remark the comparisons which he employs to illustrate this ineffable union, *i. e.*, those of iron, which melts and disappears in the fire; and of air, which is invisible, and yet subsists in the light of the sun."—p. 191. Though he gives no reference, the passage in question is plainly the following, which I find in *De Divisione Naturæ*, Lib. i. c. 10:—"Sicut ergo totus aer lux, totumque ferrum liquefactum ut diximus igneum imo etiam ignis apparet, manentibus tamen eorum substantiis: ita sano intellectu accipiendum, quia post finem hujus mundi omnis naturæ, sive corporea, sive incorporea, solus Deus esse videbitur, naturæ integritate permanente, ut et Deus qui per seipsum incomprehensibilis est, in creaturâ quodammodo comprehendatur, ipsa vero creatura ineffabili miraculo in Deum vertatur."

No doubt there was a difference between Erigena and the philosophical school of Plotinus in this respect, that the former combined Christianity with his philosophy; as Ampère says, "he wished to reconcile the opposite doctrines of Alexandrine pantheism and Christian theism," (*Hist. Lit.* iii. 139), but that his philosophy remained pantheistic appears to me as plain as possible.

pudiates tradition, never sets its authority at defiance, any more than he does that of Scripture. He speaks of truth as transmitted by the holy Fathers for the use of future generations. He frequently quotes them, especially Gregory and Augustine. His allusions to the Church are ever reverential, and, adopting the words of the Bishop of Hippo, he says, "we do not receive the sacraments in common with those whose doctrines we disapprove."\*

Still, however, John Erigena is much more of a philosopher than a theologian, while he professedly holds to the Church. "God presents himself in the historical development of religion through the authority of the Church; but true philosophy, which rises above the theophanies to the absolute itself, which soars beyond all conceptual apprehensions, gives insight into the laws according to which God must be known and worshipped. True philosophy and true religion are, therefore, one. Philosophy veiled in the form of tradition is religion; religion unveiled from the form of tradition by rational knowledge is philosophy; philosophy is the theoretic side of religion, religion the practical side of philosophy."† In this strain he speculates. Put the Bible for

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\* *De Divinâ Prædestinatione*, c. i. § 1.

† He asks, "What is the purpose of true philosophy but to exhibit the rules of true religion whereby we humbly adore, and rationally seek God, who is the first and supreme cause of all things? Whence it follows that true philosophy is true religion, and true religion true philosophy."—*Div. Prædest.* c. i. § i. John Erigena, in spite of his free speculative turn of thought, has been generally held in high esteem by Roman Catholic theologians. It is curious to notice in criticisms on Erigena, by Staudenmair, Matter and others, what a medley of thoughts

tradition, and then the theory and the tone of this mediæval transcendentalist become very much those of a modern rationalist. Both of them undermine the authority which neither, perhaps, openly assaults; both bring their theory to the explanation of that authority, and then make it mean anything or nothing as the theory requires. The former, by his timidity in the presence of tradition, shows the grasp which its authority had on the mind of his age; just as the latter, by his timidity in the presence of the Bible, indicates the hold which the Holy Book has now on public opinion.

The next great thinker we have mentioned is Abelard, of the twelfth century. A man of immense egotism, of unbounded intellectual ambition, of little religious feeling; at one time, as he acknowledges, licentious, yet cold in his love to Heloise, and utterly unworthy of her romantic and high-souled affection for him. He was imbued with Platonic habits, though he could not read Greek like Erigena. In Abelard, Plato was kept in check by Aristotle. The dialectic faculty was predominant in this remarkable man, and he may be reckoned the father of the first age of scholastic philosophy in the form of nominalism, or rather conceptualism; the mightiest of the early champions against the old doctrines of the eternal and independent reality of ideas; the precu-

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are represented as held in solution by his singular mind. He is considered the precursor of mediæval realism, and of the system of Spinoza, as the depository of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, and as the anticipator of Leibnitz, Schelling and Hegel.

sor of Locke, Reid, and Stewart.\* Abelard brought his searching logic to bear on the whole of theology. He began with the Trinity: for all the schoolmen in their speculations descended from God to man, from cause to effect. Now Nominalism says that there is nothing which truly exists but the individual: that individuals alone are realities. According to this view, the three Divine Persons, if realities, are individuals; if not individuals, they are only names. Hence the scholastic Realist sought to place the Nominalist between the horns of a dilemma; to terrify him on the one side with Tritheism, and on the other with Sabellianism. He insisted that to choose between them was inevitable, and, therefore, that the nominal philosophy must make its disciple a heretic, that it was in its very spirit heretical. Abelard was obliged to accept one side of the difficulty. Roscelin, a Nominalist before him, had affirmed, that the three

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\* For the sake of some of my readers I subjoin the following popular descriptions of the nominalist and realist philosophies:—"The realists maintain that every general term or abstract idea, such as man, virtue, has a real independent existence, quite irrespective of any concrete individual determination, such as Smith, benevolence, &c. The nominalists, on the contrary, maintain that all general terms are but the creations of human ingenuity, designating no distinct entities, but merely used as marks of aggregate conceptions." "The realists finding the one in the many—in other words, finding certain characteristics common to all men, and not only common to them, but necessary to their being men, abstracted these general characteristics from the particular accidents of individual men, and out of these characteristics made what they called universals, what we call genera. These universals existed *per se*. They were not only conceptions of the mind, they were entities."—LEWES'S *Hist. of Phil.* vol. ii. 61, 64. "Some of the schoolmen were Platonic realists, but the prevalent opinion was,

Divine Persons were three individuals, but at the same time sought to free his opinions from the charge of Tritheism. But Abelard maintained that God was only one individual, and that the Trinity, which he pronounced a necessary conception of reason, consisted of the omnipotence of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the love of the Spirit. If Roscelin sacrificed the oneness of the Godhead to the reality of the Three Persons, Abelard sacrificed the Three Persons to the reality of the Divine oneness: one was Tritheistic, the other Sabellian.\* Logical distinctions might be said to be substituted by this last philosopher for veritable existences. Most unplatonistic was this side of his philosophical theology, notwithstanding, however, he sometimes talked very

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that universals do not exist *before* things, nor *after* things, but *in* things, *i. e.*, universal ideas have not (as Plato thought) an existence separable from individual objects, and therefore they could not have existed prior to them in order of time; nor yet (according to the doctrine of the Stoics) are they mere conceptions of the mind formed in consequence of an examination and comparison of particulars, but these ideas or forms are from eternity, united inseparably with that matter of which things consist, or as the Aristotelians sometimes express themselves, the forms of things are from eternity immersed in matter."—STEWART'S *Phil.* i. 169. Hampden observes, that the realistic theory, "by assigning what metaphysicians called an objective reality to the general notions of the mind, made the whole of our knowledge deducible from abstract ideas. A dictatorial and speculative theology readily combined with such a theory." "Nominalism, on the contrary, by denying any objective reality to general notions, led the way directly to the testimony of the senses and the conclusions of experience."—*Bampton Lectures*, 70, 71. It should be added, that the conceptual theory by no means resolves all the sources of knowledge into sense and experience. It admits the doctrine of natural fundamental beliefs, without which what can save us from becoming the prey of universal scepticism.

\* *Philosophie Scholas.* : par COUSIN, 300.



Platonically, and went so far even as to compare the Holy Spirit to the soul of the World. Our extremely scanty notice of the application of Nominalism to theology is meant to do nothing more than barely indicate how philosophical discussions affected the forms of religious thought, and how, consequently, they excited the strongest feelings, and provoked violent controversy, and through theology, one of the mightiest powers for moving mankind—and, essentially, the case is not uncommon, though the form of the agitation varies—metaphysical science aroused all Christendom, brought divines together in council, placed vigorous intellects in collision, raised hierarchies to an attitude of resistance, evoked the sympathies of kings and nobles as well as of priests and philosophers—of the men of the world no less than the scholastic recluse—and spent not all its force till the combatants advanced from words to blows, and blood was shed in this chivalrous service of ideas.

Abelard's views, on the whole, were what we should call unevangelical; and lying at the root of his deviations from the truth were his confounding inspiration with genius, his pantheistic system of the universe, and his habit of looking at things mainly under a subjective aspect; though, at the same time, it must be admitted that he saw truth in some directions where, in that age, it was not generally discerned; as, for example, in the broad distinction which he recognised between theology and religion. He was pronounced a heretic by the judgment of the Church, and his Nominalism was regarded as being at the bottom of his heresy. A change

came over Abelard in his latter days. He died in reconciliation with the Church in the famous Abbey of Cluny, whose well-known abbot, Peter the Venerable, wrote his epitaph in which he says—

“sed tunc magis omnia vicit  
Cum Cluniacensem monachum, moremque professus  
Ad Christi veram transivit philosophiam.”

Grievously did the good Anselm complain of that evil philosophy which he said was undermining the verities of the faith. “These dialecticians of our day,” he exclaims, “are heretics, who declare universal substances to be merely the breath of one’s lips.” Care for a metaphysical theory too deeply entered into this admirable man’s solicitude for the maintenance of Scripture truth,—a very common blending of interest in the human mind, often observable in our own times. Anselm has successors still, notwithstanding the fact of their philosophy being very different from his.

Scholasticism, though at length taken up into the Church system, and employed as an engine of defence, was long regarded as inimical to sound theology. Afterwards employed by the advocates of authority, it was first the weapon of the advocates of reason. All the disputes of the last-named proceeded on the same principle.\*

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\* “They were only varied forms of rationalism, the pure exertions of the mind within itself, conscious of its own powers, and struggling to push itself against the constringent force of the spiritual government. The spiritual power forbade the mind to think for itself, to use its own faculties, to examine, to discuss, to object; obedience was become another word for religion. It was no wonder, then, that some more

But, notwithstanding this effort of reason, this shaking of the yoke of traditionalism, this struggling in the net, there was no open and direct assault upon false authority, there was no clear idea—certainly there was no explicit statement—that the claims of tradition were inconsistent with the claims of Scripture, and were, indeed, opposed to them. Abelard certainly did distinguish between Scripture as necessarily true, and other writings, as documents which ought to be consulted, and not implicitly followed. The same thing had been said after Augustine by others.\* It was a clue which might have led them out of the labyrinth. But Abelard, like the rest, dropped it as soon as he seized it. He was glad to cover himself with patristic livery, when it fitted. One of his famous books, entitled *Sic et non*, contains a mass of quotations from the Fathers, *pro* and *con*, relating to a number of questions.† The exhibition of their differences implied an argument against their authority; but Abelard, whatever he might think, did not bring out

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liberal spirits essayed those natural exertions of their faculties on which the painful prohibition lay. It was like one who had been bound hand and foot feeling the luxury of the limbs once more free, and enjoying the perception that he yet has strength and energy.”—HAMPDEN'S *Bampton Lectures*, 38.

\* Cap. V. in Bernard's book against Abelard, *De erroribus Abelardi* throws light on Bernard's reverence for tradition, while he indignantly arraigns his antagonist for departing from it. “Nonne omnium merito in se provocat manus cujus manus contra omnes? Omnes inquit sic, sed non ego sic, quid ergo tu? quid melius affers, quid subtilius invenis? quid secretius tibi revelatum jactas quod tot præterierit sanctos effugerit sapientes?”—*Opera*, ii. 57. Lugd. 1845.

† See the account of this curious work in COUSIN'S *Philosophie Scholastique*, 287.

any such argument. In fact, he had not that simple loyalty to revelation which is the only victorious antagonist to traditionalism. Reason was his mistress, and after the manner of a knight errant, he was willing to break a lance with any one in honour of her.

The study of theology under these influences could scarcely aid, to any great extent, in its just development. The orthodox opinions of Athanasius upon the Trinity, and of Augustine upon grace, were preserved and maintained. Doctrines on the subject of predestination, very similar to what are called Calvinistic, were the tenets of the Church divines in general.\* Conjoined with predestinarian opinions, were affirmations of the bearing of the Atonement on all men—a subject involved in dispute with Gottschalk, who took the narrow view of Christ's dying for the elect alone,† and the exhibition of

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\* Hampden, in his *Bampton Lecture*, remarks, that "predestination, regarded as the sole primary cause of all our actions—as they are moral and Christian, as they have any worth in them, or any happiness, was asserted in that theology in the most positive manner, though different doctors varied in further expositions of its nature. But reprobation, as it implies a theory of the moral evil of the world, I think I may confidently say, is no part of the system."—HAMPDEN'S *Bampton Lecture*, 181. I apprehend that something like what we term moderate Calvinism was the prevalent system as to the Divine purposes; but there are passages in the best of mediæval theologians which put the doctrine of predestination in a way which none would now adopt, but those who belong to the very high school. For an example let the student refer to ANSELM'S *Elucidarium*, lib. ii. c. ix.

† Gieseler, vol. ii. 292, supplies decisive passages on this point; they are extracted from HINCMAR, *De Prædest.* c. 5. "Illos," says Gottschalk, "omnes impios et peccatores quos proprio fuso sanguine filius Dei redimere venit, hos omnipotentis Dei bonitas ad vitam pre-

the atonement distinctly as a *satisfaction* to divine justice. Theology is indebted to Anselm for the clear enunciation of this last doctrine.

This extraordinary man is known to English readers chiefly as champion of the Church against William Rufus, in which controversy, as in that between Hildebrand and Henry, while I have no sympathy with the assertion of ecclesiastical claims, I have full sympathy with the resistance of kingly tyranny and court corruption. Anselm deserves to be better known as an eminent saint, a profound theologian, a great worker, and a great teacher. He was a man utterly unlike John Scotus Erigena, and Abelard. It was not mere philosophy which led him to study religion. It was religion that led him into paths of philosophy. He came to it, as Augustine came, through spiritual experience: not that

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destinatos ir retractabiliter salvari tantummodo velit: et rursum illos omnes impios et peccatores, pro quibus idem filius Dei nec corpus assumpsit, nec orationem ne dico sanguinem fudit, neque pro eis ullo modo crucifixus fuit, quippe quos pessimos futuros esse prescivit, quosque justissime in æterna præcipitandos tormenta præfinivit ipsos omnino perpetim salvari penitus nolit." Gottschalk, in his zeal for the doctrines of grace, pushed his way to the highest predestinarianism. Hinemar called on Gottschalk to confess that God foresaw both good and evil, but that evil he only foresaw, good he both foresaw and predestinated. Gottschalk declined to allow that.—*Hist. Ecc. Rhemensis*, lib. iii. c. 28. (GIESELER). Sismondi seems to me to give in a few words a correct view of this controversy.—*Hist. des Français*, ii. 87. Gottschalk, though a severe theorist, and a man of narrow and rigid views, seems to have been an earnest Christian, intent on the service of truth and the glory of God, and in this respect he appears in contrast with his opponent Hinemar—though in the particular controversy concerned, the opinions abetted by the latter were in themselves, as I apprehend, more accordant with Scripture teaching.

he was roused by an earthquake; rather his heart the Lord gently opened. Beautiful is the story of his spiritual life, how, in the solitude of the cloister, he thought and prayed, and longed after God, and the seeds sown in his heart at Aosta by his mother Ermemberga germinated and ripened into holy fruit. With childish imagination, while playing among the Alps of Piedmont, he had looked on the snowy peaks as God's white throne, and he had dreamt that he ascended those heights to be fed with angel's food from the eternal Father's own hand.\* As a monk he spent whole nights in meditation and prayer, and when the early clothing of his thoughts fell off, God was contemplated and adored with manly mind and heart as an infinitely glorious Person, even as his Father and King. Out of the deep thoughts of his soul, the study of the Bible and the reading of Augustine, he came to see more clearly perhaps than any theologian had done before, one grand meaning of Christ's work. He felt his need of an atonement, of the Lord's precious obedience and death, and that need, acting on a profoundly contemplative intellect, was the impulse to his inquiries and the secret of their success. The ideas of *sacrifice*, of *substitution*, and of *deliverance*, wrought out by the life and death of Christ, had long been familiar to the thoughts of Christians; but that which gives efficacy to the first two of these and produces the last—the *nexus* between the vicarious offering and the redemptive

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\* EADMER, *de Vita S. Anselmi*, lib. i., appended to the ANSELMI *Opera*. Gerberon's Edit. p. 2.

result had not excited any very careful and searching inquiries. There was, indeed, an old but not distinctly worked-out theory of a deliverance from the power of the Devil, through something done or offered to him by Christ. It began with Irenæus. It may be traced in many of the Fathers, sometimes coming out in bold, incantious, figurative methods of expression. But Anselm's philosophical and cautious mind, which could not be content without some explanation of his belief, to reconcile and bind together distinct parts of it—thoroughly dissatisfied with the theory of the atonement, so far as there was one—earnestly fixed his attention on the subject. He had clearer views than many of government, law, and justice, God was to him not merely a Father, but a Judge. Anselm looked on the sinner as owing a debt to the Divine Being, as owing not merely the duty he withheld, but compensation for the dishonour involved in withholding it. He formed the idea of punishment as inseparable from the guilt of sin. He concluded that man could not be released from punishment without satisfaction to justice, that he could not himself make the satisfaction, that only the God-man could make it, that he, being Divine, was able to render to the Father and Judge an adequate satisfaction. All this is worked out acutely in the treatise *Cur Deus Homo*,\* a book which supplies a number of arguments relating to the atone-

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\* *Opera ANSELMI*, p. 74—96. The main object of the book is to show the necessity of God becoming man for human salvation. The making of a satisfaction to the justice of God is regarded as the ground of this necessity. It may be remarked, that Anselm says more

ment, which have since been repeated by metaphysical divines, and are used at the present day as theological weapons by many who little think they are borrowed from the arsenal of a schoolman, and who, perhaps at the moment of using them, loudly declaim against all philosophy. Anselm deserves to be ranked among the chief doctors of the Church. He made a large contribution to theological science, and that not only in the way just indicated, but also by his famous argument for the existence of the Deity, founded upon the idea of God in the human mind.

Little was done by theologians towards unfolding the doctrine of justification through Christ's righteousness by faith. Bernard, indeed, with his deep spiritual experience, with his sense of personal sin, and his strong reliance on Christ, caught some glorious glimpses of that upper side of salvation—the side next heaven, that which consists in a change of relation to the infinite ruler of the universe,\*—but though, in this respect, Bernard was in advance of the Nicene theologians and of the earlier Christian Fathers, he was far from seeing upon the subject all which was afterwards discerned by the eagle eye of the great Martin Luther.

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of the obedience than of the sufferings of Christ. To Aquinas we are indebted, I believe, for the theological distinction between the *active* and *passive* obedience of the Redeemer.—See *Summa Totius Theol.* pars ii. quæst. 48.

\* Of all the approaches to the Lutheran doctrine Bernard's seems to come nearest. "Homo siquidem qui debuit, homo qui solvit, nam si unus, inquit, pro omnibus mortuus est, ergo omnes mortui sunt: ut videlicet satisfactio unius omnibus imputetur, sicut omnium peccata unus ille portavit."—*De erroribus Abel. Opera*, tom. ii. 59.



The views of the atonement held by Anselm, and the strong statements by Bernard on salvation by grace and justification by faith, were theological developments in advance of the age, exceptions to the rule of mechanical tradition. These men rose far above the church system, and presented phases of truth really inconsistent with it, though they were conscious of no such inconsistency, but, if attacked on the point, would have tasked their skill to the utmost to reconcile their views of the gospel with the teaching of former days, and would have ingeniously interlaced their evangelical sentiments with the church doctrines of sacerdotalism and sacraments, penance and purgatory. Adopting the so-called orthodox school theology, they imbibed errors as well as truths, and while the innovations of early ages affected their conceptions of Christianity through the *medium* of long-established principles, the development of those innovations through the traditional authority they had acquired, contributed further *directly* to influence them by checking mental activity in certain directions, which would have led to the supply of grand defects and the correction of mischievous mistakes. The priestly and ascetic elements of their religion were inimical to the development of truth, as they had been in the case of the Nicene teachers; and the extirpation of these elements was hopeless so long as Christians overlooked the distinction between the earthly actual and the ideal from heaven—between the Gospel of God and the glosses of man: and we can plainly see that if the Church system had so strong a hold on the

minds of Anselm and Bernard, how it must have stereotyped in its own form the ideas of inferior men! Yet it should be remarked that the piety of the great thinkers I have noticed, though modified by their system, was never crushed by it. Even through false forms deep and divine principles were working. A human priesthood, as regarded by them, was the witness of an invisible mediation, a memento of the sacrifice of Christ. Asceticism was with them a protest against selfishness, a crucifixion of sin, a holy discipline. The political bonds of the Church even, were to them cords of sympathy with the outer world—the means of introducing order into its confusion.

There was another contribution made to theology, of a far different kind, and by men of a different character. In its completeness it belongs to the end of the age before us. I allude to the doctrine of transubstantiation, which, based upon the realistic philosophy of the schools, and involving the separation of matter from form—substance from accident—essence from phenomena—did not appear in its perfect development, and rigid, dialectic shape, till the Council of Lateran in 1215. Yet it is to be remembered that Paschasius Radbert, in 831, had closely approximated to it, and there was a tendency to define the assumed real presence after the Lateran fashion at a still earlier period. At the second Council of Nice, the fathers maintained that the unbloody sacrifice is not an image, but the very body and the very blood of Christ itself,—that before the consecration the elements may have been called types, but that they could never be so called

afterwards.\* John Damascenus said they were not types. Earlier writers, though they speak of them as emblems, as we have seen, insist upon their being much more. Ratramn, even in opposing Radbert, questioned rather his mode of defining the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine, than the presence itself; and John Erigena, perhaps, was almost the only man who adopted the notion of their being simply memorials.†

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\* *Legas quosque voles, numquam invenies neque Dominum, neque apostolos, neque patres, incruentum illud sacrificium quod a sacerdote offertur imaginem dixisse, verum ipsum corpus et ipsum sanguinem. Attamen ante sanctificationis consecrationem, quibusdam patribus pie sane visum est, ἀντίτυπον, hoc est exemplar similis formæ nominare,—post consecrationem autem corpus Domini et sanguinem Christi, atque ita esse creduntur.*—HARDUIN, *Col. Concil.*, tom. iv. 702.

† Ratramn's book is thus described by HARDWICK, *Church Hist. Middle Age*, 180.

“It is divided into two parts, the first entering on the question, whether the body and blood of Christ are taken by the faithful communicant in mystery or in truth (in mysterio an in veritate); the second, whether it is the same body as that in which Christ was born, suffered, and rose from the dead. In answering the former question he declared, with St. Augustine, that the eucharistic elements possess a twofold meaning. Viewed externally, they are not the thing itself (the ‘res sacramenti’), they are simply bread and wine; but in their better aspect, and as seen by faith, the visual organ of the soul, they are the Body and Blood of Christ. The latter question was determined in the same spirit, though the language of Ratramnus is not equally distinct. While he admitted a conversion of the elements into the body of the Lord, in such a manner that the terms were interchangeable, he argued that the body was not Christ's in any carnal sense, but that the Word of God, the Bread Invisible, which is invisibly associated with the Sacrament, communicates nutrition to the soul, and quickens all the faithful who receive Him; or, in other words, Ratramnus was in favour of a real, while he disbelieved a corporal, presence in the Eucharist. Hincmar says Erigena held that the Eucharist was ‘tantum memoria veri corporis et sanguinis ejus.’”—See HARDWICK, 181.

“The consecration and the showing of the consecrated host became

The grand difference between the doctors of the Lateran and the Nicene Fathers on this subject, is that the latter *define* a real presence; the earlier do not. Cosin, in his book against transubstantiation, asserts that a real presence was admitted by the Fathers. No doubt he is correct in that assertion. The sentiment does not simply appear in a few scattered passages; it is a warp running through the whole woof of the Nicene theology—it penetrates the substance of early Liturgies\*—it is implied in the extravagant epithets used relative to the Lord's Supper. The tone of patristic teaching is certainly not Popish in the sense of *defining* a change in the substance of the elements; as certainly it is not what we should deem thoroughly Protestant, in *denying* a change. It would be difficult upon this subject to make out any consistent theory whatever from the Fathers, for the Lutheran who holds the consubstantial theory, and the Anglo-Catholic who holds the spiritually corporeal theory, may both plausibly cover their own theories with large patches of patristic language. In short, the prevalent views of Christendom on the Lord's Supper had long been far removed from what we deem the Scripture doctrine—had long supposed an awful mystery in the bread and wine\*—had long supposed some sort

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the most conspicuous part of the service, on that act being performed the faithful were to remember the passion of Christ and the institution of His blessed sacrament. The doctrine of transubstantiation itself was only a consequence of this practical view produced by the liturgy, a scholastic consequence the denial of which seemed inconsistent with that practice."—BUNSEN'S *Hippolytus*, vol ii. 215.

\* Though I believe that there is a logical distinction, but a refined one, between the Romish dogma of transubstantiation and the opinion

of Divine presence in these elements themselves, so that the absurd metaphysical definition of the Lateran Council only gave scholastic shape to ideas floating vaguely in the mind for ages; the novelty consisting rather in the exclusion of the earthly substance, than in the inclusion of a heavenly one. As far as a superstitious reverence for the Sacrament is concerned, it would be difficult for any age to surpass the Nicene.

Thus two remarkable theological developments appear in this age of traditionalism, the one growing out of Bible studies, the other out of Church principles—Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction, and the Lateran doctrine of transubstantiation.

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so boldly and repeatedly expressed by Ambrose, Augustine, and Chrysostom, yet I would say, in the words of Isaac Taylor, "that they stand at an equal distance from that notion of the Eucharist which offers itself to the uninitiated reader of the canonical history. Breaking of bread is all that we hear of in the Acts of the Apostles—an immolation, a terrible mystery—a sacrifice, a breaking, rending, and mastication, not of bread, but of the body of Christ which has come into its place, these are the things we hear of from the Nicene writers."—*Ancient Christ.*, vol. i. 528.

## LECTURE XI.

FOURTH AGE CONTINUED.—A.D. 787—1215.

### TRADITIONALISM.

**I**N our present Lecture we are to look at mediæval monasteries and at mediæval society, the fourth and fifth particulars which we proposed to take up in illustration of the age of traditionalism.

### IV. MEDIÆVAL MONASTERIES.

Congregational life was a prominent feature of the earliest realization of Christianity. It formed for a while a beautiful contrast to the corrupt social condition of the times, but it vanished in the age of development, and we find nothing of it in its pure form in the Catholic Europe of the middle ages. Something, however, resting, I think, upon the conscious need of religious fellowship, we do find. In the mediæval orders may be recognised a striving after congregational union, ignorant and awkward, creating a caricature, yet often earnest and devout. The world was full of darkness, sensuality, and violence, and men, feeling that they ought to come out of it and be separate, instead of doing so in spirit, while in person they remained to relieve the gloom and diminish the corruption, literally withdrew

from secular society, and sought in the cloister security from temptation, and excitements to piety in exclusive intercourse. The central idea of their new associations violently contradicted the holiness which, according to the Gospel there may be in family life, for monachism identified the family with the world, and taught that to be "religious" was to burst all domestic bonds.

The life of a monk was completely under the power of the church system, and that system served to strengthen, modify, or check his monkish habits. A sacerdotal religion reigned in the monastery—priestly worship occupied a large portion of time. The altar was a holy place. The mass the holiest of all services. Grace came through sacraments. To realise their efficacy the recluse had need to fast and watch. And then the relic-hallowed shrine, the imaged saint, the choral music, the smoking incense, the distant murmurs of devout voices, the lonely cloister walk, the silence round the abbey walls, would help to foster monastic piety, through that dreamy kind of devotion which, in certain minds, is the daughter of such fascinating influences. In further aid came faith in miraculous powers as still existing—an habitual conviction of mysterious sympathies between heaven and earth—a constant recognition of saintly and angelic ministries, all invisible, as well as trust in inspired visions, dreams of forgotten history and oracles of coming wonders. A theological taste often existed in union with all this monkish retirement; it was favourable to study and mental activity within the bounds already indicated, and

it would modify the tenor of monkish life, and raise somewhat the intellectual tone of monkish religion. Yet, at the same time, theology, as then understood, the confounding of the knowledge of it with piety, the substitution of logical propositions for a Divine Person as the object of faith, the large place assigned to sacraments and ceremonial service, the deference paid to tradition, the mistaking the actual for the ideal, human custom for divine law, would often serve to complicate the other errors of monasticism; while the prominence given in theology to the subjective side of salvation, with the prevalent notion of the nature and process of salvation, as a destruction of nature, not a holy return to it, mightily strengthened the ascetic disease, sent its boiling blood into the brain, and gave tenfold heat to its feverish and maddening excitement. Nor did the ecclesiastico-secular spirit of the age keep outside monastic walls. Mediæval chronicles show how much the government of the brethren and the vindication of conventual rights brought abbots into collision with kings and citizens; how often the abbey was, in point of intrigue and party spirit, the image of the troubled political world without; how the still water reflected the battle fought on its edge; how the future statesman was formed in the chapter-house; how shrewd monks were consulted by sovereigns, and moved hidden springs of public action; how all this overcame or changed ascetic impulses, being to the men who were the subject of it, in some cases a burden, and in others a joy.

The history of monasteries presents enormous cor-



ruptions on the one hand, and vigorous attempts at reform on the other. It would be easy first to cite numerous passages showing the idleness, profligacy, and crime which existed in these abodes of reputed sanctity, and then to add as many more indicating the sorrow which such excesses inspired in purer minds. Two great reformers arose, sincere and earnest—Benedict and Bernard; the one a little before the beginning, the other at the end of, the period under review. Both grappled with the hydra monster. Others, animated by the same spirit, came between them. It is curious to notice, as an indication of the measure of sympathy which these efforts obtained, that during the time when the popular voice joined in decreeing the honours of saintship, the man of literature, the politician, and the missionary were selected for canonization in the earlier centuries, but the monastic reformer became the chief favourite and the chosen saint at last. Stringent laws were applied to the correction of abuses. Some master-hand appeared and crushed a swarm of evils; but when the hand was withdrawn they arose afresh, more fierce and strong than ever. It was a battle all the way through between an unnatural system and nature itself; and nature, under such circumstances, even when abandoned, could make some plausible excuse for her aberrations by appealing against unnatural restraints to her own original constitution and propensities.

