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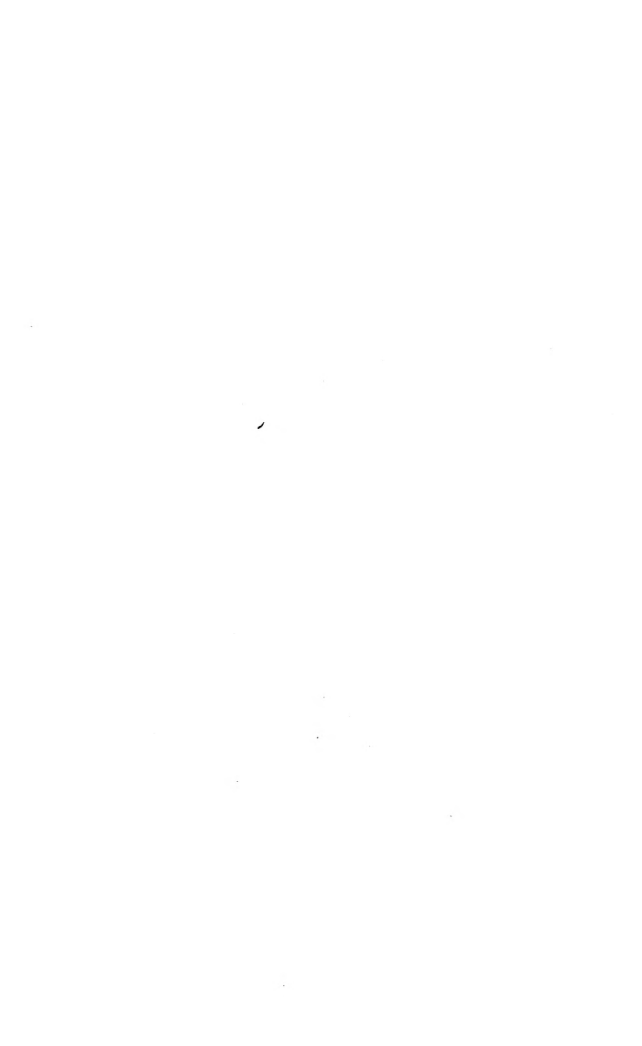
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An historical sketch of the
Christian church during the



AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

DURING THE

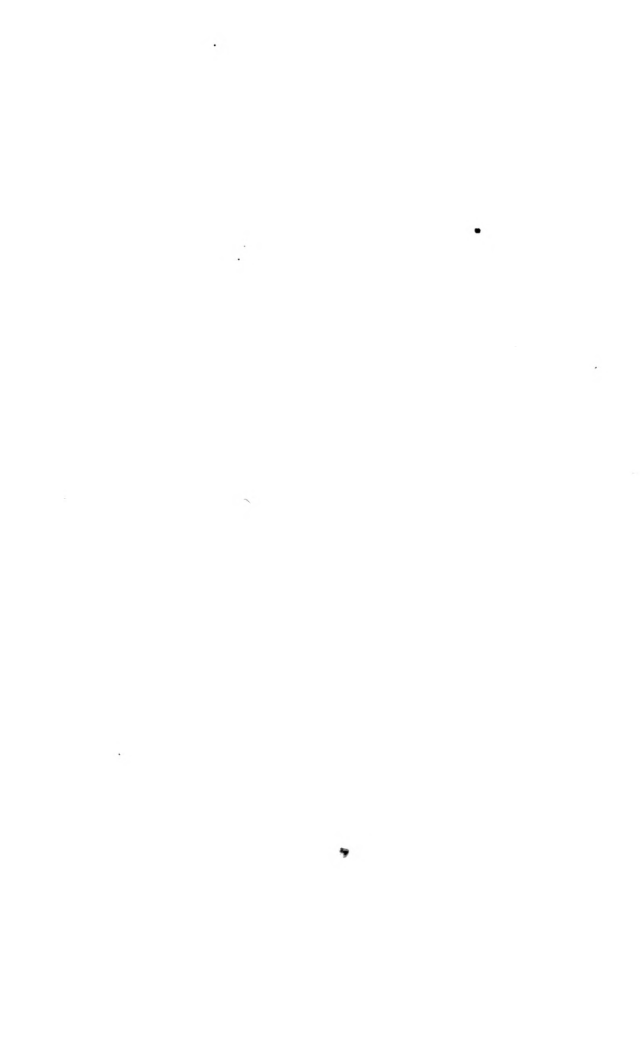
MIDDLE AGES.

—
BY SAMUEL M. JANNEY.
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

On the Corruptions of Christianity.

CHAPTER II.

History of the Novatians, Paulicians, and Albigenses.

CHAPTER III.

History of the Waldenses before the Reformation.

CHAPTER IV.

History of the Waldenses after the Reformation.



P R E F A C E.

The following work was begun with a view to give a brief History of the Waldenses, and was afterwards extended by introducing sketches of the history and doctrines of other dissenters from the Greek and Roman Churches, who appeared previous to the Reformation.

The writer does not profess to give a regular Ecclesiastical History, but merely sketches of some events which had an important bearing upon the progress or declension of Christian principles.

It will be perceived that the Church of Christ is here viewed in a very different light from that in which it has been presented by some historians;—its vitality depends, not upon the form of its organization, the creed it has adopted, or the ceremonies it employs; but rather upon the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, and the manifestation of that Spirit by works of charity and love. The highest evidence we can give of our love to God, is by loving our fellow-men and laboring or suffering for their good.

The progress of Christianity has been seldom promoted, but often retarded, by the disputations of learned theologians,—while its simple and sublime principles, expressed in the lives of the humble followers of the Lamb, have had power to subdue the hearts and convince the understandings of men. The reader of ecclesiastical history cannot fail to observe, that a large proportion of the disputes, and much of the bloodshed that have taken place among the professions of Christianity, have originated in attempting to establish or refute speculative opinions that were in themselves of no importance whatever. The learned and subtle disputants, while contending for shadows, suffered the substance to escape them. They built upon a system of doctrines, embracing nice metaphysical distinctions, while the only essential part of Christianity—its regenerating power, derived from the Spirit of Christ—was little understood or experienced.

It is the purpose of this treatise to illustrate the effects of this Divine power upon the heart and life, by reference to the self-denying example of some, who, though considered and treated as heretics in their day, were so fully imbued with the Christian spirit, that even their persecutors bore witness to the meekness and purity of their lives.