Monks and monasteries were far from being all alike. Numerous brotherhoods exhibited varieties akin to those of society at large. The ambitious man was there,

plotting to get power, to set aside a rival, to attain the abbot's throne; the licentious man was there, covering under his cowl eyes burning with passion, and lips thirsting with lust; the stupid man was there, whose chief delight was to sun himself to sleep in the convent garden; the frivolous man was there, throwing away his time in silly gossip, making mischief and breeding quarrels; the active man was there, bustling about on affairs of the order, or of the Church, or of the State; the man weary of the world was there, who had come "to lean his staff against the fig-tree, and have in mind the eternal years;"\* the studious man was there, at his books; the benevolent man, relieving the poor; the devout man, praying and counting his beads. All might be found in the same building. At different periods or in different places, whole monasteries and orders afforded varieties and contrasts. The monastery of St. Columba at Iona, in the eighth century, was very unlike that of Farfa, with its Abbot Campo, in the tenth † The French of the latter century were generally better ordered than the Italian, and these again than the German.

The two main branches of monastic society, the Benedictine and Augustine, included different orders, some lax, some severe. The Camaldulenses, founded by

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\* This beautiful expression occurs in PETRI CELLENS *Epist.*, lib. vii. 21.

† Campo, Abbot of Farfa, about A.D. 930, and his assistant, Hildebrand, "concupinis, quas prius habuerant occulte, postmodum palam abuti cœperunt, non solum ipsi, sed et cuncti illorum monachi, hoc scelus, non verebantur patrare, sed nuptialiter unusquisque suam ducebat scortam."—MURATORI *Antiq. Ital.*, t. vi. 279.

Romuald, who died in 1027, were a very strict order of reformed Benedictines. The brethren of Vallombrosa, gathered by John Gualbert, who died in 1093, were also reformed Benedictines, but less rigid. The Carthusians, established in 1084, far surpassed the rest in austerity. The Cistercians, who arose in 1098, known in modern times as Trappists, from one of their famous establishments, were also excessive in their asceticism, and became pre-eminent for influence. The Augustine order, less definite in rule, more varied in their character, than the Benedictines, branched out into the Premonstrants under Norbert (1134), at first very rigorous in discipline, afterwards modified and softened down, and into the Trinitarians (1198), a practical and useful brotherhood, devoted to the redemption of Christian captives from the hands of infidels.

Now, such an abbey as Corbay, in the tenth century, where discipline was resisted on the ground that wheat and tares are to grow together—and such as Laubes, in the diocese of Cambray, where the reforming abbot, Erluin of Gemblours, was nearly killed by the monks,—are specimens of the worst class.\* Clairvaux, of the Cistercian order, under the presidency of Bernard—where, in a dreary spot inclosed by woods and mountains, the valley was filled with men at work, each performing his task in silence—that silence only broken by the clang of

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\* D'ACHERY, *Spicileg.*, t. ii. 739. In some monasteries a very rigorous severity was practised towards delinquent monks. MABILLON, in his *Treatise on Monastic Prisons*, states that some Abbots mutilated the limbs of imprisoned brethren.

labour, only ending in the voice of praise—was a model monastery. Battle Abbey (Benedictine), whose chronicles have been recently translated, I should take as a sample of the average, decent sort of establishment, neither very bad nor very good. Listen to the following record of the last days of Abbot Ralph, as an instance of the piety honoured in the place. “In the sparingness of his food he was a Daniel, in the sufferings of his body a Job, in the bending of his knees a Bartholomew, bending them full often in supplication, though he could scarcely move them in walking. Every day he sang through the whole Psalter in order, hardly ceasing from his genuflexions and his psalmody three days previously to his death. Neither his racking cough, nor his vomiting of blood, nor his advanced age, nor the attenuation of his flesh to almost mere skin, availed to daunt this man, nor to turn him aside from any purpose of his elevated piety. But lo! after many agonies and bodily sufferings, when he was eighty-four years of age, and had been a monk sixty years and thirty-six days, and when he had flourished as Abbot of Battel seventeen years and twenty days, the Householder summoned him to the reward of his day’s penny.”

Scriptural allusions are very common in monkish chronicles. In many they abound more than in that of Battle Abbey. It is quite certain that most educated monks studied the Bible—at least, as much as they had of it,—for though in their stinted libraries we find the Scriptures, we often see that only a part of them was possessed. It is not ignorance of the Bible which

strikes one in looking over monastic works, but the very common misapprehension of its meaning, and the twisting of passages to fit in with the affairs of the convent, or to express some ascetic sentiment. I would refer to Maitland's *Dark Ages*, and to Neale's *Mediæval Preachers*, for illustrations of the abundance of Scripture quotations in mediæval writers.

In reference to the effect of the monastic system, it is interesting to notice how it often wrought upon the self-consciousness of religious life. Monks "felt dearth and emptiness in their inward being," complained of the want of fervour in prayer. They allowed themselves to be absorbed in direct efforts to get rid of evil thoughts, instead of seeking a happy self-oblivion in holy employments. All the changes and conflicts incident to intense spiritualists, who are ever analysing their own feelings, instead of devoting their energies to Christian work, were experienced by these well-meaning monks, this enthusiasm sometimes ending in a worldly, carnal reaction, sometimes in despair, misery, suicide.\* Amidst ceremonies which yielded no satisfaction, and while the realities of the Gospel were to them enveloped in mist, a spirit of earnest but ill-directed religious subjectivity was growing up—a reaction produced by the confirmed objective habits of the times. There were nuns, also, who fell into deep depression, asked why they were shut up, entertained doubts respecting religion altogether, or refused the communion because they counted themselves

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\* NEANDER, vii. 322.

reprobates. In all this we recognise spiritual phenomena common to every age, but to which a distressing vividness and power to harass was imparted by the ascetic life and its accompaniments, drawing the soul away from the contemplation of the grand truths of the Gospel, and from the healthy exercise of those social and domestic charities which are the best antidotes to religious melancholy.

Another result ensued. Minds of a certain temperament cherished a mystic piety—a soft, sentimental devotion not unlike that of the Port Royalists.\* Sometimes, indeed, mysticism took a bold, reproving, predictive tone, as in the case of the celebrated, but rather insane Abbess Wildegard, of the twelfth century, whose fervours of spirit were mistaken by herself and others for inspiration.† Bishops, popes, and emperors came to ask of her the fate of the future, and in her oracles there was at times a notable blending of Scripture truths with vague

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\* An Abbess of the seventh century, and she is a specimen of a later mediæval period, went beyond her powers in her accustomed reading, as she knew she thereby went quicker to the Lord. Incessantly praising God and fixing her eyes on Heaven, she recommended to the Most High the care of her convent daughters. When the nuns kept silence at the usual hour of praise, and said they could not sing by reason of their sorrow, she exclaimed, "Sing still louder that I may receive the help of it, for it is very sweet to me." Dying by inches, she said, when one of the sisters touched her feet to see if they were cold, "It is not yet the hour." Shortly after, with a serene countenance, the Chronicle states that this glorious blest soul passed to Heaven, and "associated with the innumerable choir of the saints." How forcibly this reminds us, as Guizot shows, of the story of Angelique Arnauld, the Abbess of Port Royal.—GUIZOT, *Hist. of Civ.*, ii. 130.

† NEANDER, vii. 291.

dreams of approaching judgments, not unreasonably founded on existing corruptions, which, with a masculine courage, she rebuked. In spite, however, of disturbing influences, the developments of mediæval piety were still determined by the Church system, like the form of the clouds sometimes seen on Alpine mountains, maintaining in their outline a resemblance to the peak and the precipice on which they hang, ever faithful to it, in defiance of changing weather and fitful winds.

It is very common to look on monasticism as if it were the creation of the middle ages. Now if any institute of the period was the outgrowth of earlier principles and habits, this certainly was one. Together with the associations noticed, by which it was strengthened or modified, it rested on a basis thoroughly traditional. The monks of the twelfth century could trace their spiritual lineage to the Fathers of the fourth. The orders were not so ancient, but the spirit which animated them was more ancient still, for, as we have seen in Cyprian and Tertullian, it unmistakably appeared in vigorous and promising infancy. Asceticism at first had been social. Men and women were not detached from their fellow creatures. It then affected a habit of individual isolation, and the eremitic type was in high honour with some of the Nicene Christians, though by others it was more justly estimated as next to worthless. The unnatural, however, became modified by the force of nature. The social principle was too strong to be beaten down and totally overcome. It resisted, and asceticism became social again, but it was socialism detached from

secular fellowship. One and the same bond of ascetic sympathy braced together the monks of all ages and climes. The Anglo-Saxon and Norman, the Italian and the Spaniard, the tonsured brethren who issued from their cells on the banks of the Loire or the Danube, and the many fraternities nestled down among the rocks and vineyards of the Rhine and Rhone, all found in the tone of patristic literature, whether of East or West, plenty to feed their unnatural aspirations. And abbots administered, brotherhoods obeyed a traditionary form of government, upon the fundamental principles of which they never thought of innovating. No conservative ever had more reverence for the past. Their conservatism was like that of the scribe in whose copy was found no deviation from the original, save in the omitted dot of the letter *i*.

I do not mean that in degenerate abbeys of later date there were not scenes which would have shocked the founders of monachism, but I am bold to affirm that, as there were very bad monks in the days of Chrysostom and Augustine, so there were also monks in the middle ages that will bear comparison with the very best of the Nicene. Take St. Bernard, of Clairvaux, and place him beside St. Antony—the faith and devotion of the latter, most persons will think, were immensely surpassed by those qualities in Bernard, while, as to sound divinity, the latter was immeasurably superior. And whatever his ascetic extravagances might be, they appear moderate and reasonable when compared with those of his predecessor.



Read Athanasius' \* memoirs of Antony, or the abridged account by Sozomen, † and you have a picture of abject drivelling superstition, more contemptible than anything attributed to St. Bernard by his biographers. Or take Paul the Hermit, described by Jerome and Nilus—the monk, whose portraiture is given by one of his loving scholars. ‡ Every reader of their lives must see that, though both were ascetics, with virtues and infirmities of the same generic order, the hero of the illustrious Latin doctor was inferior to him whom an obscure scribe has represented to posterity. Indeed, one is doing dishonour to Nilus by this comparison, for his love to God and enlightened benevolence often raised him above the bondage of his own system, in a manner to which no resemblance can be traced in the history of his great ascetic ancestor. No such evangelical sentiments are reported of Paul as are attributed to Nilus, and whereas the first was a mighty miracle worker, the latter used very sensibly to say, “Believe me, my friend, I have never asked God to give miraculous gifts of healing, or the power to cast out evil spirits,—may I but attain forgiveness of my numerous sins and deliverance from the evil thoughts which disturb me!” Stories of supernatural wonders are sufficiently numerous in the chronicles and lives of mediæval times, but in point of absurdity they do not exceed those of the fifth and fourth century. §

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\* *Opera*, tom. ii. 793.

† Soz., lib. i. c. xiii.

‡ The mediæval monks were followers of Basil and Gregory rather than Antony and Paul.

§ Such stories are found in the Greek ecclesiastical historians *ad*

The heroes of the earlier date were models for the later. Monkish piety, age after age, went on seeking nourishment from pictures and legends which illustrated the habits of Nicene saints. In the meridian hour of superstition the Pisan Campo Santo only reflected the descriptions of the solitaries sketched by Cassian. And Dante, in his moral system and classification of sins, only followed the same author, the contemporary of Chrysostom. But reverting to the brighter side of both periods, it must be confessed that, amidst clouds of superstition and credulity, there are gleams of true Christian piety, earnest practical benevolence, expressions of humble dependence on Christ, recognitions of grace, clear statements of the uselessness of mere forms, and descriptions of calm, holy, joyful deaths in mediæval biographies, which would do no dishonour to such men as Ambrose and Augustine, if recorded of them.

For example, we hear the good Anscarius, the Apostle of the North, in the ninth century, remarking, "When I was asked if I would go amongst the heathen for the name of God, to preach the Gospel, I dared not shrink from such a call. Yea, with all my strength, I desire to go thither, and no man will make me waver in this pur-

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*nauseam.* For example, St. Dunstan and the Devil form a very favourite subject of ridicule with many people; but turn to SOZOMEN, lib. vi. c. xxviii. There we read of one Apelles, a holy monk who worked as a blacksmith, and being tempted by the Devil, in the shape of a woman, he seized the iron he was heating in his furnace, and burnt the Satanic intruder's face, who howled and fled away. What can surpass the story of the blessed Macarius of the fifth century, whose wife was turned into a mare!

pose.”\* Adalhard, of the same century, is found, in his last hours, lifting his eyes to God, and his hands to heaven, seeking the Holy Spirit, and exclaiming, “What remains but that I come to thee; not as I will, but as thou wilt. Thy will be done.—I depart hence, that I may come to my God—joyful I come, glad to die: happy to pass beyond the gaping pitfalls of this present life—to approach eternal joys long-promised me.”† Iona, quoting from Gregory’s *Morals*, observes, “He who gives his external substance to the needy, but does not at the same time preserve his own life from sin, offers his substance to God and himself to sin; that which is least he gives to his Creator, and what is greatest he keeps for iniquity; he gives his property to God, and he prepares himself for the Devil.”‡ When Adalbert was ordained Bishop of Prague, in the tenth century, he observed, “It is an easy thing to wear the mitre and the cross, but it is a most dreadful circumstance to have an account to give of a bishopric to the Judge of the living and the dead.”§ And, again, when in chains for Christ’s sake, he said to his companions, “My brethren, be not troubled, ye know that we suffer this for the name of the Lord, whose might is above all might, whose beauty surpasses all beauty, whose grace is unspeakable. What

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\* Translation of the second part of NEANDER’S *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Geschichte des christlichen Lebens*, entitled *Light in Dark Places*, p. 280.

† Vita Adal., auct. PASCHASIO.—*Acta Sanctorum Ord. S. Benedicti*, sec. iv. pars i. p. 337.

‡ *De Inst. Laic.*, lib. iii. cap. 10, D’ACHERY *Spic.*, tom. i.

§ BÜTLER’S *Lives of the Saints*, vol. iv. 250.

is there more beautiful than to yield up sweet life for our sweetest Jesus!"\* Nilus used to urge, that orthodoxy without spiritual life would avail nothing—that not being a heretic would not save—that meat commendeth us not to God—that the outward demeanour avails nothing, but the turning of the heart to Christ. "I will not relate great marvels of him," says the monk who writes his life, "by which the ears of the childish and unbelieving might be astonished, but I will relate his toils and labours, for I know that in such things as these the great Apostle gloried."† Elphegus, an Archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh century, cruelly persecuted by the Danes, and by them about to be put to death, thus prayed, "O Lord Jesus, the only-begotten Son of the Father, who, through the womb of a spotless virgin, came into the world to save sinners, receive me in peace, and have mercy on them. Good Shepherd, incomparable Shepherd, look with compassion on the children of thy Church, whom dying, I commend to thee."‡ When Anselm, who lived in the twelfth century, was told on Palm Sunday of his approaching end, he said, "If his will be so, I freely obey. Truly, if it had pleased him that I should remain among you longer, until I had settled

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\* *Light in Dark Places*, 289.

† *Ib.* 296, 306, 308. Here I have lighted on the case of a layman. "Oh, Lord Jesus," exclaimed a youth who was travelling beyond the Moselle and was slain by robbers, "Oh, Lord Jesu Christ, who hast created my soul and redeemed it, I deliver and commend it to Thee, that it may be numbered among the elect of Thy redemption."—*Chron. Mosom. D'ACH. Spic.*, vii. 628.

‡ WHARTON *Anglia Sacra*, ii. 141.

the question which I have so long revolved in my mind, respecting the origin of the soul, I should have been thankful, since I know of no one, when I am gone, likely to settle it." The submission of the Christian mastered the wish of the philosopher, and he calmly died, just after the brotherhood around him had sung, "Ye are they who have remained with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me, that ye should eat and drink at my table in my kingdom."\* "I know in whom I have believed," said the dying abbot Malachias, "and I have believed in God, and all things are possible to him that believeth. I have loved God, I have loved you, and love never faileth."†

Many of the Fathers were spiritual men, and the same may be said of monks and others, whose characters were of the same stamp and based upon the same ideas of excellence. Faith in God, in Christ, and in the hope of

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\* WHARTON *Anglia Sacra*, 173; ANSELM *Opera*, EADMER *de vita Anselmi*, 26. Further illustrations of the piety of the middle ages might be drawn from the hymns composed or used during the period. Several beautiful ones are given in *Das Deutsche Kirchenlied*, parts i. and ii., and in Mr. TRENCH'S *Sacred Latin Poetry*.

† De Vita S. Malachiae, BERNARDI *Opera*, ii. 95. I have given an example of lay piety, I may add one of female piety. Mary of Oignies, it is stated, was most watchful over her heart, that nothing might enter it but Jesus Christ, and what belonged to His love. "I never," says her biographer, "heard her let fall one word that savoured of the spirit of this world, and she seasoned almost every sentence she spoke with the adorable name of Jesus. She and her devout and most affectionate husband gave all their worldly possessions for the relief of the poor, when they first devoted themselves to serve the lepers at Villembroke." —BUTLER'S *Lives of the Saints*, vol. vi. p. 322.

immortality through him, was a sword in their hand with which they wrought victories greater than those which were mythically shadowed in the exploits of the fabulous King Arthur, with his wondrous "*Excalibur*." It was the true "Jerusalem blade," so worthily extolled by Bunyan. Sheath and hilt had a fashion of its own, but the temper of the steel was the same with that which every true warrior pilgrim, before and since, has carried and used.\* Moreover, if, for a moment, we turn to look at the comparative usefulness of some of the earlier and some of the later ascetics, as connected with the present well-being of mankind, surely it must be admitted that the men who were farmers, architects, and scribes, who cut down forests and turned swamps into fruitful fields, who built churches and houses, and copied ancient MSS., transmitting to posterity classical and sacred learning, were vastly better employed than even those, the least useless of the Nicene recluses, who carried on mat and basket manufactures in their miserable settlements, and supplied the Egyptian markets with their rush and wicker wares. And the advantage is infinitely on the side of the mediæval brotherhoods, when we compare with them the hermits and monks panegyriized by St. Ephrem for grazing, like cows, in the pastures of Mesopotamia; or such as idly buried them-

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\* Surely St. Bernard must be counted more *evangelical*, using that word in its now common acceptation, than the great Fathers of the Greek Church, Athanasius and Chrysostom. Yet, in forming this estimate, we must not forget the influence of Augustine and Gregory the Great on the mediæval Latins.

selves among the stone quarries of the Thebaid, making it a cardinal virtue never to lie down; or those singular aspirants who crawled up pillars to stand there for years like idiots, drawing away from the occupations of industrial life hundreds upon hundreds of other idiots, not only to gaze at, but actually to worship them.

#### V. MEDLÆVAL SOCIETY.

It is remarkable to see how the ascetic spirit spread beyond the monastery and tinged the whole religious life of the age. To belong to the Church was to be secluded from the world, and, therefore, it was thought the more people became like monks, the closer they were to Christ—the nearer to Heaven. Hence societies were formed outside the monastery, but in the monastic spirit, for religious and beneficent purposes. Hospitality, visiting the sick, attendance on the ordinances of the Church, the education of the young, and rigid abstinence, were the characteristics of this class. We read of a married couple in the twelfth century who lived on their own little estate near Vienne. They worked hard and lived frugally, and devoted their savings to charitable purposes. They devoted their sons to the Church, but would not accept for them a benefice in advance. Anchorets in the midst of the world, this husband and wife slept on straw, and gave up their better beds to the poor and the wayfaring. A “prophet’s chamber” was set apart for any monk or priest who might visit their dwelling, and whose services, as a religious instructor, were eagerly sought. They were remarkably peaceable

people. Living in peace themselves, they endeavoured to secure the Gospel benediction on the peace-maker.\*

The ascetic spirit penetrated the regal palace, the baronial castle, the burgher's house, and the peasant's hut. It moulded the earnest piety of Elizabeth of Hungary and St. Louis of France—types of the religious spirit of this age, though chronologically belonging to the next. Count St. Gerald of the ninth century presents a character formed from the same cast. He had some thoughts of taking the monastic habit, but was dissuaded by St. Gaubert, Bishop of Cahors, his director, who represented to him that in the station in which God had placed him in the world, he was able to promote the Divine honour to greater advantage in the service of his neighbour, and that he ought to acquit himself of the obligations which he owed to others. Seven years before he died, he lost his sight. In that state of corporal darkness, his soul was employed in contemplating the Divine perfections and the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem, in bewailing his distance from God, and his own spiritual miseries, and those of the whole world, and in imploring the Divine mercy.† Raymand Palmaris, in the twelfth century, a singular specimen of laic-evangelical zeal in humble life, a sort of mediæval city missionary, who collected people in his workshop at Placenza, and talked to them about practical Christianity, also adopted ascetic habits.‡ Perhaps, of all the pious men of the middle ages, our own Alfred

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\* NEANDER, viii. p. 3.

† NEANDER, vi. 233.

‡ NEANDER, viii. 7.



was one of those least affected by the prevalent tendency. Yet I must add, that even in the most ascetic may be recognised something better than asceticism. They were often animated by a spirit of noble unselfishness; they exhibited a vigorous spirit of self-denial and sacrifice; frequently, in connexion with their most grotesque excesses, there shone the brightest virtue and love, kindled by that great Christian law, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." A remarkable phenomenon appears in Switzerland, in certain states of the atmosphere: forms on an Alpine crest are reflected in gigantic proportions on opposite clouds. A man throws over the pile of vapour a monstrous gigantic shadow, in dimensions like the crag on which he stands. Such a phenomenon appears in the moral history of the middle age. Reflections, exaggerated, distorted, caricatured—but still reflections of Christian excellence—were painted on the huge dark mists of superstition which filled the valleys and covered the mountain tops of mediæval Christendom.

There were, even in Roman Catholic Europe, some who protested against certain errors of the predominant church. Such persons were found in the north of Italy and in the south of France. Agobard and Arnulph, both French prelates, denounced certain prevalent corruptions; the former, most likely without being aware of the full application of his principles, even striking at the very root of the system, by maintaining the sole mediation of Christ, and by declaring, with Augustine,

that human writings were to be read, "not with a necessity of believing, but with liberty of judging." He also asserted that to worship images is sacrilege and folly, that churches should not be dedicated to saints or angels, and that neither should relics receive religious honours. Arnulph, in a strain of indignant eloquence, rebuked reigning popes as monsters of iniquity,\* and pronounced any who, destitute of love, occupied the papal throne, as Antichrists sitting in the temple of God; a burst of righteous resentment, however, against individual men, not by any means an enlightened protest against the office they assumed.† Of all the noble minds that opposed existing evils and errors, Claude of Turin was the most eminent for his character, opinions, and influence. A Spaniard by birth, he had much of the free brave spirit of the old Spanish nation and church. Some passages in his writings, referred to by Allix,‡ contain sentiments touching tradition, salvation by faith, and other topics, which, if carried out, would

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\* "Once we had our illustrious Leos, our Gregories the Great. The whole Church, it is true, was willing to submit to the control of such men, so superior to others in knowledge and piety, though the concession of this privilege was opposed by the African Bishops. But now shall it be decreed that to such men as the Popes of our time, monsters of iniquity, ignorant of divine and human learning, unnumbered servants of God, scattered through the world, distinguished by knowledge and piety, shall be compelled to submit? What, Reverend Fathers, do you think of him, who, seated on his lofty throne, glitters in gold and purple? If destitute of love, and inflated only with knowledge, he is Antichrist sitting in the temple of God and showing himself that he is God."—*Act. Syn. Rhem.*, c. 28.

† GIESELER, Period III., Div. ii., § 22.

‡ ALLIX'S *Churches of Piedmont*, chap. ix.

have brought him into thorough antagonism with the whole church system of his age. As it was, he acted the Protestant chiefly in reference to the idolatry of his times. "On coming to Turin," he says, "I found all the church, contrary to the word of truth, full of images and abominations. And because what the people worshipped I began to destroy, they accused me so furiously, that unless God had helped me, they would have swallowed me alive. 'We do not think,' said they, 'that there is anything divine in the image; we only adore it with as much veneration as we have honour for him whom it represents.' To whom I replied, 'that if from the worship of demons they had turned to the images of saints, they had not relinquished idols, but only changed their names. If men be adored at all, it is better to do it when they are living than when they are dead—when they bear the image of God, not when, like the portraitures of beasts, or rather stone and wood, they have neither sense nor reason. If the cross is to be adored because Christ was suspended on it, virgins should be adored because his mother was a virgin, mangers should be adored because he was born in a manger, and swaddling-clothes adored because he was wrapped in swaddling-clothes.'"\* Here was good sense, like that of our reformers, and the pious bishop further protested against the intercession of saints, using as an argument the passage in the 14th chapter of Ezekiel, where the righteousness of Noah, Daniel, and Job is

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\* See passages in GIESELER and ALLIX, Period III., Div. i., § 11.

declared insufficient for the deliverance of son or daughter. Still Claude remained in communion with the Catholic Church of mediæval Christendom, and was attacked only by the pen of theologians, one antagonist, Jonas of Orleans, displaying a moderation that greatly scandalizes Cardinal Baronius.\* It may also be observed that, though French bishops disapproved of Claude's idol-breaking, they had no sympathy with extreme idol-worship.

The purity and devotion, as well as the Christian intelligence of the prelate of Turin, remind us of our own famous rector of Lutterworth, and if the latter surpassed the former in the power of posthumous influence, there can be no doubt that Claude in a measure lived after his death, as well as Wiclif. He has been claimed as the father of the Vaudois Christians. Their antiquity, the similarity of their sentiments to his, and their geographical position, indicate at least some relationship to this eminent reformer before the Reformation. The silence of ecclesiastical historians on the subject before the twelfth century is no conclusive proof of the non-existence of such people till then, while their retired situation among Alpine valleys would account for their remaining unknown, and the majestic scenery of their humble homes, so favourable to boldness and freedom of

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\* AMPÈRE, *Hist. Lit.*, iii. 88. According to Milman, the Abbot Theodemir confessed that most of the great Transalpine prelates thought with Claudius. The historian of *Latin Christianity* attributes the security of Claude to the embarrassments of the Pope Eugenius at that time.—*Latin Christianity*, vol. ii. 339.

thought, together with the tolerant rule of the House of Savoy, under which they lived, would serve to explain the perseverance of their course and the peacefulness of their lot.\* The number of those who attacked ecclesiastical corruptions, and more or less detached themselves from the dominant system, greatly swelled in the twelfth century. Cathari, Paterines, Albigenses, then became notorious and formidable for their multitude and their influence. Bernard speaks of heretics as so common, that a great many churches were without people, and a great many people without priests. The festivals lost their solemnity, and men died without absolution.†

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\* AMPÈRE observes, "It has been thought that we ought to ascribe to the influence of Claude on the diocese of Turin, the origin of the Vaudois Churches of Piedmont. The conjecture is not improbable. It is certain, that from that moment, there has always been somewhere an opposition to the Church, a protest against the tendency to materialize Christianity which prevailed in the middle age. One sees how this uninterrupted series of resistances, which were consummated in Huss and Luther, may be traced back to the iconoclasm of Bishop Claude, and the Caroline Books." I am aware of the argument of Schmidt against the antiquity of the Vaudois, founded on the silence of history, but as I have hinted, their local position would help to account for that. I cannot look on their own tradition as invented to serve a purpose.

† The following passage appears in a MS. Chronicle of the Abbey of Corvey, written about the beginning of the twelfth century:—"Certain laymen from Swabia, Switzerland, and Bavaria have wished to degrade our religion and the faith of all Latin Christendom. They are deduced from among an ancient race of simple people, who inhabit the Alps, and have always adhered to antiquity. In Swabia, Bavaria, and Northern Italy, there often come Swiss merchants, who have learnt the Bible *memoriter*, and who are averse to the ceremonies of the Church, which they believe to be novelties. They venerate neither images nor the relics of saints. They eat herbs, but rarely meat, some of them never. We call them Manichæans."—PLANTA, *Hist. of Helv. Conf.* i. 179.

It has been a common practice to confound together the mediæval dissentients from Rome, and either to maintain the soundness of their faith and piety in general, or to brand them all as heretics and deceivers. But there are strong reasons to believe that they greatly differed among themselves, some retaining, far more than others did, the doctrines and spirit of the gospel. If into one class an heretical element was infused, if in another political aspirations were predominant, no reasonable doubt can be entertained respecting the devout and fervent evangelical orthodoxy of Peter Waldo and the Waldenses. Anticipating Luther in his conversion—for, like him, he was suddenly impressed by the death of a friend,—he anticipated him further in his chief and characteristic effort. He saw that the grand remedy for existing evils was a return to Scripture. The immortal labour of his life—that which leads us to rank him with the greatest reformers of after times—proceeded upon the principle, long forgotten, that actual Christianity is to be tested by comparison with the Divine ideal, and that men are to make the comparison for themselves, by an earnest study of the Bible. Waldo procured a vernacular translation, and had it circulated as widely as possible.\* Before his time (the twelfth century) the word of God had been a sealed book to the common people, not from any law forbidding its being read, but from the gradual changes in the use of language. The Latin was no longer “*vulgate.*” Words and idioms had

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\* According to a contemporary account, it was made for him by two ecclesiastics.

been engrafted on the Roman stock, making the primitive roots yield an abundance of new and useful fruitage, in the room of the old, which had become forgotten, strange, and dead. A language called the Romance was spoken by the countrymen and neighbours of Waldo, who was a citizen of Lyons, very different from the vernacular spoken in the Roman provinces of Gaul when Jerome made his version. Waldo's Romaunt translation included the four gospels and other divine books, and by circulating these and preaching the word, rather than by attempts at organic revolution or polemic warfare, he created and nourished a spirit which, through a revival of religion,—the only safe impulse to ecclesiastical changes,—came, in the end, to reform the Church and purify theology.

What lay without the Church—taking the word Church in its narrow sense (a common but improper sense), as signifying the clerical and monastic orders? What was the condition of the European mediæval world? What was their relation to each other, and the effect of the first on the last? Though nominally converted from heathenism, Christendom had plenty of heathenism in it still. The worship of Woden disappeared, but faith in the airy spirits of the old popular creed, the elves and fairies

Who dance their ringlets to the whistling wind,

remained, not as a mere poetical sentiment, but as a religious conviction, a practical idea. It ministered to human hopes and fears, it transferred to imaginary

beings those emotions of awe and dependence which are proper only when excited by thoughts of the Supreme. In the same spirit in which people contemplated these famed invisible powers, they attended to forms of religion, receiving Sacraments as charms, disconnecting morality and worship, and going from the altar to commit diabolical crimes. A punctilious observance of rites, and an utter disregard of virtue, were as characteristic of mediæval Europe as of ancient Israel or modern India. Gross licentiousness and vindictive passion, adultery, violence, and murder, were but too common, while feudalism, designed as a check upon social disorders—a rough kind of discipline growing out of the necessities of the times, and in some cases serving its purpose,—did in many instances only aggravate the evil.