It has been customary among all Protestants, and more especially of late, to laud the character and doctrines of the Waldenses, but I apprehend that the views and practice of that ancient church have not been fully understood; for they were, before the Reformation, widely different, in many respects, from most of the Protestant churches who have claimed affinity with them. Their simple worship and unpaid ministry,—their testimonies against war and oaths of all kinds,—and their patient endurance of persecution for conscience sake, have invested their history with especial interest.

In preparing this little work, the writer has carefully consulted such standard works, relating to the subject, as were accessible to him, and has generally referred to them in the margin. The work is now submitted to the public with a hope that it may promote the cause of Truth and the advancement of *practical righteousness*.

S. M. J.

Springdale Boarding School,
Loudon Co., Va., 5th mo. 24th, 1847.

INTRODUCTION.

It is not proposed in this work to give a full history of the Christian church during the period of which it treats, but merely a sketch of some events which had a material influence upon the progress or decline of Christian principles.

The advent of the Messiah is the most important and interesting event recorded in the annals of the world. Whether we consider the dignity and perfection of his character, the ennobling tendency of the doctrines he taught, or the influence his example has had upon the progress of society, his mission stands without a parallel. The principles he promulgated being immutable in their nature, have been the same in all ages; and although at times but imperfectly understood, and still more imperfectly carried out in practice, they are, in proportion to their prevalence in the minds of men, the only means of true peace in this life, and of preparation for the joys of an eternal world. But what are these principles? They are all comprised in these two precepts of Christ, To love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves. He who truly loves the Divine author of our being will imitate his perfections as exemplified in the life of his beloved Son, and exhibited in his works; "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. v. 45.

The Jewish people at the time of Christ's coming strictly observed the ritual of Moses; but in their blind attachment to outward ceremonies "they omitted the weightier matters of the law— judgment, mercy, and faith." It was the main purpose of the ministry of Jesus to call their attention to the kingdom of heaven, or reign of God in the hearts of his people, which sets them free from the bondage of corruption, and brings them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

By this means the disciples of Christ came to experience in themselves the fulfilment of the law, and to witness in the purifying and sanctifying operations of Divine grace all those spiritual realities which were shadowed forth in sacrifices and ablutions. But although the ceremonial law was not intended to be permanent, it appears that Jesus observed all its obligations; and there is no evidence that during his ministry he gave any command for its abrogation. His design evidently was, by calling men to the substance to lead them from the shadows, which are destined to pass away, as the shades of night are dispersed by the rising sun.

After his death and resurrection, his disciples still continued in their attachment to the institutions of their fathers. Notwithstanding the extraordinary illumination they experienced on the day of Pentecost, they could not relinquish the prejudices of their education, and they still adhered to rites and ceremonies possessing in themselves no efficacy, but endeared to them by early associations, and venerated for their high antiquity. It appears that Peter, eight years after the

ascension of Christ, was so filled with Jewish prejudices, that it required a remarkable vision to convince him that he ought to go into the house of Cornelius to preach the gospel; and after he had done so, "they of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in unto men uncircumcised and didst eat with them."

But the multitudes of Gentiles who were converted to the Christian faith came into the church with no prepossession for the rites of Judaism, and some of them, perhaps, with a strong repugnance to its onerous yoke. The attempt made by some of the Jewish Christians to force upon these the rituals of Moses occasioned a controversy which required for its settlement all the wisdom and forbearance of the apostles.

At the council held at Jerusalem (A. D. 52) to consider this question, after there had been "much disputing," Peter rose and reminded them that God had blessed his ministry to the Gentiles, and conferred upon them the Holy Spirit; wherefore then, said he, "will ye tempt God to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples, that neither our fathers nor we were able to bear."

Paul and Barnabas also declared what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them, after which James delivered the judgment of the assembled church in favor of exempting the Gentiles from the Mosaic ritual.

Notwithstanding this judgment of the church, dictated by the Holy Spirit, the Jewish Christians still adhered to the ceremonial law; for we find that eight years after this council, and twenty-four years after the conversion of Paul, when he

went up to Jerusalem the disciples said to him, "thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are *all zealous of the law.*" On this occasion the apostle of the Gentiles so far condescended to the prejudices of his brethren, as to purify himself and to enter with four others into the temple, "until an offering should be made for every one of them;" and the reason assigned by the elders for this proceeding was to make it known that Paul himself walked orderly and kept the law. Acts xxi. 17 to 25.

Indeed, there is no reason to believe that the Jewish Christians ever relinquished the Mosaic law until after the seventieth year of the Christian era, when the destruction of Jerusalem with its splendid temple put an end to the regular administration of its rites. The water baptism of John was probably retained for the same reason, although it was acknowledged that the baptism which saves is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God." 1 Peter iii. 21.

The conflicting sentiments of the Jewish and Gentile converts were not confined to those doctrines and ceremonies which sprung from the Mosaic law; for there is reason to believe that the converts from heathenism also brought with them prejudices and customs which, in the second and third centuries, it was thought expedient to conciliate by the adoption of pagan ceremonies, or the modification of Jewish rites, so as to accord with their long established habits.

Thus there was a gradual departure from the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel dispensation; and while rites and ceremonies were multiplied, the attention of the people was drawn off from the only point of vital importance, *the operation of divine grace in the soul*, and fixed upon a mass of cumbrous observances.

It will be shown in the following work that this declension of the Christian church was greatly accelerated by the learned doctors who embraced the profession of the gospel, and blended with its pure doctrines the speculative notions which they brought with them from the schools of heathen philosophy.

In proportion as pure Christianity declined the power of the bishops and other church officers was increased, for it is the invariable tendency of superstition to degrade the mass of the people, and to increase the power of those by whom the ceremonies of religion are administered.

There is but one means by which the church can be preserved in purity, and that is by a continual reliance upon the teachings of the spirit of Christ, who is "the true shepherd and bishop of souls." The revelation of this heavenly power in the human soul, by which it is redeemed from sin and made "a partaker of the Divine nature," is the only means of obtaining a saving knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ.

It was this revelation to which Christ alluded when he said to Peter, "on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:" this rock is Christ in his spiritual manifestation, "for other foundation can no man

lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. iii. 11.

The vitality of the Christian church depends not upon the form of its organization, the creed it has adopted, or the ceremonies it employs, but upon the indwelling of the spirit of Christ, and the manifestation of that spirit by works of charity and love,—for these are the fruits it will always bring forth. That these blessed fruits may be promoted and practical piety advanced, has been the design of the writer in preparing this work, which he has endeavored to render accurate by consulting and comparing all the reliable authorities within his reach.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
DURING THE
MIDDLE AGES.

—
CHAPTER I.
—

The Corruptions of Christianity.

During that dark and disastrous period known in history as the Middle Ages, extending from the latter part of the 5th to the close of the 15th century, there existed in various parts of Europe and Asia large bodies of Christian worshippers who had withdrawn from the Greek and Roman churches, in order to escape the corruption of their morals and the domination of the clergy.

It is the design of this treatise to give an account of these dissenters, and, in order, show the propriety of their withdrawal from the established churches; it seems proper to take a view of the state of religion at that period, and to endeavor to trace the causes which led to that general declension of morals and corruption of doctrines which tarnished the glory of the Christian name.

This "falling away" from the purity of primitive Christianity had been foreseen and predicted by the inspired penmen.

The apostle Paul, in his address to the elders of the church of Ephesus, related in the Acts of the Apostles, tells them, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

In his first Epistle to Timothy he says, "Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their consciences seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath commanded to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth." Chap. iv. 1.

In his second Epistle to Timothy, chapter 3rd, he alludes to the same class of false teachers, who would intrude themselves into the church, being heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. And in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 2nd, he alludes to a prevalent belief, that the Messiah would shortly appear to judge the world, and cautions them "not to be shaken in mind nor troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter *as from us*, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except *there be a*

falling away first, and that the man of sin be revealed.”

In the same Epistle he says, “The mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let, [or hinder] until he be taken out of the way.”

The causes which led to this declension of the church, may chiefly be classed under two heads: 1st, The ambition and covetousness of the bishops; 2ndly, Their proneness to adopt the notions of speculative philosophy.

In the original constitution of the Christian church, it would seem as though the Messiah had taken especial pains to guard against these two sources of corruption. He had chosen for his apostles, not the scribes or teachers of the law, but unlearned fishermen and mechanics;— he sent them forth as lambs among wolves, not dependent upon the weapons of human wisdom, but upon the guidance of Divine grace. So far from authorising them to receive money for their instructions, he told them, “freely ye have received, freely give,” and they went forth “taking nothing of the gentiles,” but with their own hands ministering to their necessities, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Not only men, but women also, were engaged in this service, and many females are mentioned in the New Testament, who were prophetesses and ministers of the gospel.

The ministers of the Christian churches were, during the first and second centuries, generally “plain and illiterate men. remarkable rather for

their piety and zeal, than for their learning and eloquence.”* Among them there were many who bore the name of prophets, being endowed with a Divine gift, by which they were enabled “to speak to edification, exhortation, or comfort.” It is remarked by the learned Moshieim, that these prophets were raised up by the providence of God, “to discourse in the public assemblies upon the various points of Christian doctrine,” because “there were few men of learning in the primitive church who had capacity enough to insinuate into the minds of a gross and ignorant multitude, the knowledge of Divine things;” and he informs us, that “the order of prophets ceased when the want of teachers which gave rise to it was abundantly supplied.”† In this instance he has evidently mistaken the effect for the cause.

It cannot be supposed that human learning would supply the place of a Divine gift in the work of the ministry; but it is reasonable to conclude that when the minds of men were withdrawn from a dependence upon Divine power, and disposed to lean upon human wisdom, the heavenly gift would be withheld and spiritual darkness would ensue.

In proportion as the number of learned doctors or teachers of religion increased in the church, their influence was exerted in favor of philosophy; and at length, when they gained the ascendancy, “laws were enacted which excluded the ignorant and illiterate from the office of public teachers.”‡

* Moshieim, E. II., Book I, part 2, chap. iii. †Ibid, part 2, chap. ii. ‡Ibid, part 2, chap. i.

The danger which awaited the church from the corrupting influence of heathen philosophy, had been pointed out by the apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Chap. ii. 8. It must be borne in mind that a large proportion of the philosophy which prevailed *in that day* was justly entitled to the epithet of "*vain deceit.*" It was not directed to the observation of natural phenomena, nor to the investigation of the laws established by the Creator; but was chiefly employed in fruitless speculations, many of which related to subjects far beyond the reach of human wisdom. There can be no reasonable objection to the cultivation of *well-founded* science, which relies upon facts for its premises, and directs its researches to the order of nature established by the Deity. This inductive philosophy leads to useful results; it promotes the comforts of life, facilitates the intercourse of nations, and expands the mind by enlarged views of the universe. But speculative philosophy is barren; it dreams instead of observing; it finds its premises in the regions of imagination, and wastes its energies in pursuing shadows. In order to show the pernicious influence it exerted in corrupting the Christian church, I will briefly advert to some of its distinguishing features. The Oriental philosophy, which was embraced by many of the early Christians, was supposed to be derived from Zoroaster, the celebrated Persian sage; but there is much uncertainty concerning the doctrines he taught,

which are supposed to have been corrupted by his successors, who took the name of Gnostics, a term borrowed from the Greek to express their more intimate knowledge of the Divine nature.

They taught that the Deity, after having existed many ages in solitude and silence, at length produced from himself two other beings, of the most pure and exalted nature, one of whom was male and the other female. From these two sprang a vast family of celestial and immortal beings, whose habitation is in the Pleroma, or regions of infinite space. Matter they considered the source of all evil; they believed that it has existed from all eternity, but was a shapeless and incongruous mass, subject to perpetual agitation until it was found by one of these celestial spirits, who reduced it to order and produced the world we now inhabit.*

He created man, who was endowed with a ray of celestial light, either stolen from heaven, or imparted by the bounty of the Deity. When the work of creation was finished, this creating spirit, whom they termed *Demiurgis*, *revolted from the Divine government*, assumed the exclusive control of this new world, and drew over to himself a number of inferior spirits, whom he appointed his agents or assistants. Man, therefore, was supposed to be compounded of two principles, acting in opposition to each other; a soul partaking of the Divine nature and aspiring to its great original, but confined in a material body as its prison

* Jones' Ch. History, vol. 1, p. 30. Mosheim, E. H., 1st century.

house; borne down by the earthly propensities which spring from the flesh, and liable to be influenced by the fallen spirits or demons by whom the world is governed. From this doctrine sprang two modes of life, or courses of discipline, exactly opposite. One sect of the Gnostics maintained that the animal propensities must be kept down by rigid abstinence, laceration of the body, and every species of austerity, in order that the soul may be permitted to rise in contemplation to its Divine parent. The other sect contended that the essence of piety consists in a knowledge of the Supreme Being, and that the soul being purified by contemplation, is not responsible for the passions and propensities of the body. Hence, they imposed no restraints upon their appetites, and led the most dissolute lives, while professing to be purified in spirit. There was another sect, whose system professed to combine and explain all other systems of philosophy, and to comprise the sublimated essence of all knowledge. This school, known by the appellation of the New Platonists, was founded near the close of the second century by Ammonius Saccas, who taught at Alexandria in Egypt, with the most distinguished success.* Ammonius was born of Christian parents, and is generally supposed to have been himself a professor of Christianity, though the system which he taught was an incongruous mass of opinions, borrowed from all the schools of pagan philosophy, and blended with some of the doctrines of Christianity.