There are many heavy charges against the mediæval Church, both for what it neglected and what it did. The indifference of the clergy in general to the gross ignorance around them,—their contentment with only a half conversion of the populace from paganism,—the common absence of sound religious instruction,—the neglect of preaching, or the delivery of sermons consisting mainly of legendary tales,—the want of moral discipline,—forgetfulness of the High Priest in Heaven,—the omitting to exhibit Him as the only hope of the world, through an absorbing conceit of a priesthood on earth,—and, as the root of all the rest, the defectiveness or the utter want of spiritual life in themselves; these are glaring faults in the mediæval churchmen on the nega-



tive side. Bishops and ecclesiastics were shepherds in the sense of folding rather than feeding, ruling than refreshing; the βόσκειν was swallowed up in the ποιμαίνειν; no spiritual nourishment, or next to none, was by many afforded. "They ate the fat, they clothed them with the wool,—they killed them that were fed, but they fed not the flock. The diseased they did not strengthen, neither did they heal that which was sick, neither bound up that which was broken, neither brought again that which was driven away, neither sought that which was lost, but with force and cruelty ruled them."\*

But the negative are surpassed by positive mischiefs, such as the countenance given to superstition, and along with it the allowance conceded to immorality:—superstition, in fact, being the rest of wickedness, and wickedness the breaking loose of superstition. What was a burden to some was a relief to others. According to the word of the Lord by the prophet, "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life." In the fullness of their superstition there were the retention of pagan ceremonies and festivals on the principle of accommodation—the sanction and circulation of ludicrous stories of hoofed devils and long-tailed imps, and of hagiologies elaborated after mythological models—the openly allowed, or only feebly

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\* Ez. xxxiv. 3, 4. See TRENCH'S *Greek Syn.*, 95.

resisted, caricatures of worship, consisting of the feast of Fools, and the feast of Asses, and the like—the deliberate invention of legendary lies, and the cunning tricks of miracle and relic-mongers—representations of saints in Heaven, even the Virgin herself, as delivering criminals, to the encouragement of crime—tales of purgatory, and the employing of such tales for ends vulgar and infamous—and lastly, contributions to the Church system of confession, penance, and absolution, which helped to perfect those instruments of appalling despotism. There were all these, and besides there was the notorious immorality not only of the inferior clergy, but of abbots and bishops, metropolitans and Popes.

On the opposite side, however, over against these grave impeachments, are to be placed facts of another kind. At a time when there was no strong middle class to maintain an equipoise between king and noble, and to hold either or both from totally crushing the peasant and the slave, the Church stepped forward to hold a balance of power—to check kingly despotism on the one hand, and feudal usurpation on the other, and sometimes to shield the scanty rights, and diminish the heavy sufferings of the poor. Nor were Popes and other ecclesiastical dignitaries always wanting as champions of virtue and avengers of wrong. The pride and vindictiveness of monarchs and barons were occasionally subdued by a churchman's threats, and arms supplied by superstition were wielded on the side of humanity and mercy. "The truce of God" was no trifling boon, as, at the ringing of the vesper bell, on the eve of saint's

day or Sabbath, there came a respite from war's alarms, and the lance returned to its rest, and the cottager could lie down in peace. The right of sanctuary, though abused, was sometimes a shelter of justice, when men were often wrongly accused. A still richer blessing appears in the manumission of slaves, and in the lightening of their bondage, when counted, as they were, "those whom Christ had redeemed at a rich price." There were individuals among the clergy who denounced the practice of duelling, and judgment by ordeal. Regard was paid to spiritual wants as well as social evils. Efforts were now and then made to revive and reform the practice of preaching. Bishops and Councils enforced on the clergy the duty of expounding to the people the incarnation, life, and death of Christ, the gift of the Spirit, and the laws of Christian morality, as well as the nature of sacraments. There are mediæval sermons which have in them not only excellent religious maxims of a general kind, but much distinctive Christian truth.\* The monastic school, though but a dim lamp, contributed a little to dispel the surrounding darkness, and now and then it was freshened into a blaze

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\* Among the earnest and spiritual preachers of the earlier middle age, may be mentioned Agobard, Claude, Ariald, Ottfred, Ratherius, Odo, Peter Damiani, Anselm, Bardo, Peter Bishop of Chartres. Peter of Blois (whose letters as well as sermons give such a vivid picture of the ecclesiastical corruption of the twelfth century), and especially Antony of Padua, were powerful preachers in their way. The last was singularly fanciful, but his popularity was prodigious. Neander supplies much information respecting the better order of preaching in the middle ages, in vol. vi., 206, 234, viii. 1—38. NEALE, in his *Mediæval Preachers*, gives a collection of Extracts from Sermons.

by the power of a Charlemagne or the patriotism of an Alfred. The Scriptorium was an ark to carry over the barbaric flood intellectual treasures saved from the old world. The abbey guest-house was famed for its hospitality, opening its wide doors to the weary wayfarer at nightfall. The farms and gardens of the monastery were nurseries for husbandry and horticulture, making, as old chronicles say, "the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose." In the cell, the hooded brother, working in wood or metal, "found out many witty inventions." And, added to these methods of civilization, we recognise moral reforms wrought or attempted by earnest individuals; nor can we forget the labours of zealous missionaries in the north of Europe. "The admission," says Gibbon, "of the barbarians into the pale of civil and ecclesiastical society, delivered Europe from the depredations by sea and land of the Normans, the Hungarians, and the Russians, who learned to spare their brethren, and cultivate their possessions. The establishment of law and order was promoted by the influence of the clergy, and the rudiments of art and science were introduced into the savage countries of the globe." Better blessings were carried into those wild regions. The preaching of the Cross taught savages self-denial, revived the virtues of humanity, and told men of the grace and glory of Christ's redemption.

I have tried faithfully to indicate the condition of mediæval society, and the influence of the Church upon it—of the bad and the good there has been abundant

exaggeration.\* Too often exclusive attention has been directed to the one or the other. Looking at both we feel some perplexity. "Can a fountain send forth, at the same place, sweet waters and bitter?" Certainly not at the *same place*. There was more than one well-spring in mediæval times. There was *priestism*, with its magic sacraments, evil, only evil, and that continually,—save as it might be overruled, now and then, for an advantage in the influence it gave a good man for doing good, or as it might, in a few cases, be recognised as the witness of a Divine priesthood. There was *asceticism*, perverting the gracious character of the Gospel, and giving false views of morality,—yet made subservient in

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\* In a remarkable Roman Catholic book on the middle ages called *Catholici Mores*, with abundant exaggerations of the good, there is a careful exclusion of the evil. In another Roman Catholic book, now before me, the Abbé BLANC'S *Cours d'Histoire Eccl.*, the evil is admitted while the good is maintained. Thus he accounts for the two classes of facts. Alluding to the irruption of the barbarians, he says, "Such were the men who appeared all over the old Roman Empire, at the time of which we speak. From their mingling with the ancient races, there arose a new society under the influence of the two principles of energy which then met, faith and barbarism, principles which when united led to the highest point of exaltation. It is in fact from this mixed and fermenting foundation that we see proceeding two modes of action, opposed to each other and leading to the extremes of good and evil. When faith rendered Christian energy predominant, action rose to the heroism of virtue; if, on the contrary, the principle of barbarism predominated, a dreadful energy led to horrors of crime. Such were the middle ages; this double kind of energy which animated them reveals to us what is mysterious in them; and it may be observed in passing, that it is from not bearing this in mind, that we have such exaggerated pictures of this great epoch, pictures without shade, and, still more, full of dark iniquitous descriptions."—p. 494.

monkish life to certain incidental benefits. There was *secularism*, blending the Church with the world, more to the injury of the first than the benefit of the second,—though the uniting bond between the spiritual and the temporal afforded a fulcrum, on which, at times, a lever might be placed to get rid of an evil, or to help over a good. Thus, the corruptions of Christianity might be overruled for the advantage of mankind, through the wonder-working power of Providence, but it should be most carefully noticed, that the good connected with the principles in question was incidental—not the natural and proper fruit, only an ingraft from a better stock. Their essential tendency was mischievous, because their inward nature was false. The distinguishing character of mediæval priestism, asceticism, and secularism, I repeat, was false. But I would not forget the words of Jerome, that “if there be a woe against those who call evil good, there is also a woe against those who call good, evil.”

There was something besides this falsehood, not *in the Church system*, taken *per se*, and carefully analysed—all foreign ingredients being withdrawn, yet *in Christendom* or rather associated with it. While from some places came forth bitter water, from one place there came “sweet water.” True religion never perished—true religion, as distinguished from the Church, from its worship, from its theology—true religion, that is spiritual life,—faith in the invisible realities of the eternal world,—faith in the Son of God, as a Divine, glorious, unchangeable person, the Redeemer and Lord of souls, who washed us from our sins in his own blood—faith in God’s truth and

righteousness—faith in that “love which hath its deep foundations set under the graves of things;” there was that. It was born, nourished, and sustained by the truths of Christ’s Divinity, incarnation, and redemption, which, in spite of corruptions, the Church ever retained. It was born of that gracious Spirit, who, though neglected and dishonoured by so many, never forsook mankind, but, by methods of mysterious love, quickened the dead. It was “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Actual Christianity, in the mediæval age, had in it enough of truth and life to give it a title to the name it bore. It was the evangelical faith remaining in Christendom which accomplished the good we love to trace, and overruled the evil. It was this that inspired all that was strong in the piety, pure in the devotion, noble in the self-denial, and God-like in the benevolence of mediæval saints.

I cannot regard that age under an unmitigated aspect of gloom and wretchedness. I have no sympathy with those who look on it as utterly abandoned, God-forsaken. I am compelled, if I open my eyes, to see in it something more than papal tyranny and the worship of images, juggling priests and deluded multitudes. I see lights in the darkness, truth amidst errors, goodness struggling with evil, and Christ reigning over all.

Yet let me distinctly state that, on the other hand, I cannot adopt the language of those who speak of the mediæval era as a kind of intermediate dispensation; who called it a “Judaism clarified,” “penetrated by

Christianity," or a Christianity in the form of Judaism, which furnished "a transition point for the rude converts before their acceptance of Christianity in the form and essence of its own pure and glorious character." Such language seems to me to convey the idea that the system had a sort of Divine sanction, that it came with authority; for the worth of Judaism, as a transitive religion, was derived from the fact of its being divinely sanctioned and authorized. Now, we know that the mediæval system was, in its distinctive principles, opposed to the express teaching of Heaven. It was a departure from the Divine ideal. Judaism was an inspired advance on patriarchal principles and institutes. It had in it more of grace and of Christ. But mediævalism, viewed at the best as an assimilation to Judaism, was a going back, not forward. It was the twilight, not of the morning, but of the eventide: not before day and leading to it, but after day, departing from it. It gave a retrograde movement to those chariot wheels which were never meant to roll backward.



## LECTURE XII.

FIFTH PERIOD.—A.D. 1215—1520.

### AGITATION AND REACTION.

THE history of actual Christianity has now been traced down to the commencement of the thirteenth century. Christianity had become a traditional system, based upon principles involved in earlier developments. The ideal, confounded with the actual, had ceased to have the authority proper to it, though its spirit, penetrating with Divine energy through the confusions of human thought, had all along widely operated upon society for its improvement, and upon individuals for their salvation. The evil and the good were handed over to the age which in this Lecture requires review.

The age opens with the fourth Council of Lateran. By its decrees upon transubstantiation and auricular confession, that council gave some final touches to the ecclesiastical fabric, but these final touches proved most mischievous to the work of ages. The sanction it gave to indulgences had the same effect. For here were three points prominently and tangibly brought out, which served afterwards to attract the keen attention of Protestant reformers—points the earliest to fall under their destructive criticism. To elaborate a false system

prepares for its overthrow. Truth will bear the fullest development. Error will not.

The place which the Lateran Council holds in ecclesiastical history will be ill understood, if attention be confined to its famous decrees. It was not a mere theological conclave, as those decrees might seem to indicate; it was in reality an assembly of rulers to consider the condition of Christendom, which was beginning to rock under them. The Church was in danger. Sectaries were increasing. Abuses within were felt to strengthen their cause who were fighting from without. The archbishops, bishops, and abbots, who wended their way, by the foot of the Cœlian, to the magnificent Basilica of St. John, at Rome, were men who saw that some reform was needed. Innocent III. had pressed it upon them in his letters of indiction. The idea was developed in his curious sermon from the text, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover." It was divided into the consideration of three passovers—the temporal, the spiritual, and the eternal. The temporal, he said, was passing into the Holy Land. It was being fulfilled in the Crusades. The spiritual was the passing into an improved ecclesiastical state. It was to be realized by reform. The eternal was the passing into the glories of Heaven. It belonged to the world to come. The second division of the sermon included an attack on heretics and an exposure of church corruption. Referring to the latter, "'Tis this," exclaims the pontiff, "that overthrows the faith, disfigures religion, destroys liberty, treads justice underfoot, increases the number of heretics, makes the

schismatics insolent, the infidels proud, and the Saracens powerful."\* Innocent's sermon was a confession of want. The consciousness of it went on deepening, now and then checked. The true remedy could come only through the destruction of the system which it was the object of the council to uphold. That destruction came at last, so far as a large portion of Europe was concerned—came by the hand of Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, Knox. Its coming is the boundary line of our present investigations.

The year of this fourth Lateran council (1215) is a memorable year to us Englishmen. While prelates were discussing profound questions of doctrine and policy on the banks of the Tiber, the Barons of England were discussing some other questions on the banks of the Thames, and the men of mail on the greensward of Runnymede, and the mitred men in the marble church of the Lateran, were both preparing, but in different ways, for the fulfilment of God's behest. More than three centuries were to pass ere the gross falsehoods of Rome should receive their full and righteous exposure, and the Divine Magna Charta be conceded to mankind; before the sale of indulgences should rouse a Luther, and the ignorance of his country and the art of printing inspire a Tyndale; but yet priest and warrior were under the overruling hand of Him who brings good out of evil, and also makes our civil rights the nurses of our spiritual freedom.

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\* Thus DUPIN,—Thirteenth century, p. 95,—describes the sermon. I have not been able to consult the original.

The council of Lateran was a beginning, as well as an end. It commenced a new epoch, as it finished an old one. And so of the Reformation. It gathered up the results of three hundred years, while it poured forth a tide of power flowing still. The age now before us reached its culminating point when Luther burnt the pope's bull at Wittenberg. All we are about to notice will be found bearing, in some way, on that consummation. There, in that bull-burning, was a real and true reform—the Lateran Fathers had visions only of a reform which was fantastic and false. What came between the fantastic and false and the real and true, historically connecting both, will now detain us for a while.

The whole period was one of agitation. It broke out with violence at the commencement. The thirteenth century must be marked off from the previous ages of darkness and slumber, which, however, were at no time so deep as the proudly wide-awake of the present day are apt to fancy. The spell, though potent, had never taken entire effect. The light could not be wholly excluded—glimmerings of day stole into the cave—reason refused to be bound. The enchantment began dissolving before it was wholly past; victims recovered strength enough to move with uncouth gesture. Some threw themselves into extravagant attitudes and shapes; a few even wholly shook off the incantation, and walked calmly forth to assail the great magician—to seek and break his staff—to

Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound  
To drown his Book.

There were causes in operation before the thirteenth century to produce the movement so manifest at that period. Feudalism, I apprehend, must be reckoned among them. If it was a form of slavery, it was also a form of freedom. The tower of rude masonry cresting the rock, overhanging the river, defying the storm, repelling the foe, embodied the idea of independent will and resolution—an idea which lay at the root of this social system—the strongest, for a time, next to the Church, and, like the Church, strangely blending good and evil. And, in what the want of a peaceful administration of justice created, namely, in judicial combats, in the appeal to the sword, the last resource of the injured, the right of individual resistance was recognised. Each man in that way took the law into his hands, and fought out his quarrels. Thus the system, amidst the evils it failed to subdue, and, in some cases, served to aggravate, encouraged the growth of a manly, indomitable will, the will to stand alone, the will to resist injustice, the will to protect itself against oppression. And it is remarkable that, where the feudal principle and spirit had the strongest hold, there the reformation of the fifteenth century was most welcome—France, England, Germany.

The crusades helped to break up the feudal system, but, though antagonistic to its forms of suzerainty, they were not alien from its spirit of independence; they were not the device of crafty churchmen, but the hot outbursts of religious enthusiasm, throbbing in the hearts of multitudes. They took their rise in earnest fanaticism more

than in priestcraft, in policy, or in military ambition. Sentiments tore through conventional restraints, and took a form of heroic resistance against Mussulman wrong. The absence of vulgar selfishness was seen in the merchant men of Pisa, who freighted their home-bound vessels not with gold, and gems, and weapons of war, but with cargoes of earth from the valley of Jehoshaphat, to cover the soil of their cloistered Campo Santo. The end of all things was supposed to be at hand; the apprehension of Christ's speedy coming,—which had never died, but from age to age revived with fresh power,\*—once more took hold, with awful grasp, on the heart of European Christendom. The judgment-seat and the mysteries of eternity, under distorted forms, rose fearfully before men's eyes. The crusading impulse was most agitating, and affected the state of Europe to a far broader extent than was covered by the simple question between the red-cross knight and the Moslem.

Then the growing nationalities of Europe, the distinct, organized, compact form which kingdoms were beginning to take—the growth of parliaments, diets, cortes—the creation of a third estate, the appearance of commons, the emancipation of serfs,—the assertion of independence by Italian republics,—the concession of charters to transalpine cities,—and the formation of corporations and guilds, which, while efforts at fraternity, while sinking rivalries in brotherhood and in common

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\* It was a curious belief in France that the world would only end with the French monarchy. The last king would lay down his crown on the Mount of Olives.—AMPÈRE *Hist. Lit.*, iii. 276.

endeavours to promote trade and perfect art, involved aspirations after equality and liberty,—these were all swelling the flood of social excitement, and were all tending in one direction. They were subservient to the education of a bold individuality of character,—they indicated the existence of the germs of it. The tendency of feudalism and the crusades—of parliaments, republics, and boroughs, here meet; and in a bold individuality of character, at the bottom of the agitations and reactions to be noticed, we discover the spirit of this transitional age. The social tendencies were in keeping with the individual tendencies. Men were combining, fraternizing, feeling the power of natural and national bonds, standing on common ground, aiming at common ends; and a growing sense of individuality really served to strengthen such socialism, for sympathies are nourished by a sense of responsibility; association becomes more desired as the individual is felt to be more precious.

A spirit of individuality, so prominent in the thirteenth century, is more or less so during the following ones. Chivalry, born of feudalism, was animated by the spirit of its sire. Commerce, nursed in the free city, made the merchant prince even more independent than the feudal baron. These forms of social life play a conspicuous part in the story of the fourteenth century, under our first three Edwards, and under the French House of Valois. The next century appears, socially, in very unfavourable comparison, as reflected in the history of the battles of the Roses, and from the pages of Philip de Comines—the one showing a war of mere faction, the

other revealing the intrigues of a hollow and base diplomacy. The years just before the Reformation were least hopeful; the hour before Rome's downfall least portentous. The false security of the fifth Lateran Council contrasts with the consciousness of danger in the fourth. But so it is. Sodom knew not when her hour was come. "The sun was risen when Lot entered into Zoar."

I shall gather my illustrations of the spirit of the age from the history of Popes and Kings,—of Mendicants,—of Scholasticism,—of Art,—of Sects,—of the one great individual Reformer,—of the Revival of ancient Literature,—and of the ultimate grand application of the pure Divine ideal of Christianity to the corrupt human realization. Their history affords many illustrations of the agitation and reaction which characterized the period.

### I. OF POPES AND KINGS.

"The noonday of papal dominion," observes Mr. Hallam, "extends from the pontificate of Innocent III., inclusively, to that of Boniface VIII., or, in other words, throughout the thirteenth century." Perhaps, the period might be more aptly called the afternoon. The heat continued, but the zenith of the day was passed after Innocent III. was gone. The termination of the conflict between Boniface VIII. and Philip of France, was very different from the issue of the conflict respecting investitures between Gregory VII. and Henry IV. The change that had come over the times, more than the characters of the antagonists, will account for the difference. The



aspirations of Gregory had been in unison with the most earnest portion of the mind of Christendom; but the mind of Christendom was undergoing a transition when Boniface wore the tiara, and public opinion was not with him as it had been with his predecessor.\* The retrocession commenced with the end of the third Innocent's pontificate. Boniface sought to restore to the papal chair the magnificence shed round it by Gregory. But, though he made great pretensions, held an imposing jubilee in 1300, assumed the imperial dress, and had carried before him the temporal as well as the spiritual sword, all this only proved his ambition; and though it be true that there were crowds of pilgrims at the altar of St. Peter, and the gold and silver contributed by them were literally raked up in heaps: yet that influx and those offerings would seem to have come from the excited religious enthusiasm of the times, bent upon seeking individual salvation by superstitious methods, rather than from loyalty to the pope, as the temporal and spiritual master of the world. But not to insist on an earlier decline, however it might be up to the reign of Boniface VIII., the decline afterwards is indisputable, agitation and reaction in the ecclesiastico-political world were manifest. The dependence of the papal see on the

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\* There was a strong feeling of dissatisfaction with the papacy even as early as the reign of Pope Adrian IV. John of Salisbury plainly told His Holiness that the Church of Rome was called by many not so much the mother as the step-dame of the Churches—that her priests were like the Pharisees, laying heavy burdens on the people—that anything she had might be bought with money, but not obtained without. The whole conversation is remarkable.—*Policraticon*, l. vi. c. xxiv.

patronage of France, during the seventy years' captivity at Avignon, and the forced employment of spiritual weapons against the enemies of France, at the bidding of its king, showed how far the popes had actually descended from the heights occupied by Hildebrand.\* All the splendour of the papal court on the banks of the Rhone, all the gay revelries of bishop and prince, and knight and lady, which echoed through the halls of the old palace at Avignon, all the luxury which aroused the indignation of Petrarch, and grieved the nobleness of Rienzi, was but tapestry on a prison-wall, enamel on a captive's chain: at the same time, the spell which arose from the association of the papacy with the Eternal City was broken; nor did the enthusiastic struggles of Rienzi to restore a republic fail for a time to weaken pontifical influence. Expedients for replenishing the drained

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\* The second and famous Avignon Pope John XXII. was accused by Philip VI. with heresy for having maintained that the Saints would not enjoy the Beatific Vision till after the resurrection; will not see the Divine face or essence till then, but only behold the Divine in the human nature of Christ. The theological faculty of France at the instance of the king condemned the Pope. It has been justly observed, "No circumstance, perhaps, offers a more remarkable spectacle to us in its contrast with the spirit of our own times. At the present moment, when the Pope could not sit for a day in safety on his temporal throne without the defence of French or Austrian bayonets, we can scarcely conceive an Emperor of France or Austria taking upon himself to convene an assembly of Catholic theologians, and the latter pronouncing a censure on the dogmas propounded by the Head of the Church. It would be hard to say whether the sovereigns of the present day would be more amused by the absurdity of devoting their time to such discussions, or the consciences of good Catholics more shocked at the presumption of such an edict."—Int. to *Theologia Germanica*, p. xxviii. Bernard in his second sermon on *The Feast of All Saints*, and still more plainly in the fourth *De Sinu Abrahamæ*, expresses what looks like the same sentiment.—*Opera*, t. ii. 415.

coffers of the see were dearly paid for by provoking the displeasure of foreign countries. When Christendom witnessed the spectacle of two rival popes, and the council of Pisa, in 1409, instead of healing, really aggravated the schism; and when there appeared three claimants to the tiara, the inevitable effect was to lower the papacy in the eyes of all Europe. The Guelf and Ghibelin quarrels which distracted Germany and Italy from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, still further affected the interests of Rome, though the parties really were distinguished by no definite principles, political or ecclesiastical. A mere faction at first, arising out of a rivalry for the imperial sceptre, the Ghibelins became at length the supporters of imperial authority against the Guelfs, who were espoused and employed by the pope as instruments for maintaining the papal ascendancy. The Ghibelins, though Catholics, were enemies to the pretensions of the papacy, to its temporal aggressions, and to its spiritual despotism; also they were not a little scandalized by the corruptions of the Roman court, employed in intrigues against themselves. So far as they had a fixed political design, it was perilous to the papal power, for it was to unite Italy, broken into petty kingdoms, feeble states, and independent cities, to place it under one sceptre, to construct out of it a great commonwealth. Politically and ecclesiastically, the Ghibelins came to be the antagonists of Rome, and Dante and Petrarch, sympathizing with the greatest talent and genius which Italy possessed, became arrayed against the tyrannical extravagance, and the moral

pollution of the pope and his ministers. A large body of men, including all ranks (some have described them as a secret society, having peculiar and symbolical methods of intercommunication), was thus united in formidable opposition, and some of them dealt heavy blows at their enemies. It was a conspiracy vast and redoubtable. It included liberal thinkers at Florence, Venice, Pisa, Milan, and even Rome itself. At the court of princes, in the banquets of burgesses, and among the people at large, Ghibelin poets turned into raillery the pomp of cardinals and the ceremonies of the Church.\*

In the fifteenth century, the demand for reform was too loud to be refused. The spirit of the old Lateran Fathers revived. It was now of keener vision and broader grasp.

At the Council of Constance, the question was, "Whether the polity of the Catholic Church should be an absolute, or an exceedingly limited monarchy?" A grand question that, most perilous to Rome. There was some real work attempted at Constance. Councils were declared to be above Popes, and a Committee was appointed to look into abuses. The crisis seemed coming—seemed just at hand; but intrigue deferred it for a while. The Council of Constance was the first in which votes were given by nations—a method symbolical of the growing spirit of national individuality of which Rome is the mortal foe. That spirit, often weak, had never died in France or England. It was now, to use Miltonic words, "mewing its mighty youth,"

\* *Etudes sur le Moyen Age*, par CHASLES—p. 320.

“shaking its locks,” “purging its eyes.” The Council of Basle went beyond the Council of Constance, and overshot the mark. Summoned to Florence by the Pope, some of the Fathers, convened in the old church on the Rhine bank, would not heed the mandate. A Council on one side of the Alps was in conflict with a Council on the other, defying the assembly at Florence. The men at Basle deposed the Pope, an act of temerity for which the age was not ripe; but the very act showed the age was ripening for some very bold thing. John XXIII. excited universal disgust by his vices; his successors were little calculated to recover the blasted reputation of the papal name. Alexander VI. was a specimen of badness such as in this bad world is rarely seen. The monster had hardly a parallel except in his son. Constitutions of Clarendon, pragmatic sanctions, statutes of provisors and premunire, together with Venetian resistances, were successive breakwaters against papal tyranny, which showed how even devoted sons of the Church feared the swelling of the flood.\*

This rapid review of the history of the Papacy in its political relations between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, indicates the prevalence of agitation throughout Christendom, and the growth of a strong reaction against the despotism of Rome.

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\* Look, in connexion with this, at the following passage from the Introduction to LOCKHART'S *Spanish Ballads*. “The civil liberty of the old Spaniards could scarcely have existed so long as it did in the presence of any feeling so black and noisome as the bigotry of modern Spain; but this was never tried, for down to the time of Charles V. no man

## II. OF THE MENDICANTS.

The history of the Mendicants illustrates the agitated spirit of the age, in connexion with asceticism, as well as in connexion with the Papacy. The Mendicant orders became supports of the latter, but they were not created by it. They did not arise out of deep plans laid by Popes and cardinals. Innocent III. was averse to the institution of new orders. At the fourth Council of Lateran, they were expressly forbidden. In vain, at first, did Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscans, apply to His Holiness for the sanction of his plan. Nothing short of a revelation from Heaven could persuade the pontiff. He dreamt, so runs the legend,—it is inscribed on the Leonine portico of St. John Lateran,—that this church—the mother church of the whole world—was falling, when the friar of Assisi approached

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has any right to say that the Spaniards were a bigoted people. One of the worst features of their modern bigotry—their extreme and servile subjection to the authority of the Pope—is entirely wanting in the picture of their ancient spirit. In the twelfth century the Kings of Arragon were the protectors of the Albigenses, and their Pedro II. himself died in 1213, fighting bravely against the red cross for the cause of tolerance. In 1268, two brothers of the King of Castile left the banners of the Infidels, beneath which they were serving at Tunis, with eight hundred Castilian gentlemen, for the purpose of coming to Italy and assisting the Neapolitans in their resistance to the tyranny of the Pope and Charles of Anjou. In the great Schism of the West, as it is called, (1378,) Pedro the Fourth embraced the party which the Catholic Church regard as schismatic. That feud was not allayed for more than a hundred years, and Alphonso V. was well paid for consenting to lay it aside, while down to the time of Charles V. the whole of the Neapolitan Princes of the House of Arragon may be said to

and sustained it on his strong shoulders.\* Innocent had, the night before, seen a palm-tree spring out of the earth between his feet—a feeble plant, which soon became a great tree. His mind, through celestial illumination, it is said, recognised in it the emblem of the man whose zeal he had discouraged.

The wonderful palm was certainly no bad figure of the wonderful Order, nor was the timely succour to the shaken edifice an inappropriate illustration of the assistance yielded by Francis to the Papal Church. The

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have lived in a state of open enmity against the Papal See, sometimes excommunicated for generations together—seldom, apparently never, cordially reconciled. When, finally, Ferdinand the Catholic made his first attempt to introduce the Inquisition into his kingdom, almost the whole nation took up arms to resist him. The Grand Inquisitor was killed, and every one of his creatures was compelled to leave, for a season, the yet free soil of Arragon. But the strongest and best proof of the comparative liberality of the old Spaniards is . . . to be found in their ballads. Throughout the far greater part of those compositions there breathes a certain spirit of charity and humanity towards those Moorish enemies with whom the combats of the national heroes are represented."

\* I give a copy of that part of the inscription which relates to the dream; and, as I record it, well do I remember my impressions on the spot, as I stood by the portico and there looked on the matchless prospect of Pagan and Papal Rome.