* Moshicm, E. H., 2nd century.

He maintained that the true doctrines of philosophy and religion came from the east, and were taught to the ancient Egyptians by Hermes.— From Egypt they were transplanted to Greece and corrupted by the fables of the poets, but again revived in their original purity by Plato. He endeavored to show that the fables of the Grecian poets, and the ceremonials of the Jewish law, were but allegorical representations of these original doctrines, which Jesus Christ came to restore and purify. His views concerning the eternity of matter and the government of the world by demons, resembled the doctrines of the Gnostics, and like them, he taught that the freedom of the soul from sensuality was only to be attained by the most severe mortification of the body. Those of his disciples who aspired to the perfection of wisdom, were required to adopt the most rigid abstinence, and the most severe discipline, for the purpose of subduing all the desires of the flesh. Withdrawing themselves from human society, they devoted their days to contemplation, and their nights to watching and prayer, in order that they might shake off the trammels of the body and rise into union with the Father of Spirits. The doctrines of this school were so well adapted to the spirit of the age, and enforced with so much learning and dexterity, that they spread rapidly and involved in the labyrinths of error many of the most prominent teachers in the Christian church.

Among these was Origen, celebrated for his learning and zeal, who endeavored to explain the scriptures by forced constructions, so as to make

them agree with the Platonic philosophy, and thus gave rise to the science of *scholastic theology*—the darkest and most dangerous innovation that ever assailed the church of Christ.

It is mournful to reflect, that, during the space of more than a thousand years, those who assumed to be the shepherds of the Christian flock resorted for instruction to schools and colleges where these visionary and deceptive notions prevailed, and where the most renowned professors wasted their time in vain speculations and fruitless debates.

Another pernicious consequence of the doctrines of the New Platonists, was the belief in demons or evil spirits, which, in the third century, became prevalent in the church. It was supposed that these evil spirits were continually hovering over human bodies, with a vehement desire to seduce them from the path of duty, and that the actions of wicked men were not so much prompted by their own depraved passions, as stimulated by the whispers of these fallen spirits. Hence there was instituted in the church an order of men called Exorcists, whose duty it was to expel evil spirits from the new converts, which they pretended to effect by loud shouting and declamation; and the demon was often heard to confess, as he took his departure, that he was one of the false gods worshipped by the pagans. As the labors of the Exorcist were supposed to expel the demons from the chambers of the heart, so the ceremony of water baptism was thought to close the door against his return.*

* Moshiem,

Although the absurdities of fanaticism may excite a smile of derision, it is humiliating to think that the pure and simple religion of Jesus should so soon have been obscured and contaminated by the inventions of men. Nor did these innovations spring from the superstitions of the ignorant multitude; they were introduced by bishops and presbyters, distinguished for their learning and renowned for their eloquence. In attempting to interpret the scriptures, they discarded the only true guide—the voice of the pure witness within the heart—and giving the reins to their imaginations, they sought for the secrets of wisdom in the wildest dreams of pagan philosophy.

Although their doctrines have long since fallen into contempt and neglect among the well-informed, there is reason to believe that their lingering influence is still felt in the superstitions that prevail among the vulgar in some parts of christendom. There are multitudes who still attribute to the influence of demons much of the wickedness that prevails among mankind, and are even disposed to assign to these evil spirits an agency in human affairs that ill-comports with the power and benevolence of the Deity.

The exclusion of the unlearned from the Christian ministry, so contrary to the example of Christ and the spirit of the gospel, soon began to produce the most bitter fruits, and led to the division of the church into two classes, the clergy and the laity; a distinction that was entirely unknown in the primitive church.

No sooner was this monopoly established than the clergy began to encroach upon the liberties

of the people, by assuming the right to settle all differences in matters of faith; and the numerous synods and councils they caused to be assembled, composed entirely of ecclesiastics, instead of settling their differences, only tended to disturb the peace of the church and scandalize their profession. We find no trace of these councils before the middle of the second century; for in the earlier ages of the church those nice points of speculative theology, which afterwards caused so much dissention, had been left undetermined; it being the chief concern of the apostles and their immediate successors to express the excellence of Christianity by the purity of their lives, rather than to inquire into its doctrines with excessive curiosity.

No creed or confession of faith had then been adopted; “but all who professed firmly to believe that Jesus was the Redeemer of the world, and who, in consequence of this profession, promised to live in a manner conformable to his holy religion, were immediately received among the disciples of Christ.*

During the apostolic age, nothing was determined without the consent and approbation of the people, for all were united together in the bonds of Christian love; the Spirit of Divine grace was acknowledged as the governing principle; and every member moving under this influence might speak his opinion. The bishops, presbyters, or elders, which were only different names for the same office, so far from arrogating to themselves

* Moshem, p. 42.

the control over the whole body, were "examples to the flock" and servants of the church. But the councils assembled in the second and third centuries changed the whole face of affairs, by diminishing the privileges of the people and augmenting the power of the clergy.

The bishops did not at once assume the authority with which they were afterwards invested. Their encroachments were gradual. At their first appearance in these councils they were considered only as the delegates of their respective churches, and acted in the name and on behalf of the people. "But they soon changed this humble tone, imperceptibly extended the limits of their authority, turned their influence into dominion and their counsels into laws, and openly asserted, at length, that Christ had empowered them to prescribe authoritative rules of faith and manners."* "They had the address to persuade the people that the ministers of the Christian church succeeded to all the rights and privileges of the Jewish priesthood, and this was a source of honor and profit to the sacred order."*

Hence the rise of tythes, first fruits, splendid garments and titles of honor by which the clergy became distinguished.

This great change in the character and constitution of the Christian system did not immediately prevail in all the churches which were scattered throughout the Roman empire. In some places they were protected by their poverty from the encroachments of the clergy; and in others they

* Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 60.

were favored with ministers who could not be dazzled by the display of erudition, nor seduced by the allurements of luxury.

The persecution they endured under several of the Roman emperors had also a salutary effect in preserving the purity of the church, by repelling from its communion those, who, from unworthy motives, might have been induced to profess the Christian name. These persecutions were sometimes undertaken to gratify the arbitrary will of the emperors; but not unfrequently they were instigated by the bigotry of the pagan priesthood and the clamor of a superstitious people.