Tertius Ecclesiæ pater Innocentius horâ,  
 Quâ sese dederat somno, nutare ruinâ,  
 Hanc videt ecclesiam, mox vir pannosus et asper  
 Despectusque humerum supponens, sustinet illam.  
 At pater evigilans Franciscum prospicit, atque  
 Vere est hic (inquit) quem vidimus, iste ruentem  
 Ecclesiamque fidemque feret—sic ille petitis  
 Cunctis concessis, liber lætusque recessit.

Anno Dom. 1294, pont. iii.

The story is given by BONAVENTURA. *Vita S. Franc.*, l. i. c. iii.

dreams of Innocent were most likely dreamt for him, but they are significant of the fact that the origin of the Franciscan order was not a mere stroke of Papal policy, whatever its subsequent employment might be. According to the biographers of Innocent, he was no more favourable at first to Dominic than to Francis. He wished him to unite with some existing community; but in this case, a dream of the friar determined the course to be taken by the Pope. The Mendicants, including Franciscans and Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustines, adopted the common monkish vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which they interpreted in the strictest sense; but the grand distinction of the two great founders was, that they conceived themselves charged with a religious mission to the world. They were not to be mere recluses, mere ascetics, nor were their energies to be expended in cultivating farms or writing books. They were to attempt what was newer and higher. They were to mingle with mankind—to dwell in the city—to penetrate into the village—to visit the poor man's cottage and the rich man's castle—to aid in preserving the faithful within the fold, and to recover the many who, under the name of heretics, were straying far beyond its enclosure. To establish, to convert, to reclaim,—these were the ends of their mission. The Dominicans were most known as orators, placing their portable pulpit at the corner of the street. The Franciscans made their presence felt in the sick chamber, and by the quiet fireside. The one class were the open-air preachers, the other, the city missionaries of their age.



Another peculiarity, which showed the breadth of that sympathy with mankind at large which was loosening the trammels of the old-fashioned monasticism, consisted in the admission to the community of what was called the tertiary order. It was composed of persons not bound by any vow, not required to quit their secular occupations, but only pledged to the renunciation of guilty pleasures, and the culture of social morality as then understood. We saw this spirit growing up in a former age, a diffused, unsettled element; here we have it organized and brought into a fixed relation to the great world of ascetic Christendom.

A double feeling prompted the Mendicant movement. First, the consciousness that the Church was shaken and wanted buttresses, that it was defiled, and needed to be swept and garnished; and next, the consciousness that asceticism was, in itself, an insufficient end, that it ought to be employed as the means to higher ends. The more we study the story of Francis and Dominic, the more we see a difference between them and the reformer Bernard, or the founder Benedict. Benedict repressed some of the extravagances of primitive asceticism, and grafted upon them some useful purposes; Bernard corrected its abuses on the side of dissoluteness; but neither of them applied the institute on any systematic principle, as an auxiliary to the Church, for meeting the spiritual wants of society. Nor did they conceive of that definite outer circle of members which so much increased the influence of the Mendicants, and so widely enlarged their sphere of activity, while it recommended itself, no

doubt, to the religious feeling of many from the semblance, but too shadowy, which it bore to that congregational life, of which the corrupt realization of Christianity had robbed mankind. This accession to the ecclesiastical army of a large voluntary corps, this reform of the old ascetic system which its discipline involved, betokened the spirit of agitation which was stirring the whole social world. That same spirit affords an explanation of the wonderful success which attended the enterprise. The five thousand disciples of St. Francis, within ten years after his death, and the equally marvellous multiplication of Dominic's preaching friars, can be accounted for only on the principle that the men who called them forth represented the spirit of the times in which they lived. There was a universal dissatisfaction with things as they were. A sore feeling of disquietude prevailed, an apprehension of danger, a craving after deliverance. The appreciation of the want was anything but enlightened, the way of meeting it a poor expedient. Not a supplement to existing organizations, but a revision of the whole ecclesiastical economy, was demanded by events. Not the patching of new cloth on the old garment, and the putting of new wine into old bottles, but a grand regeneration of the Church, in which old things should pass away, and all things become new. Yet still the Mendicant orders had under their searching gaze social and religious necessities, pressing and painful. Neither shrewd policy nor blind fanaticism roused them to their task. An emergency was confessed, and the demand created the supply, such as it was.

Moreover, in the work of Francis and Dominic, the force of a bold individuality of action is seen. Two pale, haggard, mortified, but strong-willed men rise up to change the purpose of a Pope, to carry princes in their train, to make an imperious hierarchy their debtors, and to move the world, not without blessing it for a time; for it cannot be denied that there is truth in the words of an eloquent writer, that "in an age of oligarchical tyranny, they were protectors of the weak, in an age of ignorance, the instructors of mankind, and in an age of profligacy, the stern vindicators of the holiness of the sacerdotal character and the virtues of domestic life."\* But such an eulogium must be confined to the earliest part of the history of the Mendicants. They soon turned their mendicity into the means of winning wealth, and the most successful of beggars became the proudest and idlest of churchmen. The good Grosteste, Bishop of Lincoln, welcomed them at first, but condemned them afterwards. And deeply had they fallen below the spirit of their founders when Wicliffe, with honest eloquence, denounced the unholy deeds of the "Frères." The magnificent convents of the Black Friars, and the Grey Friars, in London, in the fifteenth century, were a sufficient proof of the change which had come over them since the beginning of the thirteenth. They shared in the corruptions, and adopted the vices, of those older monks whom, in the first days of rivalry, they unsparingly attacked and highly exasperated.

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\* Sir JAMES STEPHEN, *Ecclesiastical Sketches*.

Unfaithful to their mission, they in the end increased the evils which they had first striven to diminish. They mourned over the spiritual gloom and coldness of Christendom, and then helped to quench the few sparks of fire left. Their own history was a transition from excitement to death. Asceticism, with all its revivals and reforms, is seen, throughout its history, leading to insensibility or corruption, or to both. It is a region encircling spiritual graves with broad pathways leading to them.

“When I visited the Carthusian Monastery of Grenoble,” says Chateaubriand, “I crossed a desert region which grew every moment more desolate. I thought it would terminate at the monastery; but within the walls I found the gardens of the monks looking even more deserted than the regions around. At last, in the centre of the building, enveloped, as it were, in the folds of all this solitude, I came upon the ancient cemetery of the Cenobites—a sanctuary from which eternal silence, the divinity of the place, extended its sway over the neighbouring mountains and forests.”

The Frenchman's description is a typical picture. It reminds us of what is enveloped in all monachism and mendicantism.

The characters of Dominic and Francis are interesting psychological phenomena: they are neither to be dismissed with a sneer nor understood at a glance. The idiosyncrasies of the men, the influence of the Church system under the phase it then assumed, and the power of that truth which still remained in the Romish Church,

must all be carefully considered together before we can form a righteous judgment of what these remarkable persons really were. It is difficult to say, with regard to some statements respecting them, how much belongs to the extravagance of the hero and how much to the imagination of the biographer, whether myths are not mingled with facts, and where the latter end and the former commence. But there is enough perfectly reliable to show that each was of a very different stamp from the other. Dante calls the one "seraphic all in fervency," the other "splendour of cherubic light." With deference to such an authority, we may more appropriately apply to them, in distinction, what holier words express in common—"wise as serpents, harmless as doves." Attributes so precious together were divided between Dominic and Francis. *This* man had much of the dove, and *that* man much of the serpent. In old pictures Dominic is seen with a cross and a bloodhound, Francis with a cross and a lamb. A calm sternness formed the temperament of Dominic. The Church system working on such a disposition made him a rigid ritualist and a persecuting bigot. He invented the rosary,\* he founded the Inquisition.

Then with sage doctrine and good will to help,  
 Forth on his great apostleship he fared,  
 Like torrent bursting from a lofty vein,  
 And dashing 'gainst the rocks of heresy,

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\* There was an anticipation of Dominic's rosary in Paul's pebbles, mentioned by Sozomen. He says, "the hermit carried three hundred in his bosom, and at the conclusion of each of his daily three hundred prayers, threw away a pebble."—SOZOMEN *Hist.*, lib. vi. c. xxix.

Smote fiercest where resistance was most stout.  
Thence many rivulets have since been turn'd  
Over the garden Catholic, to lead  
Their living waters, and have fed its plants.

The establishment of the Inquisition throws the darkest of shadows over the name of Dominic. The age was beginning to throb with a desire for freedom of conscience. Dominic saw in it only what one-sided priestly spirits have ever seen in it, rebellion against their idolized Church, that Church being blindly identified by them as the bride of Christ; and he put forth all his strength to crush the good, which he mistook for evil. He had just the spirit of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion, thinking, while he breathed threatening and slaughter, that he was doing God service. In his case we see the terrible influence, in a stern, resolute mind, of the mediæval system, when reformed according to the notions of the age; how it inspired such a mind with the spirit of the bloodhound instead of the lamb, and made a destructive torrent out of what might have been a fertilizing river.

Francis of Assisi was no doubt insane, a man of feverish temperament and diseased brain, wrought into harmless frenzy by religious impulses, sometimes pure, sometimes superstitious. So far he was a representative of many. Out of the madhouse, and in it, there are plenty of men and women of spiritual kinship with this gentle and loving friar, the sport of wild and beautiful fancies. One cannot severely reprove the delusion of Francis, that birds and beasts had souls to be

saved, it excites a smile rather than a frown, and none who have any poetry in them but will delight to follow him "over those Umbrian mountains, from Assisi to Subbio, singing, with a loud voice, hymns (*alla Francese*, as the old legend expresses it, whatever that may mean) and praising God for all things, for the day and for the night, for his mother the earth, and for his sister the moon, for the winds which blew in his face, for the pure, precious water, and for the jocund fire, for the flowers under his feet, and for the stars above his head, saluting and blessing all creatures, whether animate or inanimate, as his brethren and sisters in the Lord."\*

With regard to the stigmata, or wounds of Christ, said to be miraculously impressed upon the person of Francis, there can be little doubt that these marks were real, but stamped by no seraph hand, as the poor enthusiast fondly believed. Of that imposture Francis was not the author, but the victim, while, at the same time, we discover in his life the most ecstatic expressions of devotion to his redeeming Lord. He delighted much in using the old Ignatian words, "my love is crucified,"† now the burden of a Wesleyan hymn. Tears were his meat day and night, as he dwelt in love and sorrow on the sufferings of Jesus; and he died with the beautiful words on his lips, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name."

The effect of the Church system on Francis seems to

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\* Mrs. JAMESON'S *Legends of the Monastic Orders*, p. 241.

† IGN., *Ep. ad Rom.*, c. vii.

have been to increase the hallucinations of disease by the rigours of asceticism, and to stimulate a superstitious excitement, into which, however, there penetrated a purer influence. Through a distorting medium his devout mind caught daily glimpses of that Divine Person, who had not and never will forsake the children of men whom he has redeemed. And I have thus touched on the character of this singular man not only to show, as in a representative instance, the phenomena produced on a mind like his by the sum of religious influences belonging to the age, but also to call attention to what is no mere mediæval question, that of the place occupied by diseased minds in God's great spiritual universe, their strong susceptibility of religious action for good or evil, and the power there remains in the broken harp-strings to yield plaintive music under a touch from Heaven.

### III.—OF SCHOLASTICISM.

The friars devoted themselves to the study of theology after the scholastic method. The same spirit which led them into the citizen's house and the peasant's cottage, impelled them to take their place in halls of learning. In the twelfth century a professor of philosophy might have been seen, with a crowd of pupils, standing at a church door in the old city of Tournay, far into the night, pointing to the stars,—and Abelard, at Paris, had such crowds flocking to his lectures, that the city was enlarged for their accommodation. A scholastic lecturer as popular then as Paganini or Jenny Lind in our time; metaphysics exciting the multitude like music, is cer-



tainly a fact significant, rather astounding, and totally at variance with certain theories of the intellectual condition of the mediæval age. But whatever might be the thirst for knowledge at an earlier period, it was surpassed in extent, if not in depth, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Bologna and Oxford, as well as Paris, could number their students at tens of thousands. The friars became the foremost of the teachers, the brightest of the ornaments in these schools. The transition from the history of the Mendicants to the literature of the age is very natural.

The meridian glory of scholasticism extended over the thirteenth and part of the fourteenth centuries. Certain of its professors were bringing it into disrepute by their pantheistic speculations, akin to those revived in our own times, when the censure of the University of Paris, in 1204, checked the evil. Though eleven years afterwards, the papal legate prohibited the study of Aristotle, yet the attachment to the great master of logic did not abate, so that in 1231 the pope had to modify the prohibition, and the authority of the Stagyrite rose higher than ever in the schools. The resistance of the Church to the growing spirit of inquiry was useless; and, with characteristic policy, she sought to control what she could not prevent. The friars most earnestly entered into her wishes. The method which had been viewed by many with jealousy, and even aversion, was now sanctioned by the highest ecclesiastical authorities—the use of reason in the study of religion was allowed, and conclusions, which had been reached

by that process, and once rejected on that very ground, were taken up into the recognised system of teaching, now that they had lost the discredit of novelty and could be cited with veneration as decisions of the past. Peter Lombard's *Book on the Sentences* showed the revolution that had taken place. "So far as it was a compilation of authorities, it maintained the spiritual supremacy of the Church," but there was enough in it of disputation to indicate the growing spirit of inquiry, even under the continued necessity of submission. Efforts before "put forth were desultory and irregular. They were the results of individual enterprise and courage: like the voyages of mariners pushing out to sea, not knowing where the tide and winds might drive them. Now, a principle was established, according to which human reason might freely expatiate. The liberty of commenting and discussing without limits might be indulged, provided the intellect confined itself within the range of established authorities."\* Any question might be discussed which did not infringe upon the principle that tradition was in some sort a form of revelation, that the teaching of Fathers and doctors was to be placed beside the teaching of Christ and his Apostles.† Let the development of ages be thus iden-

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\* HAMPDEN'S *Bampton Lecture*, p. 46.

† In SPANHEIM'S *Ecclesiastical Annals*, translated by Wright, p. 408, we read—"The scholastic theology was a compendium of Divinity, supported by the opinions and authorities of the Fathers, but chiefly by reason and argument; *the Scriptures were quite omitted*, while the Doctrines of Christianity were reduced into a heathenish system." This is an instance of the very unfair statements often made about the schoolmen. On opening Thomas Aquinas, I find in the first page I happen to light on, eight Scripture references, on another fifteen.

tified with the will and word of Heaven; let the corrupted realization of Christianity in the minds of men be thus engrafted on the ideal from the mind of God; let the dogmas of the Church be accounted the same as the doctrines of the Bible; and under that condition, reason might be as active as she pleased, might soar to any height, penetrate into every recess. The great problem, as to the true relation of the Church to Christianity, as to the proper place of tradition, as to the authority of the Scriptures in comparison with the deference due to the opinions of wise and good men, did indeed come within the range of Roger Bacon's searching intellect (not to receive a full and satisfactory solution), and Wycliffe, as we shall see, bravely grappled with and solved it; but, generally of course, it was excluded from scholastic investigation. There was a foregone conclusion on that subject. But God's unfolding of truth being assumed to embrace patristic as well as inspired writings, its relation as a whole to reason was largely discussed, and Thomas Aquinas distinctly showed the harmony of reason and revelation, against the sceptical rationalist on the one hand, and the mystical Catholic on the other. No doubt, a number of very idle and absurd questions were discussed by the schoolmen, but the time is gone by for ranking their studies altogether under that category.\* Even the much abused contest between

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\* "Those," says Sir James Mackintosh, "who measure only by palpable results, have very consistently regarded the metaphysical and theological controversies of the schools as a mere waste of intellectual power. But the contemplation of the athletic vigour and versatile skill

nominalism and realism is now acknowledged by those of competent judgment to have been but the continuation of a battle waged from the beginning of intellectual inquiry—the battle about the connexion of the world of thought in man with the universe which encircles and covers, while it is independent of, man; and the connexion of the whole with His mind who is the Creator and Lord of all the realms of existence. Concealed under a veil of grotesque mediæval embroidery, we have, in the realism of Aquinas, the same features of thought as in the philosophy of Coleridge; in the nominalism of

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manifested by the European understanding, at the moment when it emerged from this tedious and rugged discipline, leads, if not to approbation, yet to more qualified censure. What might have been the result of a different combination of circumstances is an inquiry which, on a large scale, is beyond human power. We may, however, venture to say, that no abstract science unconnected with religion was likely to be respected in a barbarous age, and we may be allowed to doubt whether any knowledge dependent directly on experience, and applicable to immediate practice, would have so trained the European mind, as to qualify it for that series of inventions, and discoveries, and institutions, which begins with the sixteenth century, and of which no end can now be foreseen but the extinction of the race of man." Tenneman observes of the scholastic philosophy, "Among its good results were an increased ability in the management of doctrinal metaphysics, a great subtlety of thought and a rare sagacity in the development and distinction of ideas, with individual efforts on the part of several men of genius, notwithstanding the heavy bondage in which they were held."—*Manual of Philosophy*, 222. Guizot remarks, "We find in them many vast and original views, questions are often solved by them in their profoundest depths, the light of philosophical truth, of literary beauty, shines out each instant. The vein is covered in the mine, but it contains much metal, and deserves to be worked."—*Cours d'Hist. Mod.*, i. 220. From the little attention I have been able to give to the writings of Anselm and Thomas Aquinas, I must confess myself deeply impressed by the genius as well as the industry which their writings display. The

Occam we may recognise the phase of speculation uncovered by Locke and his disciples; while in the theological and metaphysical complicities during its intermediate course we see, and most worthy of study is the spectacle, connected with the decline of realism and the growth of nominalism, the progress of resistance to the papacy, the spread of liberal opinions; and finally, we witness a death-blow dealt at the spirit of the past in papal Rome, by him who is now a spirit of the present, and will be of the future, even that most illustrious of all nominalists, Martin Luther.\*

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following passages in Aquinas are remarkable, the first as recognising the principle of inductive philosophy; the second as anticipating a modern view by Biblical Critics: "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod in accipiendo scientiam non semper principia et elementa sunt priora: quia quandoque ex effectibus sensibilibus devenimus in cognitionem principiorum et causarum intelligibilium. Sed in complemento scientiæ semper scientia effectuum dependet ex cognitione principiorum et elementorum, quia ut ibidem dicit philosophus, tunc opinamur nos scire, cum principia possumus in causas resolvere."—*Summa*, prima pars, Quest. lxxxv. art. 8. "Quidam dicunt, quod animalia quæ nunc sunt ferocia, et occidunt alia animalia, in statu illo fuissent mansueta, non solum circa hominem, sed etiam circa alia animalia. Sed hoc est omnino irrationabile. Non enim per peccatum hominis, natura animalium est mutata, et quibus nunc naturale est comedere aliorum animalium carnes, tunc vixissent de herbis, sicut leones et falcones."—*Summa*, prima pars, Quest. xcvi. art. i.

\* See this idea eloquently worked out in COUSIN'S *Fragments Philosophiques Scholastiques*, p. 306. It may be remarked here that the Realists differed among themselves. Some adopted the Platonic, others the Aristotelian doctrine of ideas. The Nominalists, too, were far from all alike. "Nominalium tres erant familiæ. Aliqui, ut Roscelinus, universalia meras esse voces docuerunt. Alii iterum in solo intellectu posuerunt, atque meros animi conceptus esse autumarunt, quos conceptuales aliqui vocant et e nominalibus distinguunt, quamquam alii etiam confundunt. Alii fuerunt qui universalia quæ siverunt.

If their discussions respecting words and ideas were not quite idle, and are not now quite antiquated, certainly their theological exercises, whatever may be their real merit, have not become quite obsolete. It would be easy to institute a parallel between scholastic topics, and those discussed by modern Divines—not only in the Vatican, where the doctrine of the immaculate conception, drawn from scholastic authorities, has just been made an article of faith,—but in Protestant books, and even in dissenting pulpits. The old friars went over a good deal of thorny ground, abundantly trodden since, the thorns, albeit, remaining much about as thick as ever. Original sin, which the scholastics generally defined in a negative way, as a privation of righteousness, a privation transmitted from parent to child :\*—grace, which they treated as a Divine infusion, the source of faith and holiness ;†—the Divine decrees, which they explained much after the manner of moderate Calvinists, as including a predestination to Christian virtue and eternal life, but not any unconditional reprobation‡

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non tam in vocibus quam in sermonibus integris, quod Joh. Sarisberiensis adscribit Pet. Abelardo; quo quid intelligat ille, mihi non satis liquet.”—MORHOF. *Polyhist.*, t. ii. lib. 1, c. xiii. § 2. Cousin considers that Abelard belonged to the second class—that he was a conceptualist—that universals are not *mere* words, but conceptions of the mind independently of words: “des conceptions de l’esprit. C’est la toute leur réalité, mais cette réalité est suffisante.”—*Phil. Schol.*, 226. Dugald Stewart was of opinion that Reid’s doctrine of ideas coincided nearly with that of the conceptualists.—*Phil. of the Mind*, i. 193.

\* HAMPDEN’S *Bampton Lecture*, pp. 220, 227. † *Ib.* p. 188.

‡ HAMPDEN, *Bampton Lecture*, pp. 180, 495. “The scholastic distinction between *pena* and *culpa* should be particularly noticed in reference to the question of reprobation. The schoolmen would not

—these were subjects of their untiring scrutiny—and, of course, the whole system of the Church, priestly, secular, and ascetic, came under their examination, or rather was treated by Divines under the shadow of patristic authority and scholastic names—additions, in the way of definition and detail, being, from time to time, made to received theology.

We have noticed that the schoolmen discussed the relations of faith and reason—and, whether the former takes its rise in the intellect or the heart, a point contested in our day, was not unfamiliar to Bernard and Abelard.\* On the subject of miracles, Thomas Aquinas speaks, to a great extent, like modern Divines.† The chartered blessings ascribed by our

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admit a predestination of guilt, for this would have argued the presence of evil in the Divine mind." Aquinas connects predestination with what is good, prescience with what is evil. Predestination he holds to be the cause of grace and glory, but reprobation is not the cause of sin.—*Summa Theol.*, prima pars, quest. xxiii.; secunda secundæ, quest. clxxiv. Peter Lombard also taught, in harmony with Augustine, that predestination could not be without prescience, but prescience might be without predestination. The Deity foreknows evil, but does not produce it. He predestinates whom he elects, and reprobates the rest.—See "Analysis of Peter Lombard's Sentences," TURNER'S *Hist. of England*, vol. v., p. 80. Duns Scotus was a very mild disciple of Augustine, and said:—"In hujus questionis solutione mallet alios audire quam docere. Eorum autem non miseretur (Deus) quibus gratiam non præbendam esse æquitate occultissimâ et ab humanis sensibus remotissimâ judicat."—SCOTI *Opera*, v., 1329. Occam, in his comments on Duns Scotus, however, can see no difference between election and reprobation (p. 1313.)

\* NEANDER, *Hist.*, viii., p. 112, *seq.* Compare with this controversy, that between Fuller and Sandeman.

† "To contradict, to violate, to reverse, if you please, a physical law for a moral reason may be as much an act of wisdom as the origination of that law; and in place of bespeaking a contradiction or inconsistency in

own theologians to Adam, before the fall, very much resemble the "*donum superadditum*" of Bonaventura and Hales.\* The doctrine of disinterested love to God, enunciated by distinguished American Divines, is found in Abelard,† nor was the tenet which confounds faith with the personal assurance of salvation unanticipated, for Almaric of Bena taught that faith consists in a man's believing that he is already a member of Christ.‡

As to the foundation of virtue,§ the germs of modern

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the mind of Deity, it may be only a new indication of the immutability of the Divine purpose in seeking the highest ends by the best means, subordinating with this view the less to the greater, the material to the spiritual."—DR. VAUGHAN'S *Age and Christianity*, p. 89. Thomas Aquinas, following Augustine, says:—"Quod Deus contra solitum cursum naturæ facit, sed contra *summam legem* nullo modo facit, quia contra seipsum non facit."—See the whole discussion. *Summa*, prima pars, quest. cv., art. 6, 7. Thomas Aquinas, however, does not say, as Dr. Vaughan does, a miracle is no "suspension, much less a violation of natural laws, but simply such a control of them as bespeaks the intervention of a cause to which they are all secondary and obedient."—*Age and Christianity*, p. 91.

\* BONAVENTURA, *Sent.* Lib. ii. Dist. 29, Art. ii., q. 2. HALES, p. ii. q. 96. HAGENBACH, *Hist. of Doct.*, p. 9.

† NEANDER, *Hist.*, viii., p. 126. The doctrine of disinterested love to God has been ably supported by Edwards and Bellamy, as it had been before by Fenelon. Among the schoolmen, Aquinas moots the question, though not the first to do so:—*Utrum in dilectione Dei possit haberi respectus ad aliquam mercedem?* "He appears," as Sir James Mackintosh observes, "to consider himself as bound by authority to answer in the affirmative, and he employs much ingenuity in reconciling a certain expectation of reward with the disinterested character ascribed by him to piety in common with all the affections which terminate in other beings."—*Prelim. Diss. to Edinb. Ency.*, p. 436.

‡ NEANDER, *Hist.* viii., p. 207. His doctrine is somewhat like Erskine's.

§ Mackintosh observes of the ethics of Aquinas, that "his grounds of duty are solely laid in the nature of man and in the well-being of society. "Such an intruder as subtlety seldom strays into his moral instructions.



notions are to be discovered in the mediæval schools—where, also, we find discussed the extent of inspiration, its connexion with human elements—liberty and necessity—the predestination of God and the will of man—with other subjects familiar to theologians. The fact is, that scholasticism was a vigorous effort of the excited mind of Europe to deal, under certain conditions, with such religious themes as are ever, more or less, pressing on the attention of active thinkers. If some among them did invent metaphysical riddles to relieve the tedium of monastic life, the master-spirits were mainly engaged in meeting the earnest demands of their own intellect, as to points involved in the very foundations of religious thought. They did not always go out in search of curious questions; at times, questions of deep and palpitating interest pursued them into the University, and haunted them in the cell, stared them in the face, and challenged investigation, and would not be silent till they had extorted some reply. A broad and unqualified charge of idleness and frivolity against the schoolmen of the first half of this period, can never be substantiated. The principal just accusations against them are of another

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With a most imperfect knowledge of the peripatetic writings, he came near the great master, by abstaining in practical philosophy from the unsuitable exercise of that faculty of distinction in which he would probably have shown that he was little inferior to Aristotle, if he had been equally unrestrained." As to defects in the ethical inquiries of the schoolmen, Mackintosh states—"They do not appear to have discriminated between the nature of moral sentiments and the criterion of moral acts; to have considered to what faculty of our mind moral approbation is referable; or to have inquired whether our moral faculty, whatever it may be, is implanted or acquired."—*Dissertation*, p. 329.

kind. They made the grand mistake of their age—or rather they perpetuated the grand mistake of a former one—in confounding the Bible with tradition. They built up their fabric of theology upon a heterogeneous basis. They cited without distinction of rank, the sayings of Paul and Augustine. They were the slaves of human authority, in the service of a vain and corrupt Church, reminding us of the heathen story of Hercules, who was held in captivity by Omphale, the Queen of Lydia, spell-bound by her charms, and who sat at her feet with a distaff, spinning webs at her command.\* Nor must their neglect of the proper bounds prescribed to religious inquiry by the natural limitation of the human intellect, be forgotten, for they were ever trespassing on forbidden ground, walking where the ice would not bear, exploring regions of storm and fog:—though here, indeed, it behoves us to remember that by these tentative processes, they teach us what they did not know themselves, and thus may save us from fruitless toil and painful self-sacrifice. They resemble the unhappy mariners who, perishing in search of a north-west passage, have demonstrated to us *where* it is *not* to be found. One very heavy imputation on these students is, that they confounded words with the nature and essence of things. The realist fancied there was a complete and perfect reality embraced in all his terms;

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\* It should be remembered that the later period of scholasticism exhibited a decline in its better qualities and an increase of its worst. Its spirit became frivolous, false, and sceptical.—See HAGENBACH, i., 409.

that whatever was deduced from their meaning, was a drawing out of the actual in God's universe. They did in theology what they did in science. They put *à priori* propositions in the place of facts, and have bequeathed to modern theologians much of their own fallacious method. "Its evil consequences," as Hampden observes, "have long been acknowledged in the parallel case of physical science. It has been admitted there, that conclusions from abstract terms are no valid indications of facts in nature. May we hope that the time will come when the like will be as fully and as practically admitted in theology?" And, in addition to all this, they did what, however, was not characteristic of their age, as it belongs to every age—they completely confounded theology with religion, and denied the religion of those who denied their theology.

Scholasticism produced a powerful effect in after ages as well as its own. Its minute distinctions, wearisome divisions, and stiff and formal arrangement of thoughts and words, were bequeathed to theologians since the Reformation, who accepted this worthless inheritance while they contemned the men from whom they received it. Thus they entailed a method of treating Christianity which tends greatly to mar its beauty, fetter its gracefulness, and trammel its free and Divine spirit. On the other hand, it must be remembered, as Dr. Hampden has shown in his *Life of Thomas Aquinas*, that though the schoolmen were slaves to authority, the tendency of their speculations was to magnify reason against the principle of mere authority. And on this account

(though the assertion may seem strange) “the schoolmen must undoubtedly be reckoned among the precursors of the Reformation both of religion and philosophy.”

Scholasticism opened the way for modern research and speculation. It awakened the human mind from its torpor, sharpened its faculties, and excited it to action. The schoolmen were among the heralds and precursors of the revival of knowledge. Their antique garb is not agreeable to our modern taste, the functions of their office, as harbingers and pioneers, have been long since suspended by the arrival of that knowledge for which they prepared; but their antiquated forms should still excite veneration, and the remembrance of past good services should awaken gratitude.

Scholasticism often ran into mysticism where there was much transcendental thought, or great depth of spiritual feeling. Mysticism early appeared in the Alexandrine Church, was conspicuous in the writings which bore the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, and continued, in different forms, throughout the mediæval period, now philosophically developed with great boldness by John Scotus Erigena, and again appearing in fanatical guise among certain persons near Turin, represented by Gerhard, one of their leaders.\* The mystic schoolmen embraced both those varieties, but most commonly they were distinguished by unfolding their peculiar mental tendencies in thoughts deemed eminently spiritual, and in ardours of devotion pronounced seraphic. Mysticism was often unmanageable. It was so bold and

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\* NEANDER, *Hist.*, vi., 440.

daring, and yet vague,—it was so incapable of confinement under any dialectic formula,—it so twisted and wreathed in all shapes, and penetrated in all directions, without allowing itself ever to be caught. It seemed to mock like a being of the air the good, honest, sober brotherhood who plodded along like beings of the earth. When mysticism was only devout, when it was expended in self-negation and fervent desires to be absorbed in the infinite, it could be better disciplined and kept in check. But however policy might shape it, there was that, even in its spiritual manifestations, which was naturally alien from the Church system and subversive of it; for it merged individuality in God, and thereby interfered with the merging of individuality in the Church. It certainly was, in itself, antagonistic to principles of priestism and secularism. Priests could make use of it, and did subdue it to their purposes, yet in its ecstatic gazing on the vision of God,—in its absorption of the finite in the infinite,—it struggled with the restraints of human mediation—it turned away its eyes from man, with his traditions and ceremonies—it forgot the past in the present, and asserted a right to walk alone into the midst of the shadows of the invisible. With the secularism of the Church, its connexion with the State, its bondage and its battle,—in that respect, the fervent mystic, whose face was heavenward, and to whom all earthly things were a weariness, could have no sympathy whatever. And hence many of the men of this class, so far as they meddled with matters to them of lower interest, showed a decided leaning in favour of

change, and were, in fact, the precursors of the Reformation. At the same time, however, mysticism found one main pillar of the Church to which it could cling. Asceticism was against the natural, as mysticism was against the finite. The life of the monk and friar was a war against the whole present order of material things. It was a constant conflict with the outer conditions of existence. The mystic carried the war into more mysterious regions, and trampled upon all that was spiritual, as well as upon all that was temporal, in his endeavour to exalt and glorify God. He pushed the conflict from the outer to the inner conditions of existence, and sought to absorb them in a deeper abyss of being. The direction of both was toward the annihilation of self and nature in the Everlasting One.\*

The phases which the personal piety of the schoolmen assumed under the influence of their habits of thought—which were determined much by their mental constitution, connected with the circumstances of the age,—furnish us with very interesting studies. Thomas Aquinas, the great theological doctor, has other claims on our

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\* Thorough-going mysticism is decidedly pantheistic. It overlooks, if it does not deny, the personality of God ; and there was truth thus far, in the charge of the acute Bossuet against the opinions of Madame Guyon, that they were incompatible with a true faith in the *Divine Persons*,—I speak only of his treatment of her opinions,—to her personally the eagle of Meaux was a cruel bird of prey ; but the keen eye of the bishop certainly saw further into the depths of the good woman's philosophy than she could see herself. But in this connexion it may be observed, that whatever may be said of the tendencies of mysticism, religious mystics themselves have generally had in them more of good than evil ; decidedly theirs has been rather the error of the judgment than the sin of the heart.

regard than those which rest on his sagacious, penetrating, and comprehensive intellect, and the indomitable industry that could produce so many folios.\* Precious truths of the Gospel run like golden threads through the intricate and curious fabric of his school divinity. The *Summa Theologiæ* contains, amidst a large amount of theological error, a variety of sound theological principles. Doctrines justly deemed of vital importance are asserted by the laborious schoolman most plainly, and defended against the objections of adversaries with a patience which would astonish many a modern disputant. But beyond all that, Christianity appears to have penetrated and purified the heart of Aquinas. The dialectician, indeed, is plain enough in the minuteness with which he dissects propositions, and the skill with which he arranges them in order,—and the earnest philosopher is plain enough when, sitting at Louis the Ninth's table, he strikes it, unmindful of the royal presence, and in a fit of abstraction exclaims, as a felicitous argument flits through his busy brain, "conclusive against the Manichees;" but, infinitely better still, the believer in Christ is also plain, tinctured, of course, with the influence of the other parts of his mental and religious character, yet still earnest, loving, devout, fervent—when we see him so copiously shedding tears at mass,—when we hear him preaching on the love of God and the glory of Christ,—when, in answer to the words which he fancied were addressed to him by Jesus, saying,

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\* There are the following editions:—Rome, 1576, 17 vols; Antwerp, 1617, 18 vols.; and Paris, 1660, 23 vols.

“Thou hast written well of me, Thomas; what shall be thy reward?” we hear him reply, “To have more of thyself,”—and when, lying in ashes, in his death agony, he exclaims, “Soon, soon will the God of all comfort complete his mercies on me, and fill all my desires.”\*

The logical bent of Aquinas, however it might rule his system of divinity, did not extinguish the ardour of his affections.† Severe as a metaphysical thinker, he melted and glowed under the power of devotion—an alliance of qualities like what we find in the more original, but less excursive philosopher of the new western world, Jonathan Edwards.

Again, we may cite, as a representative of the mystical philosophy of the schools, John of Fidenza or Bonaventura, the seraphic doctor, as he was called.‡ His

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\* This is related by William of Tocco, in his *Life of Thomas Aquinas*. There is another life by Bartholomew of Lucca.—*Buller's Lives*, vol. iii., 55, 58.

† I am aware this is not the common opinion. The epithet *Angelic Doctor*, as distinguished from Bonaventura the *Seraphic*, indicates that in the former intellect predominated over feeling. I am not prepared to deny this. Perhaps I have made too strong a statement respecting the sensibility of Aquinas; but the reference of his biographer to his shedding tears at mass, and to spiritual transports, shows him to have been very different from the mere intellectual being some suppose.

‡ The name of Bonaventura, given to him when a child, is said to have been derived from the exclamation of St. Francis, “O buona ventura,” when, in answer to prayer, he heard of his recovering from sickness. His fanatical credulity, as seen in his *Legenda S. Francisci*, and his Mariolatry in the *Life of the Virgin*, are very distressing. It is a relief to turn from these to some of the passages expressive of his love to Christ, in his *Stimul. Amoris*, pars i., cc. 4, 7, *Opera*, tom. 7, 197, albeit they are full of mysticism. We should add that love to Christ had much to do with his misguided love for the mother of Christ.



mind had a strong affinity for Neoplatonistic views, and he sought to mediate between opposing opinions, and to reconcile free will with the predeterminations of God. Union with the Deity he exhibited as the supreme good, as the only method of discerning truth and enjoying happiness. Looking upon all knowledge as a divine manifestation of God, and distinguishing between that which is revealed without us in creation; that which is revealed in us by the reflection of the divine image in the depth of human nature; and that which is revealed above us, he speaks in poetical language of those who contemplate God in the first as occupying the vestibule of the temple; those who attain to the second as entering the holy place; and those who penetrate into the third as reaching the holiest of all, where rests the Ark of the Covenant, which the cherubim overshadow with their wings. And then, in a mystic tone, he goes on to speak of the two points of view whence one may contemplate the invisible mysteries of God, and attain to a knowledge of His unity of essence and His trinity of Persons—the one involved in the notion of His being, the other in the idea of his communicable goodness.\* It is all a subjective scheme, spun out by a process of deduction from primary ideas—an effort of pure reason to construct theology, not in opposition to the Church, but in strict

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\* "Quoniam autem contiget contemplari Deum non solum extra nos, et intra nos, verum etiam supra nos : extra nos per vestigium, intra nos per imaginem, et supra nos per lumen, quod est signatum supra mentem nostram, quod est lumen veritatis æternæ, cum ipsa mens nostra immediate ab ipsâ veritate formetur."—*Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*, c. v. et vii. S. BONAVENTURÆ *Opera*, tom. 7, p. 132.

conformity with her system. I have stated thus much respecting Bonaventura's speculations with the view of giving another illustration of the fact, that modes of thought in those days were not so dissimilar to some in fashion in these days, as might be supposed. But my main purpose is to remark that this order of speculation, while it would modify theological habits and cause a man in that respect to differ from Aquinas, did not prevent Bonaventura's piety from being essentially the same. Aquinas asked him what books he studied. He pointed to his crucifix, and replied, "That is the source of all my knowledge. I study only Christ, and Him crucified." The one was an erudite scholar, the other was a simple mystic. Both were Catholics, both were Christians. We recognise Bonaventura's twofold character in the remark he once made to another Franciscan friar: "If God were to bestow on any one no other talents besides the grace of loving Him, this alone suffices, and is every spiritual treasure. A poor old woman may love Him more than the most learned master and doctor of theology." Much did this pure-minded man think and speak of prayer, and in the exercise of it he lived and died.\*

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\* The characters of the two men are reflected in the prayers written by them, and inserted in the Roman Missal to be said after celebration and communion.

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

I give thanks to thee, holy Lord, Father omnipotent, eternal God, who hast deigned to satisfy me, a sinner, thine unworthy servant, with the precious body and blood of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, from no merit of mine, but solely from thy merciful condescension. I pray

To take one more example. Raymond Lully was a man whose dialectic habits had in them a strong dash of mysticism. He was especially fond of speculation and argument. Referring to Brucker, Tenneman, or Hallam,

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that this holy communion may not increase my condemnation, but plead for my forgiveness. May it prove to me the armour of faith and the shield of good-will. May it prove the emptying out of all my vices, the extermination of every evil inclination and desire; the increase of love and patience, humility and obedience, and of all virtue; a firm defence against the snare of all enemies, visible and invisible; the quieting of all agitation, carnal as well as spiritual. To thee, the one and true God, I cleave. Thou art the happy consummation of my life. And I pray thee, that thou wouldst condescend to bring me, a sinner, to that ineffable banquet where thou, with thy Son and Holy Spirit, art, to thy saints, the true light, full satiety, eternal joy, consummate pleasure, and perfect happiness; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANOTHER PRAYER OF S. BONAVENTURA.

Pierce, O sweetest Lord Jesus, the marrow and bowels of my soul with the most sweet and healthful wound of thy love, with true, calm, and most holy apostolic charity, that my soul may languish and melt with the sole love and desire of thee, may desire thee, and faint in thy courts, desiring to be dissolved and be with thee. Grant that my soul may hunger for thee, the bread of angels, the refreshment of holy souls, our daily bread, more than substance, having all sweetness and savour, and all the charm of sweetness; may my heart always hunger and eat, and the bowels of my soul be filled with the sweetness of thy savour, into whom the angels desire to look. May I always thirst for thee, the fountain of life, the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, the fountain of eternal light, the river of pleasure, the fulness of the House of God. May I always sue for thee, seek thee, find thee, tend to thee, come to thee, meditate on thee, speak of thee, and work all my works to the praise and glory of thy name, with humility and discretion, with choice and delight, with readiness and affection, with perseverance to the end; and mayst thou alone be always my hope, all my confidence, my riches, my delight, my pleasure, my joy, my rest, my tranquillity, my peace, my charm, my fragrance, my sweetness, my portion, my possession, my treasure, in whom fixed, and firm, and immoveable, may my heart and soul always be rooted. Amen.

the reader recognises in Lully only a cabalistic philosopher, the inventor of an *ars magna*—a mechanical logic, or system of mnemonics, vastly popular for awhile, but ridiculed by Bacon, though favourably judged by Leibnitz. On turning, however, to fuller sources of information, we find that this very Raymond Lully was one of the most spiritual, holy, and devoted men that ever lived—fond of disputation, indeed, but chiefly because of his intense desire to convince unbelievers of the truth of the gospel. He wrote a defence of Christianity for the use of Mahometans; strove with wonderful perseverance to found a college for the instruction of missionaries in foreign languages; became himself a preacher to the African Mussulmen; ever exalted the spiritual above the ceremonial, the inward life above the outward form, the image of Christ on the soul above the sculptured or painted one on the cross,—and, after years of love, and toil, and prayer, died a martyr's death under the hands of Saracens. It was the death he coveted; and with an ardour in which we recognise the mystic, he prays that, if denied a martyr's death, he might at least be permitted to expire weeping, and exhausted with the love of his Creator and Saviour.\* In short, he was a specimen of the power of divine grace working in the mind of a schoolman, and the heart of a mystic, lighting up the one with truth, and firing the other with zeal, so as to move a strong and earnest will,

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\* The life of Lully, as given by Wadding, in his *Annal. Min.*, Tom. vi. is most romantic.

and produce a busy, energetic, constant, holy worker in the great vineyard, such as in any age the wise will prize and God will bless.

When scholasticism declined, as it did towards the end of the fourteenth century, and when there came grosser absurdities than ever, and abundant falsehood and scepticism, the mystic element which had blended with scholasticism stood out alone in Eckart, Tauler, Suso, and Ruysbroek. In the next century it deeply imbued the writings of John of Goch and John Wessel. They were all men of deep spirituality of mind, struggling against the bondage of forms, longing for a freedom in Christ they had not attained; but, though preparing the way for Luther, by dwelling on the Augustinian doctrines of grace, and by showing an anti-ceremonial spirit, still they wore those chains of traditionalism which their great German successor broke with not less wisdom than bravery.\*

The mystic element, freed from habits of scholastic thought, yet not assailing the authority of tradition,

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\* ULLMAN'S *Reformers before the Reformation*, vol. i. 56. John of Goch distinctly says "That sense appears to merit the preference which is most consonant with the decisions of the Church, and how much soever an interpretation may seem to correspond with the letter, still it is not to be considered as the true one if found to be manifestly contradictory to these decisions. This is especially true in matters of faith, which God has so clearly revealed to the Church, whereas in matters of practice, no such decided certainty is attainable, but much has been reserved for future investigation." ULLMAN'S *Reformers before the Reformation*, p. 56. There is an additional illustration of the same thing in VAUGHAN'S *Hours with the Mystics*. Suso "examined what he had written, to be sure there was nothing in his pages other than the Holy Fathers had taught and the Church received."—vol. i. 290.

appears very plainly in that remarkable book which Luther so highly valued—the *Theologia Germanica*. The deep piety breathed throughout its pages, the hatred of sin, the aspirations after holiness, the renunciation of all self-dependence, the constant recognition of the union of the soul with Christ as the only way of salvation which we find in this interesting volume, must awaken the strongest sympathy in every devout mind; but the theologian will miss in it a due exhibition of the great facts of the Christian revelation, while most men of plain Anglo-Saxon understanding will detect in it a good deal of transcendental thinking and experience, to him somewhat cloudy and unintelligible.

The theological literature of the period altogether betokens a spirit of immense activity. In the busy thoughtfulness of even the scholastic recluse as well as the popular mystic, was nursed, as already observed, a spirit of independence, which was preparing for the overthrow of the very Church system which for awhile it served in chains. There was growing up in the prison a power that would burst its bars. And in the outer circle of literature, which it is not our province here to examine, in the fathers of modern poetry and prose,—in Boccaccio, Dante, Petrarch, and Chaucer, a still bolder, but not so true and deep a spirit of preparation for what should follow, may be seen in the lashes with which they scourge the vices of the priesthood. Dante, intensely Catholic, exhibiting with matchless power the most popular dogmas of the Church, making purgatory appear as a fact, and enthroning the Virgin in Paradise before the

eyes of all—even he unsparingly denounces the corruptions of the clergy, and, with all “his reverence of the keys,” bitterly exclaims, as he sees pontiffs in Hell,—

Your avarice

O'ercasts the world with mourning, under foot  
Treading the good, and raising bad men up.  
Of shepherds like to you, the Evangelist  
Was ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,  
With kings in filthy whoredom, he beheld,—  
She who with seven heads tower'd at her birth,  
And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,  
Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.  
Of gold and silver ye have made your God,  
Differing wherein from the idolator,  
But that he worships one, a hundred ye?  
Ah, Constantine, to how much ill gave birth,  
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower  
Which the first wealthy Father gain'd from thee.

*Hell, Cant. xix.*

## LECTURE XIII.

FIFTH PERIOD CONTINUED.—A.D. 1215—1520.

### AGITATION AND REACTION.

**WE** now proceed to the remaining topics connected with the age of agitation and reaction.

#### IV. OF ART.

The art of the age was intimately related to its literature. As to the popular forms of the latter, it is difficult to say whether art most influenced literature, or literature art. This, however, is manifest enough, that the revival of art in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, pre-eminently indicated the religious excitement of the times. An immense number of churches were built, which in grandeur of style, harmony of proportions, and beauty of detail, exhibit an outburst of imaginative thought, and sentimental feeling, which could be produced only in a period when some mighty power was working under the surface. All nature was laid under contribution to art. The precious things of heaven,—sun, moon, and stars,—the precious things of the dew, and of the deep,—the precious fruits brought forth by the sun,—and the precious things put forth by the moon,—the chief things of the ancient mountains,



and the precious things of the lasting hills,—the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof, were the chosen and fondly-studied types for the imitative fancy of architect, artist, sculptor, and mechanic, who worked, often in rude ways, and always with a kind of childish wonder. History and fable, traditionary story and legendary verse, dreams of monsters and dragons, and all unnatural things, also lent their aid for the stimulation and guidance of these curious and quaint craftsmen.

Poems of all kinds were composed in stone, the Epic in the cathedral, the Hymn in the oratory, the Ode in the shrine, the Elegy in the tomb, the Psalm in the wayside chapel. These edifices crowded the city, dotted the plain, adorned the mountain, and seemed like so many efforts to hallow the soil, to make of fatherland, according to the notion of the age, a holy land—to establish, at home, a territory sacred, like that which the Crusaders had gone abroad to conquer. Great cathedrals rose cruciform, with pointed arches, roofs carved in wood or cut in stone, all symbolical—pillars and domes lifted themselves up like forest trees—and through stained windows shot gorgeous rays; while sacred history grew out of the columns, and private biographies were recorded in the sculptured sleepers, stretched on tombs, with folded hands—and the whole was a picture of earth and her children, over-arched by the vault of the clouds and the lights of Heaven.\* Nor were such buildings raised merely by kings, princes, and bishops—the riches

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\* *Kirchengeschichte*, Von D. KARL HASE, cap. iv. § 272.

of private and common life, the voluntary gifts of merchants, burghers, mechanics and peasants, were poured forth in the same service.

Most elaborate were some works in the expression of theological thought. For example, on the exterior of Chartres Cathedral, chiefly belonging to the thirteenth century, there is condensed the system of Vincent de Beauvais. The *Speculum Universale* is there carved in 1500 statues—a magnificent book in which philosophy and divinity are quaintly but analytically and chronologically united. I am not now discussing the propriety of such an application of art, I am only stating a fact, illustrative of the character of the times. Those builders, whatever else they might have or lack, certainly possessed great activity of mind, and exquisite skill of touch. And all that appeared in the twelfth century, was the promise of a spring which, in the thirteenth century covered France and England with buds of architecture and sculpture, to be succeeded in the fourteenth century by a summer of rich and perfect flowers, and, in the fifteenth, by an autumn, when the floral became folial, when an exuberant leafage chiefly remained,—tinged, even in decay, with glorious hues: and a religious significance, for evil or good, ran through all this architecture, through all the carving which gave life to its gates and arches, and through all the pictures stained on the window or emblazoned on the wall. And, most certainly, if the popular religious feeling of the period is ever to be fully understood, it is to the relics of art which expressed and influenced it, whether in book or

building, that there must be applied a kind of study which they have not yet received—not that which belongs to the dry-as-dust antiquary, nor that which proceeds from the simple love, however intense, of ancient art, nor that which comes from an ignorant veneration for all that is mediæval,—but such as pertains to a large, liberal, well-informed, and devout mind; free from the bondage of theories, clear from the taint of superstition, having large sympathies with man, and with a keen power of spelling out human thought and sentiment, from signs at which some may laugh, and others sneer.

Illustrations of the religious feelings and the moral sentiments of the age may be detected in these works of art. Representations of God the Father, except as a hand issuing from Heaven, are not found during the first twelve centuries. Then gradually a human form appears. The Holy Spirit, until the tenth century, is symbolized as a dove; then He is humanized; but not till the fourteenth century is this common, when the adorable Persons of the Trinity are depicted together as men of different ages;—the Father sometimes wearing the kingly, the imperial, or the papal crown, according as the representations belong to France, Germany, or Italy. If, on the one hand, this indicates that the mind was turned to the thought of the Father and the Spirit more than it had been, it also betrays, in the forms employed, gross tritheistic notions, and a merging of the idea of mysterious spirituality in conceptions vulgarly material, to say nothing of grotesque and sometimes hideous portraitures, revolting in the extreme to enlightened sensibilities. A

transition from the *symbol* of the invisible to the *image* of the invisible, was a descent to lower irreverence, and tended to increase idolatry, whatever might have been the intentions of the artist. Christ on the cross a memento of the historical crucifixion, and the lamb a symbol of the doctrine of atonement, are common, the first more so than the last; but if that indicates thoughtfulness respecting Christ crucified, the thoughtfulness dwells more on His sufferings than on the glorious end of them; it is far less the thoughtfulness of intelligent faith in His redeeming work, than the thoughtfulness of sympathy with the man of sorrows—a phase of feeling very predominant in the devotional writings and sayings of most Christian men of those times. The tree of knowledge, with the serpent, is placed in contrast with the cross of the Saviour, and other artistic methods are adopted for indicating how the sins and sorrows of man are removed by the blessings of redemption. Typical parallelisms hold a high place and cover a large field. The events of the Old Testament are connected with the New; cycles of Hebrew incidents are given as accordant with cycles of Gospel facts, showing how deeply the spirit of allegorical interpretation rooted itself in the mediæval mind. But whereas, in earlier art, Jewish history was regarded only in its relation to Christ, in the times of which we are speaking the heroines of Israel had come to be honoured as types of the Madonna. Indeed, the growing number of pictures and statues of the Virgin during this period, show how much the devout were taken up with the veneration of

the Blessed Mother, to the dishonour of her Divine Son. The attitude in which she sometimes appears, and the compassion she expresses, in contrast with what is signified in Him—she the pitiful mediator, He the angry judge—but too painfully discover that *she* had in the hearts of many a place which belongs to *Him*. The glimpse thus caught of popular mediæval religion, coupled with what we know of the Mariolatry so prevalent in Catholic countries at the present day, too clearly assure us of the idolatrous superstition that was prevalent. Nor is Mary alone exalted to the height of veneration. Other saints are her rivals; and in one instance, the history of St. Francis, the pious mystic (he would, I imagine, have shuddered at the thought), is represented in the sacristy of Santa Croce, at Florence, as a distinct parallel to that of the Saviour Himself.\* Another fact respecting religion, as expressed in this mediæval art, is the abundant presence of what was terrible—purgatory, judgment, the tortures of the damned, with coarse, horrifying minuteness, were everywhere displayed before the people. The Campo Santo, at Pisa, and the churches of Florence, still preserve representations of the last day—of the Judge on the throne, and the good and the bad on either hand, which, one would think, had a tendency to harden or amuse, rather than subdue or edify, the mediæval Italians. And surely the sinners of Berne

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\* There is a curious book, entitled "ALCORAN des Cordeliers, tant en Latin qu'en François, c'est à dire, recueil des plus Notables Bourdes et Blasphèmes de ceux qui ont osé comparer Saint François à Jesus Christ, tiré du Grand Livre des Conformitez de frère Barthélemi de Pise, par Erasme Alber, et trad. en François par Conr. Badius."

could have derived little spiritual benefit, but rather the reverse, from that notable carving of the day of doom over the west door of the cathedral in that city.

Forms of art still further throw light on the ethical sentiments of the period. "The number and natures of the virtues," says Mr. Ruskin, "differ considerably in the statements of different poets and painters, according to their own views of religion, or to the manner of life they had in hand to illustrate. Giotto, for example, arranges his system altogether differently at Assisi, when he is setting forth the monkish life, and in the Arena Chapel (at Padua), when he treats of that of mankind in general, and where, therefore, he gives only the so-called theological and cardinal virtues; while at Assisi the three principal virtues are those which are reported to have appeared in vision to St. Francis—chastity, obedience, and poverty, chastity being attended by fortitude, purity, and penance,—obedience by prudence and humility,—poverty by hope and charity. The systems vary with almost every writer, and in almost every important work of art which embodies them, being more or less spiritual, according to the power of intellect by which they were conceived." All this signified that there were at least two orders of virtue. The wretched delusion was kept up, that there was one kind of morality for the clergy, and another for the people,—that there ought to be two classes in Christendom living according to different rules,—in a word, that the Church of Jesus Christ was not one. The great advocates for unity,—they who were fighting for it in one way,—were cutting

it up in another. They burnt heretics for disturbing the Church by differences of theological opinion, and then themselves rent the Church in twain by setting up distinct standards of morality.

It is further curious to notice that among the virtues depicted by Orcagna at Florence (Or San Michele), by Giotto at Assisi and Padua, and by the builders of St. Mark's and the Ducal Palace at Venice, neither honesty nor industry is ranked, except in the last instance—the Ducal Palace—where both are found, the latter, called *Alacritas*, and opposed by sloth, as well as by eight sculptures, illustrative, in Mr. Ruskin's opinion, of the temptations to idleness.\* Honesty, true honesty, was, I fear, a rare virtue in those days; nor did Italy then, any more than now, abound much in industry. Industry, however, stood high in German art. It was also prevalent in German life.

Dante's great poem was a text-book for painters. In the seventh or lowest hell he represents ten circles reserved for the punishment of fraud. They are as follows: betraying women, flattery, simony, false prophecy, speculation, hypocrisy, theft, false counsel, schism and imposture, treachery to those who trusted the traitor. So here we see that schism was placed at the bottom of the scale of vices—lowest of all but one, eight degrees deeper in guilt than seduction itself. Schism is represented as far below heresy—the punishment of that belongs only to the sixth hell; for the schismatic there is the seventh hell, and the worst place of all in it but one.

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\* *Stones of Venice*, ii. 329.

I would further remark, legendary art was abundant. Numerous saints were presented under forms and with associations suggestive of the well-known stories told respecting them, but it is remarkable that the great saints of the early Church celebrated in history and pre-eminent for their influence on Christendom, were by no means the most common in these painted and sculptured works. Among the popular patron saints were St. Sebastian, pierced with arrows, the protector from plague and pestilence; St. Christopher, the giant, carrying the child Jesus through the deep river, the great friend and succourer of pilgrims and travellers; St. Nicholas, the mitred bishop, the guardian of children, maidens, and sailors; St. Catherine, with her wheel, the patroness of education and theology; and St. Margaret, binding the dragon, the sympathizing helper of mothers. France invoked St. Denis; Venice, St. Mark, and Spain, St. James, whose legend, transforming the Apostle into a sort of valorous Hidalgo, and the adoption of whose name, *Santiago*, as the battle-cry against the Moors, so strikingly express the reflection of their own national character and spirit. A mythology thus occupied the thoughts of Christians as a mythology had occupied the thoughts of heathens. Pagan poetry and art had created a crowd of inferior gods coming between the one God and the race He had formed; now Catholic poetry and art created a crowd of inferior saviours coming between the *one* Saviour and the Church he had redeemed. Beings and events perhaps at one time meant mythically to shadow forth the gracious attributes and saving work



of the Healer, the Helper, the Guardian, the Patron, the Shepherd, and the Captain of Souls, were regarded as historical realities, individual saints were worshipped as actual redeemers; what was really concentrated in the Divine redemption of Christ was falsely distributed, as so many distinct offices of mercy, among those who were at the best like others—only the objects of his forgiveness and the partakers of his Spirit. As the truth of God had been broken in pieces, and deformed and turned into a lie, so now the truth of Christ was broken in pieces, and deformed, and turned into a lie.\*

Some legends are distorted histories, in which it is impossible to separate the true from the false; some are beautiful myths, having a moral or religious signification, and some appear to be grotesque romances or novels, created by that demand for the stimulant of fiction common to every age. But whatever the mediæval legends might be, however incredible to persons of

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\* I may here observe, in passing, that in the religious morality of the times, a mechanical, piecemeal, catalogued kind of virtue appears, just as in a prayer of the fifteenth century, where, after some very beautiful comprehensive petitions, there comes this jarring form of supplication: "May the Holy Spirit govern the five senses of my body. May He cause me to embrace the seven works of mercy, and firmly to believe and observe the twelve articles of the faith, and the ten commandments of the law, and defend me from the seven mortal sins even to the end." On the other hand, there is a beautiful unity and comprehension in the following quaint prayer, founded on a true gospel idea: "Lord Jesus Christ, by thy Cross be thou by me for my defence, behind me for my government, within me for my renewal, about me for my preservation, before me for my guidance, above me for my benediction, in me that thou mayst lead me to thy kingdom."—This is given by Mr. RUSKIN in his *Stones of Venice*.

common understanding at the present day, in that age of faith, as some call it, of ignorant credulity as termed by others, these productions were as implicitly believed as they were eagerly sought and intensely admired.\*

At the same time this legendary art has another side of brighter reflection. A contrast between it and the mythology of the old pagan world there is after all, and it is very striking. The moral spirit of the one is as far above, as its artistic skill is below, that of the other. No one can turn from the fables of Greece and Rome to the stories of the mediæval church without feeling that Christianity shot through the darkest of the latter a ray such as genius never lent to the brightest of the former.† The monkish wonders might be as in-

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\* "In the authors of the Legends of Saints are probably to be found the literary ancestors of our modern novels of adventure; and possibly their miracles may have had some connexion with the habit of mind which leads so many novelists to suppose, or at least to suggest, that the Divine government of the world is carried on entirely *ex machinâ*, and not by the orderly operation of general laws."—*Cambridge Essays*, 182. It is entertaining to read the following mode of settling the question of legends without dishonoring the authority of the Church, or disturbing the faith of her children: "Les légendes sont dans l'ordre historique ce que les reliques des Saints sont dans le culte. Il y a des reliques authentiques et des légendes certaines, des reliques évidemment fausses et des légendes évidemment fabuleuses, enfin des reliques douteuses et des légendes seulement probables et vraisemblables. Pour les légendes comme pour les reliques l'Eglise consacre ce qui est certain, proscriit le fabuleux et permet le douteux sans le consacrer."—*Cours d'Hist. Eccl.*, par l'Abbé BLANC, p. 552.

† Lord Lindsay, speaking of the floating legends of the mediæval ages, justly observes, "Some are very beautiful parables of the deepest wisdom—others, again, are purely ludicrous inventions for the recommendation of particular doctrines of the Church."—*Christian Art*, Vol. I. Int. cc. "Amidst a deluge of absurd fables, morality bursts forth with

credible as the pagan metamorphoses, but how utterly different the spirit some of them breathed. They exhibit, not the artifices and triumphs of lust, but the resistance and heroism of virtue; not gods seeking to seduce mortals, but mortals aspiring to the godlike; not beings of a higher sphere stooping to the lowest moral degradation, but men and women of lowly birth, by honest toil, fervent charity, and noble self-sacrifice, rising from obscurity to fame; and by simple faith, lowly obedience, and earnest devotion, climbing the steps of a ladder whose top touched Heaven.