The numerous train of priests and augurs, who found lucrative employment in the heathen temples, saw that their craft was in danger; for the triumph of Christianity must be attended by the downfall of paganism. In order to rouse the prejudices of the populace, they accused the Christians with being the enemies of the gods, and the haters of mankind.

Thus it happened, as in the case of Socrates at Athens, an attempt to lift the veil which concealed the deformity of paganism, roused in the breasts of a superstitious people the most malignant passions; and the inculcation of the most sublime of all religious truths, the unity and spirituality of the Supreme Being, was branded with the odious name of atheism. The fires of persecution were lighted,—the most agonizing tortures were inflicted upon venerable men and delicate women,—the wild beasts of the amphitheatre were let loose upon the unoffending victims; but still the Christian martyrs remained un-

dismayed,—refused to renounce that faith which was the crown of their rejoicing,—and died in the full assurance of a blessed immortality. Notwithstanding the odium that attended the profession of the cross, multitudes were convinced by the constancy of the martyrs, and every act of persecution enlarged the boundaries of the church.

But now the scene is about to change: the emperor, Constantine, makes a public profession of Christianity, and although he still tolerates, for a while, the religion of his ancestors, he employs all the influence of his station and the patronage of the state, to advance the interests of the church and promote the power and dignity of the clergy. This event, which was hailed by the Christians with transports of joy, and considered the harbinger of happier days, proved to be the means of corrupting the Christian ministry and hastening the progress of the apostacy.

In proportion as wealth and honors were lavished upon the clergy, their stations became an object of ambition, and the sacred office was soon filled by men who were actuated by base and unworthy motives. This was especially the case in Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria, where the churches were richly endowed and presented to the aspiring clergy a tempting object of pursuit, which was seldom attained without vehement contention. The ecclesiastical writers afford abundant evidence, that soon after the accession of Constantine, A. D. 306, the spirit of disputation, which had before been introduced by scholastic theology, but had hitherto been suppressed by the pagan power, burst into an open

flame and involved the churches in a general conflict.

The principal subject of dispute in the fourth century, was the doctrine of three persons in the God-head; a subject, "which in the three preceding centuries had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas." Previous to this time, "nothing had been dictated on this head to the faith of Christians, nor were there any modes of expression prescribed as requisite to be used in speaking of this mystery." "Hence it happened that the Christian doctors entertained different sentiments upon this subject without giving the least offence."* "In Egypt and the adjacent countries, the greater part embraced in this, as in other matters, the opinion of Origin, who held that the Son was in God, that which reason is in man, and that the Holy Ghost was nothing more than the Divine energy or active force."* The origin of the disputes respecting this doctrine took place in an assembly of the presbyters of Alexandria. The bishop of that city, whose name was Alexander, "maintained that the Son was co-eternal and of the same essence and dignity with the Father." But "Arius, one of the presbyters, disputed this position, and contended that the Son, although the first and noblest of created beings, was not co-eternal with the Father, and therefore inferior to him, both in nature and dignity."† This dispute,

* Moshier, E. H., 4th century, part 2nd.

† Moshier, 4th century. Jones, I. p. 292.

which is known by the name of the "Arian controversy," soon grew so violent and extended so widely, that the emperor Constantine became concerned for the peace and reputation of the church; and he endeavored by expostulation and entreaty to restore harmony between the contending parties. Finding his efforts unavailing, he summoned a general council of bishops to meet at Nice, in Bythinia, A. D. 325. The number of bishops was 318, besides a multitude of presbyters and deacons, amounting in the whole to 2048 persons. Constantine met in person with this ecclesiastical assembly, and the first thing they did, before proceeding to business, was to commence complaining of each other before the emperor, and vindicating themselves. He listened with patience to their disputes, and desired them to reduce their complaints to writing, which being done, he threw all the billets unopened into the fire, saying, that it did not belong to him to decide the differences of Christian bishops, and the hearing of them must be deferred till the day of judgment.

The emperor having succeeded in quieting their complaints, they proceeded to consider the business before them, and, after a warm discussion of about two months, they drew up a creed, "which they all were required to subscribe as the only true and orthodox faith, and which, from the place where they were assembled, bears the name of Nicene."

Arius appeared in the council, and was opposed by Alexander, who was assisted by Athanasius, afterwards bishop of Alexandria, and famous as a controversial writer.

The decision of the council was adverse to the doctrines of Arius, whose opinions were condemned, and he and his followers were excommunicated. Arius was banished from Alexandria; and an edict was issued by the emperor, commanding that his writings should be destroyed; and any person convicted of concealing them *should suffer death*.

At this council the time of holding Easter was also settled, which was considered so important, that it had occasioned the most violent dissensions. The bishops having fulfilled their arduous labors, the emperor filled their pockets, and courteously dismissed them.

The creed established by this council of contentious bishops, and enforced by the sword of a Roman emperor, was so far from healing the dissensions of the church, that it only increased the animosity of the two parties, and the persecuting edict of Constantine enlisted on the side of Arius the sympathies of the public; so that in the succeeding reign he was recalled from banishment, and his party gained the ascendancy, when they in turn persecuted the Athenasian party, and endeavored to establish their own doctrines by the arm of secular power.

After various vicissitudes, the Athenasian party finally prevailed over the Arians, and assumed the name of Catholic, or universal church, of which the bishop of Rome was considered the head.

It appears sufficiently clear, that in the Apostolic age the See of Rome enjoyed no kind of supremacy or control over other churches.

The plea set up by some writers, that Peter was the prince of the Apostles, and that he founded the See of Rome and delegated his authority to his successors, appears to have no other foundation than tradition of the most doubtful character.

An event so important to the Christian church could not have been entirely overlooked in the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of Paul. Now, we find no mention of it in the Acts; and Paul, so far from countenancing such a claim, says expressly, that to himself was committed the ministry of the Gentiles, as that of the circumcision had been to Peter. It appears from the most authentic accounts, that in the first and second centuries the bishops of Rome did not enjoy, or even claim any supremacy or authority over other churches. All the bishops were considered as brethren, whose master was Christ; but there were three churches, those of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, which, in consequence of the great number of their members, and the power and dignity of those cities, possessed greater influence than the churches established in smaller cities.

This influence being delegated to the bishops who represented those churches, gave them great consideration among their brethren, but no authority to govern them in matters of faith.

When the seat of imperial power was transferred to Constantinople, the bishop of that city claimed the same respect that had been awarded to Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria. In process of time the churches of Antioch and Alexandria were weakened by various causes, and ultimately almost destroyed by the dominion of the Saracens.