I loathe and condemn as much as any man the old pagan spirit of superstition and falsehood, which so far lingered in Europe as to produce a multitude of imaginations which too often took the place of God's true histories; but I do still discern, and would gratefully celebrate, those traits of charity, gentleness, and endurance which were blended with the baser of the legend elements. The twofold spirit of the legend is stamped upon the art, and we must overlook neither form. I can never gaze upon the pictures and statues of the Madonna by pre-Raphael artists, and some of their successors, without feeling that there is a matronly grace and purity—the very ideal of Christian womanhood—in these productions, to be found in no Venus, Greek or Roman\*—

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an immense influence; it is seen, it is felt,—this sun of intellect shines upon the world in the bosom of which it lives. I might refer you almost indifferently to all the legends; you would everywhere meet with the fact I point out.”—GUIZOT, *Hist. of Civ.*, ii. 124.

\* “Dans la statuaire de l'antiquité les sens parlent aux sens; dans

another instance of the power of true religious sentiment rising with dignity above the debasements of mediæval folk lore. And as to representations of Scripture characters and history, what a depth of religious feeling is shown by many of the pre-Raphael masters. Their perspectives, costumes, and conventional methods of treatment may provoke the ridicule of superficial critics, but the devout feeling, often expressed in the countenances they depict, will more than make up for the absence of what experience and mechanical facility have since supplied, in the lack of that religious spirit which burns like gentle fire from Heaven in the pictures of Fra Angelico.

The truly beautiful is ever founded upon truth. When we see it in a Venus or Apollo, it consists, not in the representation of a fictitious deity, but in the natural expression of human attributes. The sculptured marble becomes to us really admirable only from being viewed as the ideal of female loveliness or manly dignity. And so the beauty of Fra Angelico's pictures, and of other great Catholic artists, consists, not in their being representations of objects worshipped or regarded as mediators by the Catholic Church, but in their being just conceptions of pure, noble, and holy character embodied in form and feature, attitude and expression. I think of

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la sculpture moderne, c'est un dialogue pour ainsi dire entre les sens et l'esprit : la statuaire grecque produit en nous un sentiment très pur, le sentiment du beau, mais du beau physique ; la statuaire chrétienne développe le sentiment du beau physique et du beau moral, et plutôt le dernier que le premier."—M. CHARLES MAGNAN.

pictures I have seen, as presenting to me the lives of holy men whom I hope to meet in Heaven, fellow heirs of the one blessed promise. I put aside the recollection of the abuse of these wonderful artistic achievements. Then do I enjoy them. But the thought will force itself upon one, that art has too commonly been the servant of error. Beauty, married in Heaven to Truth, has on earth been divorced from her husband and lord. The fact awakens speculation, and plunges us into mysteries. But can we fail to believe that He who is equally the God of truth and beauty, and has joined them together in His own works, will one day bring back His creatures into sympathy with Himself, and, curing them of their errors and superstitions, perhaps through the remembrance of errors and superstitions, teach them ever to bind in unity what have been so often dissevered, even the really true with the really beautiful, in the purposes and doings, the tendency and effect of human art?

Again, I beg to be understood that I am now looking at mediæval art solely for the purpose of gathering such illustrations as it affords of the religious life of the period, good as well as bad; and in the same way I would point to the signs of the better moral feeling associated often with the worse. For example, with how much elevation of feeling are the virtues depicted by Giotto at Padua: Hope with her wings, Charity with her flames, Faith with her cross, Justice with her balance, Temperance with her sheathed sword and bridled mouth, and Prudence gazing in her mirror. And then, what a religious lesson there is in the statuettes of the ten virgins which

one observes over some of the old French and German church doors,—the five wise grasping carefully their lamps in both hands, the five foolish most negligently holding in one hand theirs reversed. And belonging to the end of the period, there is the magnificent allegory of the Knight, and Death, and the Devil: a moral *Pilgrim's Progress* condensed into a little print of matchless execution,—a triumph of instructive art, a lesson worth the study of every boy and every man, the work of the great Albert Durer, who carried over into Protestantism the purest feeling of Catholic art.\*

Religious feeling was also breathed over domestic architecture and ornament. “The cross was carved above the porch or surmounted the gable, while scriptural subjects were often painted on the wall or woven in the tapestry, and above the entrance some religious legend, supported by bending angels, told that the householder and his family were not ashamed to supplicate the favour of the Most High, and to acknowledge that they dwelt beneath the shadow of His wings.”

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\* Melancthon makes a touching allusion to Albert Durer's death in his *Epistolæ*, lib. iv., No. 67. In another Epistle, lib. i., No. 47, there occurs the following remarkable passage, worthy of the study of the artist, the man of letters, and the preacher:—“Memini virum excellentem ingenio et virtute Albertum Durerum pictorem dicere, se juvenem floridas et maxime varias picturas amasse, seque admiratorem suorum operum valde lætatum esse contemplantem hanc varietatem in suâ aliquâ picturâ. Postea se senem cœpisse intueri naturam et illius nativam faciem intueri coratum esse, eamque simplicitatem tunc intellexisse summum artis decus esse. Quam cum non prorsus adsequi posset, dicebat se jam non esse admiratorem operum suorum ut olim, sed sæpe gemere intuentem suas tabulas et cogitantem de infirmitate suâ.”

Most of the art pertaining to the period under consideration was in bondage to traditionalism, but it is curious to observe how, in an age of excitement, the spirit of independence found some scope for play without running utterly beyond bounds. Individual feeling appears in the painter; he throws off the leading-strings of old Greek mediæval art, he breaks up the worn-out stereotype, invents forms for himself, and instead of the image-like Madonna, there appears the living Mary, the woman and the mother. The apostles made to order by prescriptive pattern give place to individual men, in each of whom a personal character appears; rigid mannerism melts under the warmth of awakened genius; a spirit of generous rebellion appears, fatal to the usurping authorities of the past, promising and hopeful of the legitimately royal authority of reason and truth in the brightening future.

It would be interesting, if we had space to pursue the relation of art to religion, to explain how, while in some cases the cultivation of artistic taste was checked by asceticism, in other cases asceticism was softened and elevated by art; how, as one frowned on it as vanity, another made it the handmaid of beautiful thoughts, and employed it in spiritual service; and further, to illustrate the probable influence of the later ecclesiastical architecture of the Rhine upon the religious mystics who worshipped in its churches, upon such men as Tauler and Suso,—the inspiration of the cathedrals of Strasburg and Cologne, the idealistic, dreamy, heaven-aspiring poetry of the Gothic builders having succeeded

to the grave, staid, though expressive prose of their Romanesque fathers; but all that must be left, and only one other observation on this part of our subject allowed.

Art was to a large extent the servant of priestism. The very form of Gothic churches betokened it. The choir was thrown far beyond the nave, was raised, was sometimes separated from it by screens and rood lofts: the altar stood at the further end, often indistinctly visible to the people: the grandest, richest, noblest portion of the edifice was for the priest, there, with his back to the laity, he mediated on their behalf. The cathedral and the church indicated that the old congregational worship and the old congregational supper at the Lord's table were at an end. Art was further employed in details of priestly worship; it ministered to priestly pomp; it threw splendour and witchery around priestly pretensions. Having reared the temple, it carved the shrine; it gilded the altar; it chased the crucifix; it embroidered the vestment; it jewelled the mitre. It thus most perniciously served to support the power of an early innovation. It perpetuated, gave substance to, built up, and carved and painted the dreams of ages. Art, no doubt, served to keep Christendom under the spell of superstition, but that was not all. It is curious to observe how, though art was in the main employed in prolonging delusion, it sometimes proved restive under restraint. The corruptions of the priesthood, and of conventual orders, aroused indignation in the artist. He saw the vices of the men for whom he



worked. The quarrels of rival communities increased the ebullitions of excited feeling. The painter placed priests and prelates at the left hand in pictures of the Last Day: they were cast into perdition before the eyes of all the people. The illuminator of the MS. scrupled not to employ an abbess as an emblem of hypocrisy. The stonemason set up the effigy of a fox in a friar's gown. A good deal of honest and virtuous anger—sometimes honest but not virtuous—found vent after this fashion. Art thus bears testimony to the dissatisfaction of the times in reference to the priesthood. It shows a strong under-current of opposition to men who were the world's religious rulers. This kind of revolt, it is true, was not against the system so much as against its administrators. It was meant as an assault on priests rather than priestism; but woe to a system which has not God's truth for its ground, when its rulers fall under popular contempt, when that contempt is increased by their caricaturing each other. As the thoughtful antiquary walks about old churches on the Continent and in England, he recognises in many a carving and picture signs of after history,—hints trifling in themselves, but full of a prophetic spirit, the petrel before the storm, the first rumble of the earthquake.

#### V.—OF SECTS.

The agitated spirit of the age produced new sects, and revived and increased old ones. As early as the Council of Lateran, the Church was alarmed by the

numbers she saw throwing off allegiance to her authority. It was the mission of the Friars to restore, or destroy the wanderers. The authors of the thirteenth century and afterwards, deplore the growth of heresy, and describe it so as to show that what they often falsely called heresy was engendering what, with equal falsehood, they called schism. Distinct parties were being rent off from a corrupt community, the separation in some cases being but partial, in others complete; but between the degrees of nonconformity at that period it is difficult to draw a line, since we find that then, as in later ages, terms of reproach were applied without discrimination to all suspected of dissent. Beghards, or praying people\*—Lollards, or psalm singers, were common nicknames.† Persons of this description were not confined to any one country, though, during the reign of the Emperor Lewis, in the fourteenth century, they were more numerous in Germany than elsewhere; he, during his quarrel with the Pope, opening his dominions as a land of refuge for all disaffected to the Papal Court. The efforts of the stern inquisitors, however, in the next reign, purified these regions of toleration, but while they destroyed, they also drove out the infected, who communicated their opinions afresh in the places of their retreat. The cause seemingly depressed was really victorious.

1. The Church herself became the mother of sects.

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\* Mosheim satisfactorily shows that this is the meaning of the word.  
—*Hist.* (Reid's edit.), p. 461.

† DU CANGE, *in loco*.

Out of her own principles schisms grew. The spirit of reform, grafted in her own institutes, produced strange fruit. The Fraticelli were part of this harvest. They were a section of the Franciscans, men who sincerely carried out the rule of their order, as to poverty and self-denial. They wished to be like St. Francis, but there were many now who worshipped St. Francis and yet thought this extravagant. They looked out of the gates of their palatial convents, and pronounced their truly poor mendicant brethren, as they passed by, fanatics and impostors.\* That farce has been acted over and over again. The disciples who retain the principles of their founder come to be abused and persecuted by those who relax those principles. The Fraticelli, loving reform more than their order—more even than the Church—were forced beyond the pale of both. They who had thought themselves their mother's loving children were driven out of her house as aliens. They were very numerous, and included both men and

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\* Mosheim remarks, "The opposite of this doleful sect was the merry one of the dancers, which originated in the year 1373, at Aix-la-Chapelle, and thence spread through the district of Liège, Hainault, and other parts of Belgium. Persons of both sexes, both publicly and in private houses, suddenly broke into a dance, and holding each other by the hand, danced with great violence till they fell down nearly suffocated."—*Eccles. Hist.* (Reid's edit.), 520. He alludes to it afterwards as "a singular species of disease." We find it described among the epidemics of the middle ages under the name of the dancing disease, the dancing mania, and the dancing plague. It broke out at Kolbig, in 1027, among children, at Erfurt in 1237, at Utrecht in 1278, at Strasburg in 1418.—*BASCOMBE'S History of Epidemic Pestilences*, 39, 42, 56, 63. Such disease appears the same as St. Vitus' dance, that saint being regarded as the patron of persons so afflicted.—*BASCOMBE*,

women, for the sect attracted the tertiary or outer class of the Franciscans, and it is stated that one hundred and thirteen persons of both sexes, within ten years, expiated in the flames their zeal for the poverty of St. Francis. Altogether, an enormous catalogue of such martyrs might be made out. Here, then, was asceticism, the darling of the Church, strangled and burnt in the very act of striving, in its own poor foolish way, to serve its unnatural parent—unnatural now in a double sense.

In the fourteenth century the citizens of Cremona saw a multitude of half-naked people, wearing red crosses on their backs and breasts, and flogging themselves twice a day most unmercifully. They rapidly increased. The kind-hearted Germans, either from pity or admiration, opened their houses to receive them, and welcomed the strangers to their tables, who made it a point of conscience, never to tarry beyond a day. They marched along, each bearing a wooden cross, and chanting, in soft Italian strains, a hymn on the Passion. They were

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64. A legend of St. Vitus seems to have been framed in reference to this disorder, and he is said to have prayed that he might protect from the dancing mania those who should solemnize the day of his commemoration. Another legend states, that being shut up in a dungeon, his father looked through the keyhole and saw him dancing with seven beautiful angels.—Mrs. JAMESON'S *Legendary Art*, 328. We have in all this a curious blending of disease and superstition, and it is more than likely that disease has had a great deal to do with many of the religious aberrations, not of the mediæval ages only, but of later times. I may add, that Hecker, in his book on the epidemics of the middle ages, shows how certain periods above others are open to such inflictions as that of the dancing mania, which he describes, and how they pertain to certain temperaments at those periods.—Pp. 87-152.

reformers, people who had caught the spirit of the age, and carried earnestness into religion. Theirs was an outburst of asceticism, but less in the way of poverty than pain. They were descendants of the old self-torturers—of the same spiritual family as the Nicene hermits, except, and here was the grand cause of offence, but for which they might have been canonized rather than condemned—except, that their asceticism was not in service but in resistance to the priesthood,—for they slighted the ceremonies of the Church, and counted their own baptism of blood more efficacious than any water. Pope Clement VI. proclaimed a crusade against the harmless enthusiasts, in some of whom perhaps insanity and devotion were blended as in the sainted Francis.

2. There was a second general group of dissentients much resembling the former but more extravagant. These persons consisted of the Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit. They had a contempt for nature—they looked upon matter as a thing in itself corrupt and degraded. They were wrapt in mysticism—they wished to plunge out of themselves into the ocean of the divine and infinite. By forgetting the sensible, and becoming absorbed in the spiritual, by losing their individuality in the all-comprehensiveness of God, they would attain to freedom and perfection, and realize the true sonship of the Gospel of Christ. With all this there was associated, not a mere antipriestly, but a thorough antichristian spirit. The reaction produced by the ceremonialism of the age had gone over, as it

often does, into the opposite extreme. They were above external rites. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, prayer,—these were chains of thralldom thrown off by the free spirit. Nor did moral restraints any more than religious form or ecclesiastical law belong to such emancipated souls. They have been charged with the licentiousness of the old Gnostics, whom they not a little resembled. But many of these people, notwithstanding their opinions, were virtuous mystics, being Antinomian only in theory, and making their gnosticism in practice stoical instead of epicurean.

3. A third class were the apostolicals—also ascetic—also mystical; adopting and exaggerating what the Church had taught or allowed, and driven into a course of irrational excess, like the other sects, by an endeavour to avoid the corruption which it saw around in such fearful shapes. "There were," said Dolcino, their leader, "four ages of the Church; the first during the Old Testament; the second begins with Christ and His apostles; the third commencing with Pope Silvester under Constantine; but the Church in each age having deteriorated, especially in the third, the clergy, the monks, the friars, having successively proved unfaithful, there now was needed a fourth, which had come with the apostolicals—an age of poverty, spirituality, and freedom,—they were to live from hand to mouth, for to have property was sinful, they needed not the external in religion; prayer was no better in a church than in a sty. They were free from vows—they had no bond but that of the spirit." Visions of the purification of the Church floated

before this fanatic and his followers. There was a dash of the political in his dreams, and he longed for the time, near at hand, when the meek apostolicals should inherit the earth. With the asceticism and the mysticism of this sect, there was a strong infusion of communism. The sect were a sort of fifth-monarchy men, who in their lordship of the world were to have all things in common. The votaries of the scheme actually formed a community by themselves, and, entrenched in an inaccessible mountain, they were driven by famine into robbery, which ended in war and death.

Asceticism, mysticism, communism, might all be roused and excited by the corruptions of the priesthood, the falsehoods of Christendom, and the confusions of society; but there was no salvation, because no regeneration from any of them. Worse still, there were tendencies in them fatal both to religion and order. Either mysticism on the one hand, or socialism on the other, could it have had full play, would have been fatal to human interests. The one would have blighted theology, the other upset government. Melancthon afterwards perceived this, and wisely remarked that there were seeds of opinion germinating, which would have produced terrible confusion, if Luther had not arisen to draw the minds of men another way.

But mysticism, as already noticed, was found in this age allied to something incomparably better than itself. There were not only mystics of "the free spirit," but there were mystics who bore the name and vindicated for themselves the reality of being "Friends of God."

The *Theologia Germanica*, mentioned in our last Lecture, expressed sentiments which were cherished by many; and as in that little book, so in the minds of a growing multitude at that period, amidst dreamy imaginations and extravagant metaphors, there rested two great truths, *i.e.*, that the soul of man is dead in the selfishness of sin, and that it lives only through a union of faith with Christ. The "Friends of God" were not a distinct sect, but a large number of individuals, in communion with the Church, scattered about Europe, having such bonds of sympathy as appeared in correspondence, intercourse, and mutual counsel. Their greatest apostle was John Tauler, who by his faithful preaching, produced wondrous effects in the old cities of Strasburg and Cologne, not only gathering crowds to hear his earnest pithy German eloquence, but by the loving proclamation of the truths just mentioned, folding, we believe, many of Christ's sheep.\* Men of this class earnestly devoted themselves to the study of Scripture, but great difficulties in their case were connected with a return to the Divine ideal, for in the interpretation of it, though they rose above the traditions of the Church, it was impossible that they should not be influenced by the allegorical method of expounding the Bible which had been sanctioned by the practice of so many ages. Hence, while struggling against the legalistic

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\* Of a similar spirit with "the Friends of God" were the brethren of the Common Lot at Deventer, of whom Ullman has given so full and interesting an account in the second volume of *Reformers before the Reformation*. As their name imports, these brethren were communists; they were also ascetical, yet were they by no means rigid monastics.



and ceremonial bondage of Christendom, they became involved in very extravagant misconceptions of the meaning of God's word.

Sects outside the Papal Church continued. The Albigenses, though thinned by the crusades against them which form so frightful an episode in the history of the thirteenth century, were not extinct. So far as they took only the narrow ground of opposition to ecclesiastical abuses, they could have in them no fountain of vigorous life, though in eastern Europe, where they were unpersecuted, their numbers were very large in the fourteenth century. It was far otherwise with the Waldenses, both as to character and destiny. They held the principles of Peter Waldo. The ground they occupied—the broad ground of Scripture authority against mere traditionalism—was impregnable. Distinguishing the Divine ideal from the human realization, thus anticipating the views of the most clear-sighted of the reformers, these humble but God-taught men were bearers of no deceitful hope to Christendom; on brotherly terms with the "Friends of God," they went beyond them. They began a work into which others, taught like them, afterwards entered, proceeding along the only pathway which could lead to reform and revival. 'Tis beautiful to read the progress of their story. In defiance of persecution they multiplied, not only in their own sequestered valleys of Piedmont, but in France and Germany. And among them we find reviving that fine congregational life—that real religious fellowship, that consciousness and exercise of common ecclesiastical

power which declined after the third century, and out of the want of which counterfeits and mockeries in the shape of monastic communities so prolifically sprung up during the ages of corrupt development and false traditionalism. We find these Christian brotherhoods on the Rhine and up the Moselle in 1231. In the old Roman city of Treves they were circulating German versions of the Scriptures. Their enemies were astonished to find that some of them had committed to memory the whole of the New Testament, and were compelled to acknowledge the piety of their lives and the orthodoxy of their creed. Only they abused the Church of Rome. They did not frequent wine-shops, or attend balls. They were frugal and industrious, and governed their passions; and, strange to say, even shoemakers were teachers among them. The fact is, they had learned from the Scriptures that there was no exclusive priesthood such as the Church maintained; and that all who were able, were bound to teach as well as practise Christianity. They were home and city missionaries and colporteurs. They went among the poor, and might be found in the market and at the fair, with baskets of jewelry. Having sold a ring, when asked, "Have you more to sell?" "Yes," they would adroitly say, "we have jewels still more precious than any you have seen. We should be glad to show you these also, if you would promise not to betray us." Upon being assured of safety, they would proceed—"We have a precious stone so brilliant that by its light a man may see God; another which radiates such a fire as to kindle the love of God in the heart of

its possessor." Immediately they produced suitable portions of Scripture.

Of course the fate of these innocent and pure-minded people was persecution. Their consciousness of the rights of freedom, their love of the Bible, and their independent congregational life, could not but provoke an intolerant hierarchy, and bring down upon them the exercise of those methods of rooting out assumed heresy which the blinded zeal of Dominic had invented and bequeathed. Innocent VIII. published a bull against them. He invited all Catholics to take up the Cross for their extermination, absolving from all ecclesiastical pains and penalties those who should do so, releasing them from any oaths they might have taken, legitimatizing their title to any property they might have illegally acquired, and promising remission of all their sins to such as should kill any heretic. But crusades and inquisitions, murders and torture, were unequal to the extinguishment of the new life which Christ had inspired in the hearts of these His people. As the valleys of Piedmont flowed with blood, and villages were reduced to smoking ruins, persecution served to develop in the Vaudois noble traits of faith, patience, virtue, and heroism.

## VI. OF A REFORMER.

Let us pass from the Alps to the heart of England, and look at one great individual reformer in this age of agitation and reaction. Wiclif had attacked the Mendicant orders as early as 1360. His arguments

against them rested not simply upon their corrupt practices, but upon the entirely unscriptural character of the institute. His appeal was to the New Testament, whither also his antagonists had repaired, but on different grounds, to seek in the poverty of Christ and his apostles a sanction for their own proceedings. Rising in influence at Oxford, appointed to a theological lectureship, he publicly declared the workings of his mind as to the superstitions of the age, denying the power of masses, pilgrimages, and absolution to save the soul, or that of excommunications and interdicts to endanger it. He was on the way to a fuller emancipation from the errors of the times, when he went as one of the Commissioners to meet the papal embassy at Bruges, where his acquaintancé with the iniquities of the Court of Rome was increased, where his determined spirit of resistance, from what he saw of the bold independence of the Flemish burghers, was no doubt confirmed, and where it is possible, too, his growingly Protestant views might receive fresh light and further impulse from hearing of the "Friends of God," or some such persons, who were so numerous in Germany, and could hardly fail to be known in one of the chief cities of the Hanseatic league. It must be acknowledged, however, that Wiclif makes no reference to them in any of his writings. Certainly, after his return from the Continent, his opinions and his course became more decided. His books bear testimony to the clear light of truth diffused by this morning star of the Reformation. But his most precious work was *the Version* which he pro-

duced of the whole Bible, the first that ever appeared, begun about 1378. It was made from the Vulgate. The whole truth of God was transferred from the language of the Church to the language of the people. Christianity had been Latinized, in how many respects our lectures have shown, and the use of the Roman tongue in her ritual and sacred books had been a symbol of that place of mediation between the Divine Spirit and the human mind which the Roman Church had assumed. A Latin priesthood had formed the mind of mediæval Christendom. In Latin men spoke to God, in Latin God's Word was given to men. Wiclif, in the spirit of Waldo, broke down the Latin middle wall of partition. He would have no mediatory form of language to keep the people from coming to God direct. They should hear the eternal voice speaking to them in the tongue wherein they were born. Anglo-Saxons should hear it in the racy speech of their Anglo-Saxondom. Wiclif's diction is far more Anglo-Saxon than Chaucer's; and most interesting is it to compare Wiclif's translation from the Vulgate with the Rhemish translation from the Vulgate, and to contrast the pure vernacular of the one with the half foreign gibberish of the other; the translators in the latter case being sadly afraid that the people should too plainly understand what Heaven had said to them. Wiclif's translation was meant for all England, that it might be disclosed more openly,—as Knighton mourned that it was,—“to laymen and women able to read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy.” It implied how clearly our reformer saw

that the true pathway of reformation was to be found in the comparison of Christianity as realized in Christendom with Christianity as taught by God in his own words. The sole authority of that Divine ideal he most distinctly taught. I know none of the reformers before the Reformation equal to him in this respect. In his book, entitled *The Truth and Meaning of Scripture*, he maintains that Christ's law sufficeth; that a Christian man well understanding it, may gather sufficient knowledge during his pilgrimage on earth; that all truth is contained in Scripture; that we should admit of no conclusion not approved there; that there is no court beside the court of Heaven; that though there were a hundred popes, and all the friars in the world were turned into cardinals, yet should we learn more from the Gospel than we should from all that multitude; and that true sons will in nowise go about to infringe the will and testament of their heavenly Father.\*

Wiclif here stood upon a vantage ground. Such a man could not but obtain views of truth bright and broad. He did obtain them, as his writings testify; and whatever might be the errors of the old system still floating in his mind, he seized upon grand principles, whose tendency was to clear up all remaining confusion. It is remarkable how his expressed opinions went to cut up by the roots the chief errors out of which the whole mediæval Church system grew. The defectiveness of Wiclif was in matters of detail, not in first principles. In the latter respect the clearness of his

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\* JAMES' *Apology for Wiclif*, p. 8.

vision was wonderful. It would be easy to show from his works how he abjured *asceticism*; how he looked for pardon and holiness, not to self-torture, but to free grace;\* how he abandoned *priestism* in its mediatorial character,† its necessity for the constitution of a sacrament,‡ its hierarchical development,§ and its exclusion of congregational life and power;|| and how he opposed *secularism*, not only contending against the palpable corruptions arising from the mixture of things secular and ecclesiastical as they then obtained, but going so far as to advocate in its full extent “the voluntary principle.”

Of his theological views on the way of salvation, it is remarked by one well competent to judge:—“No language can be more explicit than that in which he asserts the dependence of man for the remission of his sins on the satisfaction made for them by the obedience and death of Christ. It is declared that to the one offering presented on the Cross every descendant of Adam must be indebted, not in part merely, but entirely, for the removal of his guilt. It is at the same time affirmed that this highest token of the Divine approbation is most assuredly awarded to every penitent believer, however condemned by an unregenerate priesthood. If there be passages in which the reformer speaks of men as ‘deserving’ the blessedness of a future world, we have his protest against its being interpreted as at variance with the doctrine which regards the salvation

\* VAUGHAN'S *Life of Wiclif*, ii. 318.

‡ *Ib.* 310.

§ *Ib.* 277.

+ *Ib.* 299.

|| *Ib.* 279.

of the soul as being in every view of it purely the work of God.”\*

And while the breadth and depth of the reformer's views are so remarkable, it cannot but be noticed by those who have paid any attention to his writings, how free he is from the mystic tendencies which so generally tintured the early Continental reformers. What an absence he shows of all dreamy speculation; how much self-diffidence is mingled with all his boldness; how he claims the liberty of doubting where a subject is not plain, of leaving the explanation of the mysterious till brighter light shall come; and how thoroughly the practicalness of the Saxon understanding, the homely, profitable, and precious common-sense of his countrymen, works calmly along through the entire performance of his earthly task. Deep piety was at the bottom of the whole. He loved his Bible for the life it gave to his own soul, and its purifying comfort amidst all his sorrows—for Wiclif had many sorrows. Life he called a valley of weeping. Though not a martyr, his course had been none of the smoothest, and towards the close of life he had some of the troubles of a confessor. But the cast of his mind, doubtless, had much to do with his sorrowfulness. That mind was not of the same type with the buoyant, genial temper of his great German successor. We cannot fancy him doing what Luther did. The table-talk of the two men would be widely different. There is a mournful tone in Wiclif's first

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\* VAUGHAN'S *Life of Wiclif*, vol. ii. 318—325.



book, *The Last Age of the Church*. It was written in dark times, when the plague, like Death on the pale horse, was careering over Europe. It was a time to weep rather than laugh, and the key-note of all Wiclif's writings is struck in the first. Not that his tone was sentimental, but it was sad—a grave, manly, nay even at times, a severe sadness. He was often roused to holy displeasure, oppressed with grief, and moved by compassion; “but judging of him by his works, it is difficult to suppose that his brow was often cheered by a smile, or that his heart was often the seat of any feeling which had not a strong mixture of the sorrowful.” But he found comfort in prayer and in his Bible, and in the faith he ever had in that personal Redeemer who watches over all his faithful ones, and who mysteriously, but wisely, governs both the Church and the world. Among the noblest works of God was John de Wiclif, and I deeply feel the truth and beauty of good John Foxe's words:—“This is out of all doubt, that at what time all the world was in most desperate and evil estate, and that the lamentable ignorance and darkness of God's truth had overshadowed the whole earth, this man stepped out like a valiant champion, unto whom it may be justly applied that is spoken in the book called Ecclesiasticus. ‘Even as the morning star being in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon being full in her course, and as the bright beams of the sun, so doth he shine and glister in the Temple and Church of God.’” \*

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\* FOXE, *Book of Mart.*, vol. i. 484.

Amidst the agitations of the age, there was no one in the fourteenth century whose bold individuality came out with such wisdom and truth on the side of reform, as the Rector of Lutterworth. He had seized on the principle which alone could overturn the pillars of the papacy, and cleanse Christendom of its corruptions. Mysticism and socialism could but palliate an essentially evil system, and while sometimes moderating its grosser developments, at other times the same things were employed in strengthening the system itself. But Wiclif's appeal to the Bible, as man's sufficient guide in religion, and his opening of its contents before the eyes of his countrymen, bidding them read and judge for themselves, was no mere superficial corrective of ecclesiastical and spiritual evils—it went to the root of them all. The Lutterworth Rector came in the true line of apostolical succession, working after the manner of Waldo.

Wiclif's influence died not with him. Others following, wrought in the same spirit. There is another English version of the Scriptures extant, of a date rather later than that of Wiclif. Several MSS. of both remain in our public libraries. They must have been originally very numerous and extensively read. To be Wiclifites was synonymous with being Bible readers; and Knighton, the historian, laments that such people so crowded the land, that out of every two Englishmen who met on the road, one was of this description. A bill was brought into Parliament in 1390, to check the study of vernacular versions, but it failed. Archbishop Arundel, however, in 1408 pub-

lished a prohibition which formed the basis of all subsequent Bible persecutions. Some documents belonging to the year 1429 are given by Foxe, which show that to possess an English Testament incurred the charge of heresy, and that the ability to read among common people—then a rare attainment—was supposed to be chiefly employed for acquiring a knowledge of the new versions. It is remarkable that we lose traces of Wiclif's influence after the earlier part of the fifteenth century. The Lollards, so numerous at the beginning, almost disappear at the end. Yet Wiclif's grand principle—the sufficiency of Scripture—we find maintained by Bishop Pecock,\* in his *Treatise on Faith*. This remarkable person was an opponent of many of the Lollard conclusions, and a defender both of episcopacy and of the Church, but his advocacy of the fundamental Lollard principle, even in spite of his recanting it, was enough to procure for his name an association with Wiclif's as a brother heretic, and, accordingly, so we find them coupled in the statutes of King's College, Cambridge.

Anne of Bohemia, Queen of Richard II., had a part of the Bible in English, and studied it, as we learn from Arundel's funeral sermon for her. It was probably Wiclif's Bible. The influence of his books in her native land, conveyed through some of her attendants, and even by Jerome of Prague, who visited England in the year 1400, is an ascertained fact. It served,

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\* Promoted to the See of St. Asaph in 1444, translated to Chichester 1449.

probably, to confirm that love of the Scriptures which we find existing among the Bohemians before the Reformation, and which was of deeper significance, as to their own religious life, and of more fatal import to Rome, than all their Calixtine controversies and Taborite battles. The power of that spirit was confessed at Constance. There it was said, "a common layman with the Bible at his side, is more to be credited than a whole council, when contrary to the Bible." The Bohemian brethren, the forerunners of the United Brethren, the *Unitas Fratrum* of Herrnhut, were strong spiritual builders of the Wiclif class, and laid deep the corner-stones of their work among the mountains of Reichenau. When scattered by persecution, these pit-dwellers, as their enemies nicknamed them, found their comfort and joy in what had renewed their souls, while it taught them the need of ecclesiastical reformation. Not daring to kindle a fire by day, lest the smoke should betray them—they heaped up blazing faggots at night, not only to warm their limbs, but to serve as lamps for the reading of their much-worn Testaments in their forest sanctuary.

This love to God's own pure truth, revealing itself now and then like a bright stream amidst wild dark scenes, in the religious history of the fifteenth century, when so much that was bad and corrupt everywhere existed, is the main relief of a frightful picture. The more we study that epoch the gloomier it appears. The agitations of the thirteenth century had not spent their force, but the principal effect now seemed to be the throwing up on the surface of the filthiest social pollutions in Church

and State. Never was there more superstition, idolatry, falsehood, cruelty, lust—more of hypocrisy among priests, more of irreligion among people, than just before the Reformation. The Church, amidst all the pomp of her worship, and all her punctiliousness in ritual service, was getting more and more infidel in heart. That worst of all ecclesiastical curses was in her, care for her lucrative craft, with disbelief in every one of her holiest doctrines. Faith was passing away from the earth before the new coming of the Son of Man. It was an age of infidelity. We turn back an hundred years or so, and we find, so early, the agitations of the times assuming, in some minds, a sceptical form. Boccaccio makes sportive allusions of the kind, perhaps the covering of serious doubts. Petrarch distinctly informs us in his day, of persons who believed the world was eternal, and made a joke of the Mosaic history of creation—who had a contempt for Christ and his apostles, impiously treating them as idiots—who profanely called Hell and Heaven, tales of an ass—and who maintained that Providence took no care of anything beneath the moon. But infidelity was taking a far stronger and broader hold on society in the fifteenth century, than the fourteenth. The proof of it is found in the opposition made to it by thoughtful men. Eichhorn mentions defences of religion by Marsilius Ficinus, Alfonso de Spina, Savonarola, Æneas Sylvius, and Picus of Mirandola.\*

Where no sceptical opinions were openly expressed,

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\* HALLAM, *Int. to the Lit. of Europe*, vol. i. 190.

there was that silent but operative heart infidelity, which is worse than intellectual assault, or sophistry, or banter. From the Vatican downwards, through all ranks, that poison spread—worship had, too commonly, lost its sincerity. Temples were profaned—priests in the choir told stories of battle “in the midst of matins,” and, under pretence of responses, repeated the “fables and gestes of Robin Hood.” While the Church and the world were fast rushing down to the pit of perdition, there were events, serving in the end at least, to aid that power which was to prove the salvation of both.

#### VII. OF THE REVIVAL OF LITERATURE.

The revival of Greek literature in Europe after the fall of Constantinople, is a fact requiring discrimination to judge of its effects. Under classical attractions, many became imbued with a pagan spirit. The *renaissance* fever so raged, that certain learned cardinals called Jehovah Jupiter, and Heaven Olympus. Classic taste did not make men infidels, but in some cases it found them so, and confirmed them in their infidelity. They had identified Christianity with the corruptions, the prejudices, and the ignorance of the age, and their disgust at these was deepened the more their intellectual taste was purified by acquaintance with the fairest and most perfect models of ancient literature. At the same time, the ethical spirit of the Greek philosophy, especially Plato's, must have appeared superior to the moral influence of a system whose advocates in their own lives

set at nought the obligations of virtue, and openly professed to sell for money the mercy of Heaven. A temper of disbelief, or at least of doubt, in reference to Christianity so misapprehended, would, in this way, gather strength, and consequently, inattention to Scripture truth would be encouraged by classical sympathies, in proportion to the profounder dislike which those sympathies inspired towards the gross falsehoods which covered and concealed that truth. Scholars transferred idolatry from the Virgin and the Saints to Socrates and Cicero. They adored the past in literature and art, as they saw its glories in old Greece and Rome; supremely did they desire its revival in the present. There was abundance of mere dilettantism, much devotion to the study of words, not in their deep meaning, but merely as material for the graces of style and rhetorical ornament. Yet though infidelity or frivolousness might be found among some of the classical revivalists who gathered round Lorenzo de' Medici in the beautiful halls and gardens of Fiesole, or formed the court of Leo X. in the luxurious palace of the Vatican, the new learning was far differently employed in other directions. The brethren at Deventer used recovered Greek in the study of the New Testament; and, ultimately, to the revival of classic lore the Reformation owed the Paraphrase of Erasmus, and the Version of Tyndale.

The invention of printing was a good less mixed "with baser matter." The Mazarin Bible was the first book of considerable size which was issued from the press. "We may see in imagination this venerable an

splendid volume leading up the crowded myriads of its followers, and imploring, as it were, a blessing on the new art, by dedicating its first-fruits to the service of Heaven." It may be stated, on the authority of Mr. Hallam, whose felicitous language has been just quoted, that no less than six vernacular translations from the Vulgate were printed between 1471 and 1478. The vast multiplication of purer versions afterwards was the result of the typographer's toil; and nothing so ministered to the progress of the Reformation at home and abroad as the circulating of the Bible. On whatever side the Papal system was first and mainly assailed,—whether through its sacraments, as by Zwingle; through its indulgences, as by Luther; or through its Roman supremacy, as by our own Reformers,—in each case the vantage ground occupied was the Bible, on which were placed those engines of assault that work with such a happily destructive power on the huge and formidable errors of ages. And it may be added as a fact little noticed, but one of very great importance, that in our own country, during the short reign of Edward the Sixth, there were no less than fifty distinct issues of the Scriptures, and that out of the fifty-seven printers then in England, thirty-one were engaged upon the sacred volume.\* The circumstance serves to explain the progress which the Reformation had made by the time of Mary's reign, as compared with Henry the Eighth's.

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\* ANDERSON'S *Annals of the Bible*, vol. ii. 237—239.



## VIII. OF THE APPLICATION OF THE IDEAL.

The ultimate application of the Divine ideal to the existing corruptions of the age had begun with Wiclif; it was carried on and brought to a grand and memorable crisis by Luther. The revival of learning, and still more the invention of printing, prepared for the exhibition before the minds of men of that Divine ideal of truth, revealed a millennium and a half before, but which, during that space, had been thrown into the background, and concealed under a corrupt historical realization. By comparing the latter with the former, by an exposure of unsightliness in the one, and of unmixed beauty in the other, aspirations after a purer state of things in Christendom were roused, and all that was really strong in the work of Reformers came into existence and attained its noblest ends. We have seen first Waldo, and then Wiclif, adopting the true method of reform—the application of the Divine ideal as the standard for measuring the human actual, with a view to the cutting out of Christendom all that did not correspond with that standard. We now notice another man, if not better, yet more illustrious than either, pursuing the same plan, but with a bolder and more heroic spirit. His blessed work of destruction forms the climax of our present historical subject; it marks the end of our task. Upon his toils of construction,—upon what he built up,—upon the positive Protestantism of modern Christendom, it is not our province to enter :

we finish with his great act of pulling down the falsehoods of ages.

The case was this. God gave an ideal of truth and duty for man to the end of time: he was to work and live by it; but at first, without forgetting that, he sought out many inventions, he added things of his own to Christian worship, Christian polity, Christian doctrine. The innovations of one age were developed in another, and that development became traditionalized in the next. Human traditions had become gradually blended with Divine revelations, till the mass of men totally failed to distinguish between the two. Bishops, popes, monks, friars, saw from time to time that there was something wrong, without going deep enough to get at the cause. They never probed the wound; they healed the hurt slightly, sewed it up, and it burst out again. All their attempts at reform were utter failures. Evils grew broader, deeper, stronger, beneath their unskilful efforts to extinguish or repress them. And now came the man raised up of God to lay bare before all Europe the root of the mischief; to show his fellows that all the miseries of Christendom arose out of a departure from the Bible; that Councils and Popes had been devising, and sanctioning, and elaborating a Church system that was opposed to the Bible; that if Christianity was to be saved from the superstitions, the idolatries, the excesses, the confusions, that threatened its extinction, there must be a return to the Bible. That return was, wherever it took place, a destruction, to a large extent, of those errors which it has been our

business to trace, century after century, in their rise and progress.

Luther was prepared for his task by studying the Bible, and by learning to distinguish between its exclusive authority and the fallible conclusions of men. Deeper than any mere scholastic exercise was the process which led him into the clear apprehension of the doctrine of justification by faith. That side of the work of salvation which consists in a change of relationship to the moral Governor of the universe—the pardon of sin, acceptance with the Lord of all through a simple and loving trust in Jesus, as distinguishable from though ever connected with the renewal of the heart by the grace of the Holy Spirit—that spiritual fact explained by the apostle Paul, but inadequately apprehended by theologians, now shone with pre-eminent luminousness in the heart of Luther, stilled the agony of his guilty conscience, and poured peace into his soul. Reflecting upon it, he gave logical expression to his thoughts in his theology, and thus made the richest modern contribution to the science of religion. From a warm heart the truth passed into a clear intellect, and then came forth in vigorous, pointed, convincing speech. The Bible made the reformer by teaching him this doctrine.

The sale of indulgences gave this doctrine the lie, and that sale was the last and most loathsome development of the Church system of past ages. The priest, in the most blasphemous manner, here pretended to mediate between God and man; secularism appeared full of avarice, grown greedy as the horse-leech;

asceticism, too, was present in this mystery of iniquity, canting about penance and its virtue, while in the act of selling exemption from its obligations in the open market-place. The traffic of Tetzels was the ripe rottenness of a system which had now utterly lost all earnestness save such as cupidity inspired. This flagrant corruption brought on the grand crisis of the sixteenth century. Had that corruption been suppressed in time; had a Hildebrand instead of a De' Medici been on the Papal throne; had a Bernard been in the Vatican instead of a Babbiena, who said, "The only thing we want is a court with ladies;" had a Savonarola, instead of being burnt, been spared to diffuse his mystic piety, and to execute his practical reforms; had even a Contarini, with his devout spirit, and bright glimpses of salvation by grace, only with a firmer will, been in the ascendant at Rome,—might not the crisis have been delayed longer? Yet it would have been only delay. But with nothing to postpone, with everything to accelerate, the inevitable battle and the overthrow, they came at once. "The iniquity of the Amorites was full."

One winter's day there was a bonfire outside the walls of Wittenberg, and a crowd of German students cheered on Luther, in his monk's frock, as they saw him throw into the flames the Canon Law, the Decretals, and the Pope's Bulls.\*

Not long afterwards, there was a great gathering of

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\* Luther thus announced to Spalatin what he had done. "In the year 1520, the 11th day of December, at nine o'clock, A.M., were burned at Wittenberg, without the Eastern gate, near the Holy Cross,

princes and prelates, with the Emperor of Germany among them, under the shadow of the red sandstone towers of the cathedral in the old city of Worms. Luther was there to justify himself and maintain an evangelical creed. "I cannot submit my faith," he boldly said, "either to Pope or Councils. If I be not convinced by testimonies of Scripture, I neither can nor will retract anything. Here I stand; I can do no otherwise. God help me!"

No two scenes were ever fuller of meaning. The corrupt growth of ages was burnt, the one Divine law for Christendom upheld. There was not only the destruction of error,—truth was built up. The whole Reformation was there.

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all the books of the Pope, the decree, the decretals, the recent bull of Leo X., &c., in order that the incendiary papists may see that it requireth no great purpose to burn books which they cannot refute."

## CONCLUDING LECTURE.

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OUR reading of Ecclesiastical History from Pentecost to the Reformation is now completed. The endeavour has been to analyse the collected facts of successive ages, and to show the sum of the peculiarities of each. The first age was *formative*, when Divine objects were newly presented, and infant Christendom was being taught to see. The second was *innovating*, when youthful fancy disturbed the exercise of the perceptive faculty, and blended too often dreams with realities. The third was busy with *development*; the logical understanding unfolding premises in which the truths of spiritual insight and the errors of unrulèd imagination were strangely intermingled. The fourth was in bondage to *tradition*—memory uncritically gathering up and preserving whatever had come within its reach, the affections and the will being made subject to the authority of the historical Church. And the fifth, an age of *agitation* and *reaction*, showed that a higher reason than had aforetime asserted its prerogatives, was beginning to fulfil its office—first to destroy, and then to reconstruct, and that the era of the Church's manhood was at hand. In the first and second ages we see Christianity working chiefly upon man; in the third

and fourth upon society and man; and in the fifth, through them, upon universal literature and upon art in general.

I have made no attempt to give a philosophy of the ages. A philosophy of their history would be among the grandest works any one could accomplish. But he must look much further, and go far deeper than the present lecturer has the power of doing.

Yet something in the way of reflection on the result of our studies ought to be attempted. That we shall attempt.

I. ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IS, TO A LARGE EXTENT,  
A HISTORY OF CORRUPTIONS.

The fact that it is so, has sometimes produced an impression unfavourable to Christianity. The divinity of the latter has been impugned, on the ground that such evils as we have described exist in connexion with it. But a moderate share of candour and perspicacity will suffice to detect the injustice of such a procedure. Corruptions in Christendom, as we have shown, are the result of innovations *upon* the Gospel. Such things are introduced only into the *realization* of Christianity, making that realization imperfect and false—or, to speak more properly, they render the history of actual Christianity a departure from the ideal. Surely the ideal can never be righteously condemned for what in actual Christianity absolutely contradicts it! Whatever things there may be in ecclesiastical history to shock a pure and honest mind, they are utterly opposed to the book of

Christian morality and faith. Comparing the pages of that book with the pages of this history, however much discredit may fall on some of the heroes of the one, it would be a flagrant injustice to reflect any of such discredit on the teaching of the other. Christianity claims to be judged of according to what it is in itself, as authoritatively exhibited in the sacred records, not according to the abuse or neglect of its charter and institutes. Who could ever blame the law of the land for the crimes which it forbids and punishes?

Moreover, the corruptions were foreseen. In the ideal itself it is implied, that, for a long time at least, the actual would not only fall below it, but be contradictory to it. We read in the New Testament of "a falling away," of "false prophets coming in sheep's clothing," of "departing from the faith," of "giving heed to seducing spirits," of "bringing in damnable heresies," of "men denying the Lord that bought them," of "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." Paul describes "the man of sin, opposing and exalting himself, sitting in the temple of God, exhibiting himself as if he were God." The mediæval apostacy was foreseen,

Ere it came

Its shadow stretching far and wide was known,  
 And two who looked beyond the visible sphere,  
 Gave notice of its coming. He who saw  
 The Apocalypse, and he of elder time,  
 Who, in an awful vision of the night,  
 Saw the four kingdoms, distant as they were—  
 These holy men, well might they faint with fear.

The darkest pages in Church history are only what



Scripture predictions lead us to expect. Between the corruptions and the prophecies there are numerous coincidences, both general and minute, as Newton, Keith, and others have shown in luminous detail. Thus, the defects and errors of Christendom become evidences of the Divine origin of Christianity. Now, if on the one hand, it had been stated in the New Testament, that the Gospel was never to be misapprehended or denied, that the heavenly gift could never be soiled by earthly touch, that Christian men were to be exempted from human infirmity:—then, indeed, such a state of things as we have reviewed, would overturn our faith in the volume which could falsely paint a sunny and unclouded picture of things to be—or if, on the other hand, with the premonitions contained in Christ's discourses, and the apostles' letters, no heresies, schisms, or inconsistencies, no falsehood, fraud, or hypocrisy, no ambition, avarice, or sensuality, could be found registered in ecclesiastical annals;—then we should have to face a difficulty of another kind indeed, but, like the former, insuperable. But if neither of these cases exist, if the aspects of human nature, character, and experience found in the story of the Christian world, coincide with the foretellings of the Christian oracles, what conclusion can be drawn but that they are the fruit of superhuman foresight, of Divine wisdom?

Still it may be said, if the ideal be Divine, how is it that the arrangements of its Author have been what they are—how is it that He has permitted the history of its realization to include so much that is painful and

revolting? How is it that He did not keep unpolluted his own sacred institutions; that He did not save the light from being dimmed, that he did not preserve the Church an unblighted garden, a home of unruffled love? We can only answer, "His ways are not as our ways, and His thoughts are not as our thoughts." God's universe from end to end is a perfectly different realm from what man's wisdom would have made it. The human ideal of what a world should be, of what a system of creation should be, of what an order of moral government should be, of what a revelation from Heaven should be—how that petty, frail, philosophical affair is dashed to atoms the moment it comes in contact with God's actual world, with God's real creation, with God's existing government, with God's positive revelation. None who look around and reflect, but must cease to wonder that God has not ordered the history of the Church according to any *beau ideal* of ours. Whatever there may be in history to perplex people who have conceived certain optimist theories, let them but study the commonwealth of existence, of which the Church is only a part, and they must either be very blind, or very brave, if they continue to stand by their idle dreams. The history of Christendom is only in accordance with the history of the universe. It is a smaller ring within a larger—a wheel in the middle of a wheel. God revealed truth and duty to angels in Heaven. He did the same to Adam and Eve on earth. They were all at first perfect according to their nature. The greater Church above was pure

and holy—the lesser Church below had on it no taint. Then, a part of the celestial *Ecclesia* apostatized, morning stars fell, sons of God kept not their first estate. The little terrestrial *Ecclesia*, as a whole, was disobedient; as its members multiplied, they corrupted religion, accepted shadows for substances, and went fearfully astray. Here then we have examples of responsible creatures having before them divine communications full of holiness and love, while they are either in declared hostility to the gracious message and law, or else keeping hollow peace, and paying hypocritical deference. Infinite power and goodness have not prevented such a collision—nor excluded such an alliance. Evil exists in this world and in other worlds. Is it out of harmony with that fact that evil should be found in Christendom? The analogy between the corruptions of the Christian religion, and the prior corruptions of reason and conscience, between the introduction of sin among angels, and the appearance of disobedience among Christians, is obvious enough. There is only this difference, that whereas in the earlier case there was apostasy after *perfection*—a departure from the ideal after a full realization of it—in the latter case, there has never been full perfection; at the beginning the ideal was not more than partially realized. The first fall was deeper than the second, and far more wonderful. If nature be corrupted, is it so great a marvel that revelation should be perverted? Amidst the raging of moral disease, is the mystery much increased when we see mortals resisting or misapplying the remedy? How could human sin

and folly, prevalent everywhere, be kept out of Christendom, without a miracle very different from, and far greater than, any which the Bible relates ?

## II. BUT ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IS ALSO A RECORD OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Amidst the corruptions of Christianity we trace the existence of what is essentially opposed to them. The ideal, after all, has by no means failed to produce some beautiful realization of itself. The *Church*, indeed, understanding by that, the one visible organization on which Cyprian set his heart, which the Nicene Fathers went on to build, and which mediæval saints and politicians toiled to finish and preserve, appears to us to be a falsification of the Christian doctrine of the one redeemed family, and of the institutions for visible fellowship. *Theology* also, understanding by that the development of human thought and feelings, as engaged upon Divine facts and principles, we are compelled to regard as, at the best, incomplete. But *Christian religion*, understanding by that the power and life which Christianity conveys into the heart—the binding force which it exerts in gathering up and concentrating the energies of humanity on moral and spiritual ends,—*Christian religion* presents to us a very different history:—we see age after age producing the copy and the counterpart of a holy original.

1. Indications of Christian piety from the first century to the sixteenth are abundant—we nowhere miss them.

However dreary may be the student's path in other respects, it is skirted by spiritual verdure—in the distance are ever and anon caught glimpses of rich scenery. Examples of faith, purity, love, heroism, devotion, and obedience, have already come under our notice. They might easily be multiplied. They are often found in the by-paths of ecclesiastical literature. They are met with where least expected—purity is seen amidst pollution—a heavenly mind where only earthliness of the basest sort was thought to dwell. How pained we are on reading about the patrician circles of Constantinople under Arcadius, and their unprincipled plottings against Chrysostom. "What goodness could be there?" we despondingly ask, even as in the same temper we put the same question, while we read of Whitehall and St. James's in the reign of Charles II. The memoirs of a Margaret Godolphin check, in the modern case, the hasty conclusion of imperfect knowledge. Be it known that the writings of Chrysostom indicate that there were Margaret Godolphins amidst the worldly and reckless ladies of Constantinople: and, therefore, the sceptical inquiry is silenced—"Can any good thing come out of that Nazareth?"\* Names may be discovered belonging to dark eras, embedded in neglected chronicles, sparkling with Christian virtue. And it is only fair to assume, from the fact of so many passing away unrecorded, even

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\* See the story of Olympias, in comparison with that of the Empress Eudoxia, and the Court ladies Marsa, Castricia, and Eugraphia. It is well given in a *Life of Chrysostom*, by F. M. PERTHES. American translation from the German. Chap. viii. and xviii.

in our days of popular biographical literature (for it is impossible for all names to become memories), that there must have been in the ages just rapidly reviewed, multitudes of men of like faith, love, and patience, with those whom the pen of fame or friendship has rescued from oblivion. And, throughout patristic and mediæval literature, there may be detected a deep under current of feeling, such as one never finds in pagan writings, significant of what bare philosophy could not engender. I mean a sense of sin—of its evil and its curse. Many of those confessions and lamentations of contemporary iniquities, to which the sceptic on the one hand, and the partisan on the other, point each for his own purposes, do also correct them both;—for those very confessions and lamentations, while testifying to the existence and prevalence of social evil and confusion, do, at the same time, reveal such sensitiveness to the enormity of moral wrong—such horror of impurity and selfishness, such a conviction of their demerit, such a sympathy with the abhorrence of them by a holy God, as prove something of a realization in the writer's mind of the lofty ideal of Christian goodness. Salvian, of the fifth century, writing on the state of his times, in this way produces on the reader a totally different effect from what Tacitus does. Fellowship with Salvian, in a Christian hatred of sin, may be discovered at the bottom of many a monkish biography and legend.

2. We have noticed instances of spiritual decline, but we have also noticed instances of spiritual revival. Contemporary with the shadows of death on some spots,

there are flushes of life over others. It is with the religious as with the physical and national,—while in England we suffer with Christmas frost, they in Australia are basking in summer sunshine:—and when Nineveh and Persepolis were become waste, Athens was in meridian glory, and Rome was rising into Empire. While autumn tinges the woods of Canada, spring is blushing in Pacific Isles:—and when Spain was in the yellow leaf, America was putting forth her new-found life. So the circle of spiritual seasons has followed the natural and the political. Contemporary with the waning of piety in Antioch, was its waxing in Milan. When the churches of Alexandria and Carthage were sinking into the decrepitude of formalism, the churches of Gaul were battling the vices of imperial civilization, and the rudeness and disorder of barbarism. The era of the early growth of Rome's impious pretensions, was the era of Ireland's light and life, holiness and beauty. While Mahomet was God's avenger on Syria and Egypt, the monks of Iona were studying their Bible, and Scotch missionaries were crossing the Anglo-Saxon border, and entering the heart of Germany. As Gregory IV. was encouraging the sons of the Emperor Lewis in parricidal wars, Claude was preaching the truth at Turin, and adorning it by a holy life. When the pontifical court at Avignon was disgracing the name of religion by luxury and vice, pious men were writing books and preaching sermons, and practising godly virtue in Teutonic cities. When the night of superstition and despotism was getting blacker than ever in France, the

morning star of the Reformation rose on England. When Italian fields were covered with rotten stubble, Bohemia was whitening to the harvest. We do injustice to history, we dishonour providence, by looking at one side only of its manifestations. While we must not so dwell on seasons of sunshine and harvest, as to give the idea there was nothing else; neither must we so pore over pictures of night and winter, as to imagine that age after age there was nothing but a winter's night.

3. There were varieties in the outer form of olden piety. Numerous causes, I believe, contributed to those varieties. Climate and scenery, race and language, national laws and memories, early education and circumstances, friendships and idiosyncrasies — all have had their share in shaping the embodiment of spiritual life in the saints of God. We are apt to underrate the *number* of influences by which even sanctified humanity is affected. The mind is fond of referring complex results to a simple cause. We are apt to imagine that the climate of a country is determined entirely by position in point of latitude—that every mile nearer to the pole it must be colder—that every mile nearer to the line it must be hotter—whereas numerous and diversified agencies affect the state of climate, and combine to produce wonderful curves in the isothermal lines. So we are apt to imagine that one cause determines religious character, that all the phenomena of spiritual life are regulated by the action of revealed truth on the heart—and that the nearer we



get to the time when the Christian revelation was made, the more pure and perfect we shall find the specimens of Christian piety to have been—whereas, in fact, forces of all kinds have been, and are ever at play, to disturb the simple influence of the principles of the Gospel on human minds. It is proper distinctly to recognise varieties on the surface of spiritual life, and to hint at the range of study demanded for a full illustration of their origin,—but it is incumbent at the same time to maintain the identity of essence underlying all. Whoever looks closely into the annals of the fifteen centuries, will find ever as the ground of true religion, the same precious elements of power—faith in God's fatherhood—faith in Christ's mediation—faith in the Spirit's work. There is the foundation of Christian thought, Christian experience, Christian character. Could one of us converse with a Nicene or mediæval believer, there might be some difficulty in understanding him at first—but getting below metaphysical theology—forms of worship—ecclesiastical discipline—and æsthetic predilections; when each came to speak to the other of God, as a personal and ever-present Father—of Christ, as the Son of God and the brother and redeemer of man—of the Spirit, as the soul's sanctifier—and of the Divine presence in the temple of the Church—varieties would be harmonized—heart would answer to heart, and men, divided by ages, would clasp hands and kneel together before the one cross and the one throne. No ground of unity would be seen in ceremonies and discipline, in church-order and usage—no, not even in theology—not in any

scientific propositions, about Divine things—but only in *Divine persons*, in their gracious character and relations to us—only in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

And because in the Church system, with all its corruptions, there never was a denial of these Divine persons, because, on the contrary, it has ever recognised and proclaimed them in unity, spiritual life has been possible, and has been often realized and manifested within a sphere pervaded by so much that is erroneous and false. Protesting against the Gnostic, as one who impugns the Divine Fatherhood, against the Arian as one who impugns the Divine Sonship, and against the Pelagian as one who impugns the Divine agency, the general voice of Christendom has ever given bold assertion to fundamental truth, false and forgetful as in other respects it may often have remained. Not to the Church system, as a system, did piety, living under it, owe either birth or nutriment; only from the truths which the system encircled, could there come spiritual life and enlargement. The Nicene and mediæval Church, as a Church, was not a witness of the Kingdom of God—nor was her prelacy a witness of the power of God—nor were her sacraments witnesses of the grace of God; but, notwithstanding, truths were preserved in it amidst apostasy and superstition, which proved seeds and fostering powers of life Divine in human souls.

4. Infirmities, imperfections, and inconsistencies, have more or less ever been blended with individual piety. The relative proportions of good and evil in the cha-

racter of a Christian now, and in the character of a Christian twelve or fourteen hundred years ago, are not so unlike as might be at first supposed. There are perhaps some excellences which are most prominent in our day, and others which were most prominent in theirs. And if they had their special failings, we are not without ours. Estimating character apart from privileges, looking at it absolutely, we may pronounce religion now purer than it was then, and the corruptions of religion in ancient times as greater than those which cleave to us; but taking privileges with character, looking at religion relatively, considering the lesser knowledge, experience, and advantages of earlier Christians together with *their* very obvious failings, and *our* larger knowledge, experience, and advantages together with *our* highest claimed attainments, then the apparent difference in the measure of real religious power will be wonderfully diminished. Minor acquisitions of wisdom by them will be found perhaps associated with as much rectitude of mind, as the greater acquisitions may exhibit among us; and the inconsistencies of modern Christians, peradventure not so startling, may, nevertheless, when viewed in connexion with altered times, imply equal, if not greater guilt, than belonged to ancient Christians, before whose aberrations we stand perfectly amazed.

The ideal of religion, as presented in the gospel, has never been fully embodied in the life of any individual man. If we take the best specimens of Christianized humanity, and compare the copy with the original, something will be found defective; but if we take the

whole collection of instances in which Christianity has moulded and enriched human life, we shall have a fair realization of the Divine type. And that is what we ought to do if we would deal fairly with facts, and with Scripture truth. The full expression of God's ideal of the human intellect can be found only after a broad induction from the history of our race at large. The Englishman is not the perfect mirror of human thought, nor is the German, nor is the Frenchman. Each has, in his national character and habits—in his mode of looking at, and treating subjects—some delicate, subtle, powerful element which the others lack. To get at the embodiment of the idea of man the created, we must combine the varieties of man the actual—we must put English, Germans, French, Italians, all together, to get at God's type of humanity; and so if we would see the realized ideal of man the redeemed, we must bring together the varieties of spiritual life which have adorned Christendom from the first. Modern piety, mediæval piety, primitive piety, must be compared. In that man who was the Lord from Heaven, alone we find *individually* comprehended all the treasure which humanity contains. In the Redeemer only are all the graces of the redeemed. But the Church, which is His body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," exhibits, in diffusion, what he reveals in concentration. His people reflect, each in tiny rays, but, all together, in a flood of radiance, the light poured forth by Him.