During this time the power of the Roman bishops was gradually augmented; but their encroachments were resisted by the patriarchs of Constantinople, who were considered at the head of the Greek church. From that time to the present the Roman and Greek churches have been at variance: they differ from each other in their doctrine and discipline, but are, perhaps, equally alienated from the purity and simplicity of the Christian dispensation.

In the latter part of the sixth century John, the patriarch of Constantinople, received the title of universal bishop, which was conferred upon him by a council held in that metropolis. This title was so offensive to Gregory, who about this time assumed the title of pope, that he used every effort to induce the patriarch to renounce it; and failing in this, he appealed to the emperor Mauritius, but without success. Gregory, who has been honored by the Catholic writers with the title of "the great," condemned this "pompous title;" declaring that "whoever adopts or affects the title of universal bishop, has the pride and character of anti-Christ."* Yet this very title, so much abhorred by Gregory, when applied to his rival, was a few years afterwards solicited by one of his successors, Boniface III., on whom it was conferred in the year 606 by the emperor Phocas, one of the most profligate tyrants that ever usurped a throne.†

No sooner had the title of universal bishop been conferred by Phocas on the popes, than they be-

* Jones i. 381.

† Mosheim, 6th and 7th centuries.

gan to assume a more extensive authority, and claimed the right to exercise jurisdiction over the whole Catholic church. This claim was for a long time rejected by the other bishops, and required many centuries of persevering efforts for its full establishment.

Hitherto the popes had only claimed spiritual dominion; but in the year 754, Papin, (la Bref) king of France, in order to secure his usurped power, made an alliance with pope Stephen, invaded Italy, subdued the king of the Lombards, and bestowed a part of his territory upon the bishop of Rome, who from that time became a temporal prince, and held the sword of the magistrate as well as the crosier of the priest. Charlemagne, the successor of Papin, and the most powerful monarch of his age, still further augmented the papal power. This renowned conqueror was engaged during many years in bloody wars with the Saxons and Huns, whom he undertook to convert to the Christian religion by force of arms; and he finally succeeded in dragooning them into a profession of Christianity. He stationed among them many bishops and priests, and founded schools and monasteries, in order to complete the work begun by his soldiers. Although licentious in morals, his signal services in behalf of the church entitled him to high consideration, and his name stands enrolled in the calendar of Catholic saints.

After the death of Charlemagne, A. D. 814, the empire was divided among his sons; and the popes took advantage of their weaknesses to advance their claims. Nicholas I., in the year 858,

was seated in the papal chair, and announced to the world his claim to paramount jurisdiction over all Christian kingdoms, in virtue of his office as the successor of St. Peter.

This arrogant assumption, though at first resisted, was, through the weakness and dissensions of the European monarchs, submitted to by many, and in several instances was exercised by humbling or deposing the most powerful sovereigns.

One of the most efficient measures employed to advance the power of the clergy, was the imposition of a vow of celibacy on all who entered the order of the priesthood. By this means they were separated from their connection with society, their individual interests were merged in the general interests of the order, and their energies were devoted to building up and consolidating the power of the clergy, which was considered as identified with the prosperity of the church.

During the first three centuries, marriage was permitted to all the members of the church; and we learn from the Scriptures, that the Apostle Peter had a wife; and Philip the Evangelist had four daughters, who were all prophetesses. But it appears that in the third century, "those who continued in a state of celibacy obtained by this abstinence a higher reputation of sanctity and virtue than others.

"This was owing to an almost general persuasion, that they who took wives were of all others the most subject to the influence of malignant demons."* In order to comply with this prevailing

* Moshem (3d century) cites Porphyrius.

superstition, many of the clergy lived in a state of celibacy ; but the attempt thus made to countervail the order of nature re-acted upon its authors with tremendous effect, and introduced into the church a general corruption of morals.

This deplorable result was still further augmented by the tendency towards monastic life, which prevailed throughout christendom.

It appears that even before the Christian era a portion of the sect of the Essenes retired from social life, and established communities where a rigid abstinence from every pleasure was practised or professed, in order to secure the tranquillity and perfection of the soul.

During the earlier ages of the Christian church, when its members were subjected to persecution and death by their Pagan rulers, great numbers of both sexes fled to deserts or solitary places, where they obtained a frugal subsistence by the labor of their hands. When persecution ceased, many returned to their homes ; but some having become accustomed to solitude, chose to remain and devote their lives to religious contemplations.

The example of these anchorites may have been the first step towards monkery, which afterwards became so prevalent throughout christendom ; but about the beginning of the fourth century the ascetic life was embraced by several fanatics, who attained to great celebrity, and spread far and wide their pernicious superstitions.

Anthony, an illiterate youth of Thebais, in Egypt, distributed his patrimony, renounced society and kindred, and after a long and painful

sojourn among the tombs, advanced three days' journey into the desert, to the eastward of the Nile, and fixed his abode in a lonely spot which enjoyed the advantages of shade and water. Here he became an object of curiosity and superstitious reverence, numerous pilgrims resorted to him, and having attained the age of one hundred and five years, he rejoiced in beholding numerous colonies of monks, the fruits of his teaching and example.

“To the south of Alexandria, the mountain and adjacent desert of Nitria were peopled by five thousand anchorets; and the traveller may still investigate the ruins of fifty monasteries which were planted in that barren soil by the disciples of Anthony.”*

About the middle of the fourth century, “Athanasius introduced into Rome the knowledge and practice of the monastic life,” by transferring to that city an Egyptian colony of monks.

The strange and savage appearance of these fanatics at first excited the horror and contempt of the Romans, but at length gained their applause and zealous imitation.

“The senators, and more especially the matrons, transformed their palaces and villas into religious houses, and numerous monasteries were erected on the ruins of the ancient temples.”†

The infection spread to all parts of the empire: the monasteries of Palestine are represented as “innumerable;” they were also “profusely” scattered on the coast of the Black sea; in Gaul,

* Gibbon, vol. 2, 385

† Ibid. 386.

in Ireland, and in Iona, one of the Hebrides, colonies were found; and wherever they appeared they obtained the reverence of a superstitious people. The pure and simple religion of Jesus Christ was corrupted by the monks, who thought, by voluntary penances, to gain the favor of heaven, lacerating the body to purify the soul, and substituting a round of useless ceremonies for that pure and spiritual worship which alone is acceptable to the Father of spirits.

The rapid increase and wide diffusion of the monastic orders is attributed by Moshem to the doctrines of the New Platonists, introduced in Egypt by Ammonius about the close of the second century, and subsequently adopted by the teachers of religion in most of the schools of philosophy.