5. Christianity, then, as a religion, is no failure. It is not feeble, but strong; not vanquished, but valorous

and victorious. How wonderful it is to trace the history of gospel influence so regarded ; to watch it as a spiritual power in the midst of a Godless world ; to see it working in the early centuries, and during the middle ages, and ever since ; working in spite of resistance and corruption, in spite of violence and sophistry, in spite of errors and perversions ; often apparently imperilled, but never really overcome ; assailed, but invincible ; warred against, but triumphant. Arnold says of Rome, when attacked by Hannibal, "The single torrent joined by a hundred lesser streams swelled into a wide flood, overwhelming the whole valley, and the principal object of interest is the one rock, now islanded amid the waters, and on which they dash furiously on every side as though they must needs sweep it away. But the rock stands unshaken, the waters become feebler, their streams are again divided, and the flood shrinks, and the rock rises higher and higher, and the danger is passed away." The passage may be applied to the power of gospel truth, the might of evangelical religion when threatened by Rome—Rome imperial and Rome papal, classic Rome and mediæval Rome, the Rome of the Cæsars and the Rome of the Pontiffs—the one rushing in a torrent of persecution, the other in a tide of corruption ; both swelling into a flood, while the one rock stands islanded amidst the waters, till *they* become feebler, and *it* rises higher and the flood shrinks ; first when Paganism was overthrown, and secondly when the glorious Reformation came.

Christian religion discloses its power and wealth by

degrees, like the tilled earth and the worked mine. It takes years to show what it can do for one man. It has taken ages to show what it can do for society and civilization. This is a fact which it would be absurd to ignore, and which it must be full of argument and persuasion to study. It yields presumptive evidence of the Divinity of that by which it is produced. Handed back by historical study from age to age, till we come to the first, the presumptive evidence meets the demonstrative. The annals of Christianity, as a religion, prepare us for the miracles of Christianity as a revelation. If, in beginning to study Christian proofs, our starting point be the present; if we do not descend from the beginning till now, but ascend from now to the beginning, the journey well fits us for the home it leads to. Musing on the history of what we see in Christian faith and patience, purity, heroism, unselfishness and love, we shall feel, as we proceed, that the power creating all this *must* be Divine, and all the more so for that which resisted and impeded it. Arrived at the apostolic age, and the age of Christ, —there, surrounded by the calm intense light of his miracles, his wisdom, and his love, we shall be compelled to admit that the Gospel *is* Divine. Yes, indeed, it is!

### III.—THE EXISTENCE OF THIS PIETY THROUGHOUT, IS A WITNESS TO THE PRESENCE AND AGENCY OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

Physical nature, intellectual life, artistic power, are all realms of Divine operation. In things relating to the

natural, as well as in things relating to the spiritual, man is wholly dependent on his Maker. According to Scripture, creation is the Spirit's work—mental endowments are gifts of the Spirit—talent and skill, even in the toils of handicraft, come to man through the influence of the Spirit. Because some have confounded different methods of Divine agency, have sunk the distinction between genius and inspiration, we are inexcusable if, while protesting against their error, we rush to an opposite extreme, and overlook the Divine in nature and providence. If over a wide range of space and thought and time, the creative and stirring power of God's Spirit has been unweariedly at work, it is not proper for piety to be indifferent to the Divine origin and relation of objects so beautiful and varied. Surely, the lips of piety are not to be shut, or opened simply to say *No*, to proud false oracles that are commingling things that differ, but rather should those lips clearly and intelligently express the truth; and declare how the fountain of all that has been precious in humanity, in ancient and modern times, lies hid in the power and Spirit of God. And, accordingly, when we think of the erudition of Clement, the eloquence of Chrysostom, the comprehensiveness of Augustine, and the acuteness of Thomas Aquinas—of the hymns and the music of Ambrose, of the architectural skill of Italian, German, and French builders—of the painter and the sculptor,—of Ghiberti, Fra Angelico, and Michael Angelo, we are to recognise in them, and in all the gifted churchmen of every age, fruits of an agency without which none

of them could have been what they were, any more than earth or sky, without God, could be what it is.

But, besides *an* agency of the Spirit, there is *the* agency of the Spirit. His work in redemption rises above his work in nature. It is a subject of special revelation and promise. It is distinguished by uniform peculiarities. While to hide the objects of faith from the soul, to shut out the inner and the upper world, to make men forget the fatherhood of God and the mediation of Christ, are the intent and labour of the prince of darkness; to reveal those objects, to press them home, to inspire a filial confidence in the Father of all, and a humble trust in the Redeemer of all, are the office and end of the Spirit of God in the economy of grace. While the parent spirit of selfishness, hatred, malignity, revenge, and all uncharitableness, kindles corresponding passions in human breasts, and seeks to multiply types of himself; the parent Spirit of love breathes his own temper into human souls, subduing ingratitude and resentfulness, and lighting up in the dark chambers of the human heart, the lamps of love to God and charity to man. While the spirit who works in the children of disobedience promotes impurity, fans fleshly lusts, stimulates carnal appetites, intoxicates desire, and maddens passion; the Spirit of light and holiness conquers depravity, washes away pollution, extinguishes unhalloved fires, roots out weeds of lust, inspires with virtue, clothes with chastity, and crowns with temperance. And as in faith, love, and purity, we have the *result* of the Spirit's work, so in the unfettered range—in



the immediate direction—in the gentle, subduing, mysterious touch of His influence, we find indications of the *method* of His agency. Our best ways of doing good are limited by feebleness; the only restraint upon His, proceeds from its running orderly within lines of wisdom. Our method is circuitous and mediatory, telegraphic signs passing from mind to mind through organs of sense, but His is immediate and penetrating, and more than persuasive, affecting human consciousness in a manner for which no word is fittingly descriptive; though it should be carefully remembered, the agency, with all its might and effectiveness, leaves the personal agency of man unimpaired, and his responsibility increased rather than diminished. Our methods are sometimes blind and mistaken, and by their tendency contradict their purpose; for we, with the best intentions, blunder, roughly handling what is delicate, bewildering when we wish to guide, repelling when we mean to draw, and fancying that mechanical tact and political economy have as much to do with the kingdom of God, as with the kingdoms of men. But the Spirit's method is always true and right, sure and good, adapted and effectual.

Apply this to the history we have examined.

The abode of the Spirit in the Church, from Pentecost, is a fact. A succession of ages is presented, on all of which the Spirit sets a seal. It is true that we discern an opposite seal, the world's seal, but over against it there is the Spirit's seal.

Take the first age, that during which the apostles lived, and of which we have the record in the New

Testament. We see that even so early there was an evil work going on. Hebrew prejudice, and Gentile sensualism, were vigorous and active; but the Divine power was also conspicuous, not only in the form of miracles and inspiration, but in the beautiful moral forms of faith, love, purity; faith struggling with unbelief, love with selfishness, purity with carnal passion. A remarkable simplicity of character appeared in the best of the primitive Christians. They had the spirit of little children to a degree which well became the infant age of Christendom. Perhaps in no century like the first were there such instances of complete submission to the requirement: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of God." Their faith was unsophisticated belief; their love was childlike affection; their purity a sort of infantile virtue.

The next age was externally one of persecution—internally one of innovation. That was the aspect on the dark side—on the worldly side. But do we not see the Spirit of God kindling a counter-spirit of heroism, raising up Justins, Polycarps, and Cyprians, bravely to defy sword and flame, to resist unto blood, striving against sin? Do we not see the Spirit present in the Martyr Church? And was He not also in the Mission Church of the first three centuries, when, in spite of persecution, the word of God was not bound, but really, in the face of the world's deadly warfare, had free course and was glorified?

The third age had its worldly characteristics. It was

emphatically secular. But there was a brave battle at that time fought against the two deadly errors of Arianism and Pelagianism. I cannot think of such men as Athanasius and Augustine apart from the agency of the Spirit of truth, who, in spite of their infirmities, built up through them strong embankments against floods of heresy which were threatening to inundate the Church. Nor, as we have seen, are beautiful Christian sentiments and actions wanting in the records of that age of terrible social corruption—further to indicate the presence of the Spirit of faith, and love, and purity.

The fourth age, and fifth, were as dark as they were long—overshadowed by ignorance and spiritual despotism, but the light of the Spirit's presence may be traced amidst the gloom, not only amongst those who stood apart from the corruptions of Christendom, but even in the heart of the Roman Church. Faith, love, and purity, as we have noticed, may be found in the lives of many in that communion, connected, it is true, with error and superstition, with much that was foolish, and worse than foolish; but yet faith, love, and purity were there,—and where they were we are sure the Spirit was—all the more manifestly, indeed, for the evils and hindrances that surrounded them; for that the elements of simple piety should appear in spite of false theology and superstitious forms, is a fact which carries on its surface the brightest of all proofs of Divine operation. The efficacy of grace strikes us irresistibly when we see it counteracting and conquering the perverseness of man and the lies of the devil. The Spirit's work then was a

work of preservation. Men there were like Elijah, who protested against the idolatries of the age; and men there were like the seven thousand, who in their obscurity bowed not the knee to Baal; and in both cases we own the fulfilment of the promise, "When thou passest through the fire I will be with thee, and through the floods they shall not overflow thee." Spiritual life there was, winding about, and marking its course by the verdure of righteousness, with which it fringed, adorned, and enriched with hues of living green the waste and the desolate places.

Then, at the end of the age of darkness and despotism, came an age of light, liberty, and reform, somewhat sudden in its visible outburst, but yet the result of causes previously in operation; a flush of spring-tide beauty, of which the fount lay deep, fed long before by the vitalizing energy of the Spirit. And did not the Spirit then raise up the messengers who went far and near proclaiming old truths with a new voice? Did He not make the Confessor and the Martyr? Did He not inspire a myriad hearts with the love of these heaven-sent teachers? And though some may think, on reading the story of the Reformation, of that remarkable incident in Elisha's death-chamber, when the Prophet said to the King, "Smite upon the ground, and he smote thrice and stayed;—and the man of God was wroth, and said, Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it;"—yet so far as the smiting of Rome, and the conquest of its

tyranny and superstitions went, it was the Spirit of God that nerved the arm of the spiritual hero, and winged and guided the arrow of deliverance.

While marks of the Spirit's presence are thus traceable throughout the history of Christendom, it is important to observe that faith in the power and grace of that blessed One has also been devoutly expressed in all ages. The acknowledgment of Him "brightens the fragments of the earlier ecclesiastical writers." We cannot read their epistles, their homilies, their expositions of Scripture, and their records of facts, without perceiving that the work of the Holy Spirit in renewing the moral nature of man was a matter of belief and devout contemplation in the Churches of the first ages. The liturgies and hymns of the Church are a most interesting study, and throughout them we find, from the "Te Deum" downwards, express recognitions of the Holy Ghost the Comforter—sometimes in private compositions imaginatively and mystically expressed—but in certain precious fragments unfolded with a spiritual beauty which lifts the soul of every devout Christian into blessed communion with the Giver of all strength and grace. In the darkest periods this faith was still avowed. Pious mediæval writers and worshippers join with Fathers and Puritans in the recognition of this vital principle. "Nor is it less worthy of remembrance, that this agreement is found not only in formal statements of doctrine, but in practical exhortations, in narratives of fact, in liturgies and hymns for public worship; and in those numberless

incidental occasions on which the inward sentiment breaks through the expressions of a writer.”\*

“He shall abide with you for ever.” It was not a conditional promise, nor even a simple prediction, but the announcement of the very constitution and law of the kingdom of Heaven. And to suppose the absolute withdrawal of the Comforter at any one time from the hearts of the children of men, would be to suppose the failure of Christ’s reign, and a breach of the covenant that he should “see of the travail of his soul.” His spiritual kingdom was founded on the *abiding* presence of the Holy Ghost. Such is the authorized account of the Christian dispensation; and we are not first to set up some standard of our own, to try the ages of the Church, to see whether the Spirit was there or not,—we are to judge of His working by His own revelation, and apply it to explain the facts of history. We know that He was present in the first age, amidst corruptions then so rife. All things considered, I doubt whether it be harder to believe that He was present amidst the corruptions of the ages which followed.

#### IV.—ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IS A VIRTUAL PROTEST AGAINST THE VERY EVILS IT EXHIBITS.

Are the corruptions of Christianity to be considered apart from the scheme of Divine providence? Surely

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\* STOWELL’S *Congregational Lectures on the Holy Spirit*, p. 197. See an interesting collection of extracts illustrative of this statement in the Appendix to that work, note K.

not. That providence takes within its jurisdiction the evils it allows, no less than the good it creates. There must be a purpose and meaning in the permission of these evils. For us to presume that we can fathom the counsels of Heaven, is impious as well as idle, but to unfold and apply those laws and uses which appear upon, or just under the surface of history, must be right and wise.

Now, it is manifest that in many individual instances erroneous opinions and practices, like all things which tempt and try the spirits of men, in this disciplinary state of existence, have served to bring out the life and power which God puts into the hearts of his people, making the trial of their faith much more precious than of gold that perisheth. Humility, love, and devotion appear all the fairer when seen amidst dark temptations to pride, selfishness, and a worldly life. Simple piety triumphing over what imperils its existence, reveals its energy, and even gathers strength. It fights the braver for the heat of the battle, and wins a nobler crown through the severity of the strife.

Besides, as we have seen, incidental benefits appear in association with institutes involving corrupt principles. The organization and power of the priesthood, upon the fall of the Empire, contributed to preserve the elements of civilized life, mental culture, industrial activity, social intercourse, and temporal progress in general, during a crisis the tremendous confusion of which we, in our comfortable nineteenth-century homes, can never even imagine. The effect of monasticism, for good as well

as evil, must be acknowledged by the impartial and honest student of history—and to that subject we have endeavoured to do justice. The secular relations of the Church in times of violence and misrule, cannot be denied to have had advantages as well as mischiefs. Nor am I prepared to deny that out of the papacy itself, monstrous a corruption as that was, there came forth, now and then, aid to the oppressed, a voice on the side of virtue. The very submission to Rome, which united ecclesiastics all over Europe, seems to me to have been not merely a chain of serfdom, but a social bond, when other influences were tearing race from race, and shutting up men in wretched isolation, ignorant of the breadth of the world, and of the brotherhood of humanity.

No doubt the spirit of all evil is to be discerned in the history of Christendom. The devil's work is revealed in it. I am convinced of the truth, while I feel the boldness of Jonathan Edwards' historical philosophy, as he shows the agency of Satan from beginning to end, resisting the redemption of man, raising tempests to destroy, and weaving snares to entangle. It is a fact that the Red Dragon has had a sore conflict with Michael and his angels:—that the serpent causes the woman to be carried away of the flood. The creation of heresies and the revival of paganish superstitions, the pride, selfishness, injustice, and sensuality of popes and churchmen, may be righteously connected with the arch devices of the Father of lies—the tempter to all filthiness of the flesh, no less than all filthiness of the



spirit. It is a true verdict which is pronounced in the popular opinion of Protestants, that popery, meaning by that the whole system of ecclesiastical falsehood and corruption, is the master-piece of the Devil. But, while we see Satanic power at work in the past, as well as the present, while we tremble under the dark shadow of his outspread wings, amidst the storm, and the thunder, and the lightning of the mediæval night time, do we not see above him another Being infinitely mightier than he, checking his pride, and chaining up his strength, and balking his rage, and turning his work to another purpose than he cunningly meant—riding on the storm that he has raised—voicing the thunder he has evoked, guiding the lightning he has kindled? We see Christ in Christendom from first to last, as Lord and King—we see him there also as teacher and prophet. He permits wrong, not only that he may overrule it, but that it may serve to his reflecting people as a warning for them, and as a protest against itself. So we would humbly strive to read the mysterious story of the past. In Church history we have a Divine monitor teaching by examples. It would seem as if the verbal didactic method, though adopted by the lips of everlasting truth, were not enough to carry conviction to men's minds, as if what we poor mortals have to learn, must be embodied in facts, as if the consequences of principles must be wrought out in actual experience ere truth can be justly valued, and error fully shunned. Is it not God's plan that his human creatures should become wise through the memory of follies—good through the

remembrance of sins—that what is true should be confirmed, that what is false should be confuted, through a review of a long course of events, that caution and safety should come out of danger, that improvement should grow from the watching of failures—that intelligence should expand and deepen, and purify itself, as time reads to us his lessons :—

For, I doubt not, through the ages one eternal purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns.

In the Bible we have a written Lecture : in ecclesiastical history a series of experiments. Divine truth put to the test yields good, unmingled good. The contradiction of it, or the neglect of it, yields evil, pure evil, except as infinite love in its mysterious offices makes it the occasion of eliciting what lies deep in its own truth and grace. Reading Church histories is like witnessing on the one hand the qualities of light—on the other, those of deadly vapours. Therefore we gather from the record of corruptions, as well as of their opposites, lessons of rich instruction, which a wise-hearted generation will study and prize. We are taught that innovations upon the original Church system have been mischievous ; that priesthoods and hierarchies have depressed, not raised religion ; that asceticism has not exalted but degraded virtue ; that attempts at uniformity have been inimical, not friendly to union ; that civil establishments of Christianity have been corrosive, not cementing,—elements of spiritual decay, not bonds of Christian strength. Especially are we taught the in-

sidiousness, and the slow but steady advance of what is false and evil in Christian Churches, in the absence of strong intelligence and enlightened faith, to stem the tide. We are warned against the beginnings of error and evil. We are stimulated to resist the corrupt and the mischievous the moment they make their appearance. Childish simplicity might say, What harm was there in the self-mortification of early Christians, and the importance they attached to fasting and celibacy? What harm was there in speaking of Christian ministers, as Cyprian and Chrysostom spoke of them? What harm was there in confounding the one Catholic family of the faithful with one visible organized Church, as the good Bishop of Carthage did? What harm was there in appealing to Emperors for help, and in accepting aid from the exchequer of the State, after the manner of Nicene Bishops? But manly wisdom, taught by Church history, will never ask such childish questions. It will be seen that when once Scripture views of nature and the relation of religion to nature are lost, when once the simple idea of an instructive and pastoral ministry is abandoned, when once ecclesiastical organization becomes a grand object of desire and attempt, when once it is forgotten that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, there is no end to the evils that will spring up under the secret but diligent tillage of the Evil One. Let there be asceticism, priestism, and secularism—and then superstition, spiritual despotism, and corruptions of every kind, with persecution, are sure to come, sooner or later, out of the surrender of the pure truth taught in Scripture on these

subjects. Ecclesiastical history is a practical sermon on the text "While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." And with that long sermon before us, if we heed not the caution of the Divine text, brought home by so direct an application, we shall be more inexcusable than earlier Christians, who had the text without the sermon. The men of the first three centuries little knew what tares would spring out of the seeds sowed in their time. We do know. Enriched by the dearly bought experience of so many centuries, let us be cautious according to our knowledge. Primitive simplicity, as to form, and spirit, and faith, let us preserve; primitive simplicity, as to the seminal evils of apparently harmless principles, let us eschew. Surely by this time Christians should be "no more children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine," but should understand and teach the truth in love blended with and strengthened by a manly and matured wisdom.

I look upon it, that throughout the history of corruption, the Lord and prophet of the Church is warning his people against first innovations, through the very development and traditionalism which have inevitably followed such innovations when accepted and cherished. He teaches us to distinguish between a fully expanded system and the principles out of which it unfolds itself, yet to remember that where the principles are unchecked, there, in its season, the system will also be. Where there are acorns there will be oaks. The elements of popery, and popery itself, are not the same, but ignorantly let in the elements, and the thing they produce

will appear. Nor should it be forgotten, that the elements are more to be feared than the system. Between *that* and minds unused to it there is a great gulf. From *it* the understanding recoils as strange, monstrous, *outré*. But between *them* and minds which shrink from *it* the distance may be far less wide and differently related. A bridge of narrow stride and gentle steps may lead over that part of the gulf by which they stand, up to the mountains on the other side, and to the stern keep, built of old there among the beetling crags. It is easy for certain minds—for minds imbued with certain notions—Church principles as they are called—to get upon the first step of the bridge, and to begin a walk (to sentimental, imaginative temperaments a pleasant, attractive, because romantic, walk), which will finish we know where. Have we not been beholding whole generations, Nicene and mediæval, crowding over? To trace their footprints has been one object of these Lectures. And now, in our own day, see we not individuals, learned in a particular kind of lore, and imbued with a peculiar cast of sentiment, in the very act of crossing the same bridge; or already over it, and within the castle walls on the top of the hill yonder? They have accomplished the passage over the abyss! They have gone from Oxford to Rome. Anglo-Catholicism—the attempt to revive a sort of Nicene Church, is the *Via Media* in a sense the travellers may not have liked to acknowledge at first. Recent converts to popery have only compressed into the biography of a few years, the history of a few centuries. They have epitomized in their own

experience the three ages of innovation, development, and traditionalism. They have begun by being priestly, ascetic, and Catholic in the Cyprian sense. They have ended in being all this, in the mediæval sense. Very natural! Why should not tendencies in an individual work as tendencies have done in society? No student of Church history can wonder at the Oxford conversions. Students patristically devout have only followed Chrysostom, and Ambrose, and Jerome, and then have been handed over by these good Fathers to Gregory the Great, and then by him to the second Council of Nicæa. And who can consistently stop there? The way is open, and the impulse is irresistible to seek rest amidst the Lateran decrees and under the shadow of Innocent's high throne. I am perfectly aware, and am anxious to maintain, that the Nicene Churchman was not a Papist; and that the Tractarian Churchman is not a Romanist, but in both may be discovered that Catholicism which leads to Romanism and Popery. There is nothing very mysterious in the philosophy of their perversion, who take the Fathers as their authority, who confound the actual with the ideal, and who read the Bible through the glass of Church traditions. Some ten years of Oxford Church history, and some five centuries of general Church history, pretty well explain each other.

Ecclesiastical history, then, is a permanent protest against the three great evils whose development it records—those evils to which attention has been so repeatedly called during these lectures. Their condemnation by the ideal law, is confirmed by the verdict of

actual facts. The Bible and history at the Reformation, taught Protestants to see more or less of this important truth. Measuring the Church system by the standard revealed by the founder of Christianity, studying the evils of that system in the light of the past and the present, reformers were led into that work of destruction to which we referred in our last Lecture. The burning of papal bulls and decretals by Luther at Wittenberg, was a grand symbolical act. It was a deep, full, fruitful act, leading to large and more careful but kindred acts, in after times. The mediæval Church presented an immense deal doomed to destruction. Germany began destroying asceticism; the genial Christian, Luther, could not endure its unnaturalness. Convents and monasteries were emptied, and employed for other than useless discipline—for other than licentious purposes, under cover of ascetic hypocrisy. Switzerland, France, and England carried on a fierce war against asceticism. In no respect did the Reformation manifest its spirit so energetically. It worked earnestly, even blindly—sparing in its wrath neither the associations of the system—the building, the statue, the carved work, the paintings, the furniture, the records and the manuscripts—any more than the system itself.

Germany assailed priestism—undermined its mediatory character, brought men into immediate relation to God—especially by putting the Bible into their hands, but left the destruction of the superstitious doctrine of sacraments incomplete. Zwingle was, in this respect, more enlightened and bold than Luther. Calvin stands

in a *via media* between the two. The English Church imperfectly reformed the old doctrine of priesthood and sacraments. It certainly did make a bold stroke in the reformation of worship. I never saw this so clearly as when two Easters ago I went from St. Peter's at Rome, after mass, to the English Church, where the Lord's Supper was being administered. Wonderful contrast between the blazing pomp of the one, and the quiet subdued spirit of the latter. From the Mass Book to the Common Prayer, so far as the order and method of service is concerned, the change was immense. But in the exposition of the sacraments,—both the Lord's Supper and Baptism,—the English Church did not sufficiently purify its doctrine from the corruption of ages. Baptismal efficacy and eucharistic grace were left as elements of superstition, to nurse in later times a band of sons, adhering to and exaggerating the forms, while faithless in many respects to the spirit of their mother's teaching. A back door was left open through which men have gone to an older home.

The destruction of priestism in Churches was left for the Puritans to accomplish. The mediation of man they repudiated—the doctrine of sacramental virtue, with different degrees of clearness, they denied. But neither in Germany, Switzerland, France, or England, was the evil of secularism seen by the chief reformers. The connexion between Church and State was upheld. An Erastian establishment was its fruit in this country, which, whatever may be said in its favour as to the check of the civil power on the despotic tendencies of High



Churchmen, is quite as much opposed to the Divine ideal of a Church, viewed as a free and independent institute, no less than a spiritual, unearthly, and humble brotherhood—as the Church of Rome is opposed to that ideal, in relation to its arrogant claims of lordship over the State. Puritans were not opposed to an establishment. The work of assailing the ancient prejudice in behalf of the union between Church and State, was left for Independents. They undertook it. Thus they only carried out the spirit of the Reformation,—legitimately extending the application of Luther's principles. If Pope's bulls and decretals contrary to Christ's law ought to be burnt, do Acts of Parliament and political covenants of like character, deserve any better fate? Reformers said the Church ought not to be the *mistress* of the State:—the Puritans said the Church ought not to be the *bride* of the State. The Independent says amen to all that—and adds, the Church ought not to be the *slave* of the State.

Lessons are also taught by corruptions of another kind. We have seen the effect of Alexandrian philosophy on some of the Fathers of the Church. We have also noticed the perpetuation, or rather, occasional revival, of its influence, during the mediæval period. Mysticism, simply fanatical, or in union with philosophical habits, has appeared, playing no inconsiderable part in the drama of developments. The history is full of instruction and warning for us of the present day.

1. Many good people are amazed at forms of thought

rife in many quarters, as though some strange thing had happened; and, indeed, the air of originality some of these forms of thought assume, might lead one to fancy they are as new as they are misty and confused. But modern transcendentalism is only the reflex or reproduction of antique transcendentalism, and is what must be expected in this terrestrial economy of many-sided mind. Mystics now are only sailing round the cloud lands, or dashing into the fog banks we have already pointed out as attracting or enveloping many a transcendental thinker of the old time.

2. One thing is clear, that pantheistic transcendentalism can never have influence to a large extent. As we see it in John Erigena's metaphysics, it is but a passing phenomenon, as brief as it is brilliant. That order of speculation will cast its spell over but a few. It lays no hold on the common intellect, while it mocks the anxious heart knowing its sin and asking for a Saviour. Transcendental theology can never be popular.

3. Another thing is plain, that transcendentalism, apart from any pantheistic element,—that habit of mind which consists simply in the indulgence of a transcendental method of contemplating the infinite personality of God, and the objective facts of Christianity,—is to be far differently judged from that habit of mind which denies or overlooks the personality of God—which merges the Creator in creation, or the creature in the Creator, and repudiates or ignores the Gospel histories. There is an obvious distinction between the metaphysical pantheist and the transcendental believer in the Gospel of Jesus

Christ; between such a man as Plotinus, in the third century, and such a man as the great Clement of Alexandria, nearly contemporary with him; yes, and between even a person like John Erigena and a person like Bonaventura; between the mad members of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and the simply mystical readers of the *Theologia Germanica*. We must carefully balance the scales of justice before we weigh the characters of our fellow mortals: we must be on our guard against unchristianizing a brother believer who, from the character of his mind, looks at truth from a different point to that which we have come to occupy. Still, transcendental methods must be closely watched. Though it be useless to inveigh against them as habits of thought, it is of the utmost importance to detect and expose their liabilities to peril, to seize and overturn the errors they may have produced.

4. Furthermore, we learn that there are dangers besetting the path of the dry dialectic. He may look with horror on the rash flights of buoyant-winged intellects, and tremble for them as they dash up yonder into bright clouds; but let him, as he plods his way, remember there are entanglements peculiar to his own path, and let him look well to every step he takes. If the Greek Platonist be a warning in one respect, the Latin schoolman is a warning in another: if idealism has its temptations, logic has its snares. We are warned by Clement and Bonaventura; we are warned by Tertulian and Thomas Aquinas. Nor let it ever be forgotten that while the one habit of thinking may originate

error, the other often perpetuates error. There is surely a medium between him who can scarcely see any mystery, and who cuts out his round system of belief as he would strike a circle with a pair of compasses, and him who can scarcely see anything but mystery, to whom all truth is as the "pre-Adamite earth" when it was "without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep."

Here we must conclude, fully conscious of the imperfect manner in which we have accomplished our task. We have touched on the main classes into which the facts of Christendom may be grouped,—theological processes and conclusions; ecclesiastical institutes and proceedings; spiritual life and experience; and the complication of these with the secular world without. We have pointed out some of the relations in which they stand to each other. We have given such a broad reading as to show that in the multifarious details there is the working out of a grand epic unity. We have indicated that amidst changes of theology and polity, spiritual religion, though modified, has not perished. And we have tried to read the lesson derivable from the story of corruptions, as well as that which comes from the record of better things. The result is, I hope, a conviction that if we would work for Christ surely and well, we must clearly distinguish between His Word and man's traditions; and make the former alone our law.

And allow us here to add that loyally submitting to His word as the law of life, it is our deep and earnest conviction that there we are taught those doctrines of salvation by grace which are most prominently maintained by evangelical Protestants. The clear apprehension of justification by faith in the person and work, the obedience and death of our Divine Lord; and of the necessity of the new birth through the instrumentality of Gospel truth and the agency of the Holy Spirit; and of those principles as well which are commonly connected with them in the doctrinal creeds and confessions of reformed Christendom,—all this we regard as the most precious fruit yielded by the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century.

After all, our course has been a fragment—Christendom before the Reformation. We have roughly indicated its beginning, its middle, and its end. Christendom since!—then comes another beginning, with its middle, among the conflicts and the clouds of which we of this age are now. What will be its end? When the cycle is complete, what will be the result? Lord of the ages, to thee we commend the present, with its hopes, fears, and struggles; with Thee we leave the future, with its secrets of dread mystery—or bright glory—or both!

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