According to their views,—the matter of which our bodies are composed being naturally inclined to evil, and the soul being also subjected to the influence of evil spirits, which are continually hovering around us,—it becomes necessary to mortify the body by severe penances, in order to purify the soul from the gross desires of the flesh.

In an age when superstition was general, there were various motives which prompted to the adoption of the monastic life. Some embraced it in youth, under the influence of misguided zeal,—others in old age endeavored to atone for a life of sensuality and crime, by renouncing the pleasures they could no longer enjoy, and spending their few remaining years in voluntary penance.

The rich were sometimes induced to give up their wealth, to purchase treasures in heaven;

and the poor and distressed hoped to find tranquillity and ease in the seclusion of the cloister.

Thus they renounced the obligations of society, and the pleasures and duties of domestic life, under the vain pretence of devoting themselves to God ; as though it were more acceptable to Him to spend our lives in useless ceremonies, or indolent repose, than to be actively engaged in the service of mankind, in imitation of our holy pattern, who went about continually doing good.

To such a pitch of extravagance was this passion carried, that many of these enthusiasts erected for themselves pillars or columns, on the top of which they passed many years of their lives, destitute of shelter, and regardless of the inclemency of the seasons.

These were called *stylites*, or pillar saints. One of them named Simeon, a Syrian monk, passed, in this manner, thirty-seven years of his life, of which the last fifteen were spent on a column sixty feet high. There he went through the various forms of his devotions, sometimes stretching out his arms to make the figure of a cross, but more frequently bowing his emaciated body until his forehead came in contact with his feet.

“ Successive crowds of pilgrims from Gaul and India saluted the pillar of Simeon ; the tribes of Saracens disputed in arms the honor of his benediction, the queens of Arabia and Persia gratefully confessed his supernatural virtue ; and the angelic hermit was consulted by the younger Theodosius in the most important concerns of the church and state. His remains were transported to Antioch by a solemn procession of the patri-

arch, the master general of the East, six bishops, twenty-one counts or tribunes, and six thousand soldiers. The fame of the Apostles and martyrs was gradually eclipsed by these recent and popular anchorets; the Christian world fell prostrate before their shrines; and the miracles ascribed to their relics exceeded, at least in number and duration, the spiritual exploits of their lives.”*

As superstition increased and extended its sway, the passion for relics, the adoration of images, the invocation of saints, and the performance of pilgrimages became general among the professors of Christianity, and afforded another source of wealth and power to the clergy.

No place of worship was in favor with the people, unless it could boast of having the bones of a martyr, a wonder-working image of the Virgin, or at least something that had been once in contact with the sacred remains of a saint. To illustrate this superstition I will quote a letter written towards the close of the sixth century by pope Gregory I., to whom the Greek empress had applied for the body of the Apostle Paul, to be placed in a church at Constantinople.

Gregory informs her that she has solicited what he dares not grant; for, says he, “the bodies of the Apostles Peter and Paul are so terrible by their miracles, that there is reason to apprehend danger in approaching even to pray to them. My predecessor wanted to make some alterations in a silver ornament on the body of St. Peter, at the distance of fifteen feet, when an awful vision ap-

* Gibbon, vol. 2. p. 394.

peared to him, which was followed by his death. I myself wished to repair somewhat about the body of St. Paul; and with a view to that, had occasion to dig a little near his sepulchre, when, in digging, the superior of the place raising some bones apparently unconnected with the sacred tomb, had a dismal vision after it and suddenly died. In like manner, the workman and the monks, not knowing precisely the tomb of St. Lawrence, accidentally opened it, and having seen the body, though he did not touch it, died in ten days. Wherefore, madam, the Romans, in granting relics, do not touch the saints' bodies; they only put a little linen in a box, which they place near them; after some time they withdraw it, and deposite the box and linen solemnly in the church which they mean to dedicate. 'This linen performs as many miracles as if they had transported the real body. In the time of pope Leo some Greeks doubting the virtue of such relics, he took a pair of scissors, as we are assured, and cutting the linen, forthwith the blood flowed from it.'

He, however, tells the empress that he will endeavor to send her a few grains of the chain which had been on Paul's neck and hands, and which had been found peculiarly efficacious, provided they succeeded, which was not always the case, in filing them off.*

I have given a rapid sketch of the causes which led to the corruption of Christianity, and some of the steps by which an apostate persecuting church

* Jones, vol. 1, p. 360. Fleury's Ecc. Hist., tome viii. p. 91, 93.

arrived at the summit of power. We see that her encroachments were at first gradual and almost imperceptible ; for in the first stage of her progress she could have had no prospect of the giddy height to which she afterwards attained. In proportion as the priesthood became enriched, they aspired to power, and indulged in luxury, until, at length, their arrogance knew no bounds, and their vices were proverbial throughout christendom. During that mournful period which elapsed between the ninth and the sixteenth centuries, the state of religion was truly deplorable : the worship of images and relics was almost every where practised,—pretended miracles at the shrines of the saints were devoutly believed by the vulgar ; the sacred Scriptures were hidden from the people, and almost unknown to the clergy ; worship was performed in a dead language ; the hard earnings of the poor, and the riches of the great, were taken to purchase masses for the dead, and indulgences for the living ; the terrors of the inquisition repressed the spirit of inquiry, and impaired the confidence of social life ; and, in fact, every thing seemed to proclaim that the powers of darkness had taken possession of the human mind.

But let us not suppose that the knowledge of Divine Truth was banished from the earth ; the church of Christ was indeed oppressed and afflicted, but not destroyed ; the outer court was trodden down by the Gentiles, but true worship was still performed by a faithful few in the inner sanctuary of the heart. Notwithstanding the general corruption of manners that prevailed, there were, doubtless, many pure spirits that

mourned in secret for the desolations of Zion ; and many true hearts that did not bow the knee to Baal, nor kiss his image. Even in the cloisters of the monks and nuns, so generally the abodes of sloth and licentiousness, some sincere worshippers were found, who, like Thomas a Kempis, retired from the world to seek for spiritual comfort in communion with God. But there was another class of worshippers far more interesting to us, and by no means inconsiderable in number, whose history I propose to examine in another chapter.

These were the dissenters from the established churches, who for many centuries bore witness to the truth, and protested against the usurpations of the clergy.

The brightness of their example softened the gloom that settled over the Christian church, during the long dark period of the middle ages ; as the twinkling of a solitary star, in a tempestuous night, serves to keep alive the hopes of the distressed mariner, until the morning star appears, and gives the promise of another glorious day.

CHAPTER II.

History of the Novatians, Paulicians, and Albigenes.

Having in the first chapter taken a view of the causes which led to the corruption of Christianity, and involved its professors in the dark clouds of ignorance and superstition, I shall now proceed to describe some of those Christian churches, or sects, which dissented from the doctrines and withdrew from the communion of the Latin and Greek churches.

The purity of manners exhibited by these dissenters, the firmness with which they resisted the encroachments of the bishops, and their constancy in the midst of persecution and extreme sufferings, cannot fail to awaken the interest, and call forth the admiration of every benevolent heart.

By means of their faithfulness, a succession of witnesses has been preserved from the Apostolic age down to the present time; and although they have prophesied in sackcloth, and borne the odious name of heretics, even their persecutors have been compelled to acknowledge the spotless purity of their lives. The knowledge we have of these dissenters in ancient times is chiefly derived from the writings of their adversaries, who, while they bear witness to the excellence of their moral character, affect to consider them the worst of heretics, because they denied the supremacy of

the pope, and bore a testimony against the sacrifice of the mass, the worship of images and relics, the invocation of saints, and the vices of the clergy.

These dissenters were known by various names, such as Novatians, Cathari, Paulicians, Paterines, Waldenses, Albigenses, Wickliffites, and Bohemian Brethren.

Even before the time of Constantine the Great, a pastor of one of the churches in Rome, whose name was Novatian, separated from the Catholic party, on the ground that their discipline was too much relaxed, and their communion degraded, by receiving back into membership those who, in times of persecution, had denied the faith and fallen into idolatry. He also complained that the attention of the people had been transferred by the bishops from the great principles of religion, and fixed upon vain shows and ceremonies borrowed from the Jewish law, and the institutions of paganism. "Great numbers followed the example of Novatian; and all over the empire Puritan churches were constituted, and flourished through the succeeding two hundred years. Afterwards, when penal laws obliged them to lurk in corners and worship God in private, they were distinguished by a variety of names, and *a succession of them continued till the Reformation.*" This account, taken from Robert Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches, does not entirely correspond with the views that Mosheim and some others have taken of the secession of Novatian. These writers concur with the Catholics in blaming him for the severity of his discipline, which, they al-

lege, inflicted a needless wound on the peace of the church.

It is, however, acknowledged by all, that there was at this time, in most of the churches, an alarming tendency to pomp and luxury on the part of the clergy, accompanied in many instances by vices which dishonored their profession.* This being the case, it is obvious that the secession of some part of the church, in order to establish a purer discipline, would have a salutary influence upon the whole. Whatever may have been the motives which prompted Novatian, there is sufficient evidence that the members of the churches which bore his name, and who were sometimes called Cathari, or Puritans, from the strictness of their morals, were a worthy and exemplary people.

When the emperor Constantine the Great condemned the errors of the Manicheans and their kindred sects, he directed a civil magistrate to inquire into the principles of the Novatians; and being convinced of "their orthodox faith and *exemplary morals*," he issued an edict in their favor, exempting from the penalties of the law, and allowing them to build a church at Constantino-ple.† "One charge against them was, that they did not pay due reverence to the martyrs, nor allow that there was any virtue in their relics;"‡ which is an evidence of their good sense, and shows that, even in that early age, superstition and idolatry were creeping into the church.

* Moshicm, 3d century, part ii. chap. ii.

† Gibbon, i. 436. ‡ Jones, i. 315.

During the reign of Constantine, the Novatians were subjected to a cruel persecution by Macedonius, bishop or patriarch of Constantinople. Being informed that a large district in Paphlagonia was inhabited almost entirely by them, he resolved either to convert or extirpate them; and for this purpose sent an army of four thousand troops to subdue them. The Novatian peasants, driven to despair, defended themselves with scythes and axes, and repulsed the invaders.* Although often subjected to persecution, this is the only instance I find in which they resisted.† About the same time the most violent conflicts took place in Constantinople between the Arians and Athanasians, in which many lives were lost. One of their battles took place in a church, of which the courts and porticos overflowed with blood.

A circumstance is mentioned by an ancient historian, which reflects great credit upon the Novatians. During the reign of the emperor Valens, in the fourth century, the Arians had the ascendancy, and a violent persecution was waged against the Athanasian party.

The Novatians were at first included in this persecution; but through the influence of Marcian, one of their presbyters, they secured toleration for themselves, and extended much liberality and kindness towards the Catholic party, by whom they had formerly been persecuted.†

In the fifth century the Novatians were found in Egypt; and we learn from Gibbon, that one of the first acts of Cyril, the famous archbishop

* Gibbon, i. 467.

† Jones, i. 315.

of Alexandria, was to persecute these people, "the most *innocent and harmless of all the sectaries*," and "to interdict their religious worship."*

About the middle of the seventh century another sect of dissenters arose in the east, under the name of Paulicians, which, for the sufferings they endured and the excellence of some of their testimonies, demand a share of our attention.

An obscure individual named Constantine, who lived in a village near Samosata, entertained a stranger who was returning from Syrian captivity, and from him received the inestimable gift of the New Testament, which was then almost lost to the world, being concealed by the clergy from the eyes of the vulgar.

This book became the constant study of Constantine, and enabled him to discover that the gospel of Christ had been almost obliterated by superstitious observances and the inventions of men. He was particularly attached to the writings of the apostle Paul, and from this circumstance it is supposed that the name of Paulicians was derived, which was bestowed upon him and his adherents. Constantine took the name of Sylvanus, and his fellow-laborers were known by the appellations of Titus, Timothy, and Tychicus, which they adopted from the writings of their favorite author. The doctrines of this sect are only known through the writings of their adversaries, and have probably been much misrepresented in many particulars; but there is no doubt they bore a faithful

* Gibbon, iii. 249.

testimony against the worship of images and relics, and the invocation of saints, which had then become almost universal in the Greek and Latin churches.

They were accused by their enemies with the heresy of the Manicheans, who blended the doctrines of the gospel with the speculations of the Persian Magians; but they disclaimed the imputation, and professed to be the simple votaries of St. Paul and of Christ.

Whatever may have been their doctrinal views, there is reason to believe that the strictness of their morals, and their open contempt of the superstitions of the age, were the chief causes that drew upon them the hatred of a mercenary priesthood, who instigated the persecutions they endured.

“The Paulician teachers were distinguished only by their scriptural names, by the modest title of fellow pilgrims, by the austerity of their lives, their zeal or knowledge, and the credit of some extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit.”* “But they were incapable of desiring, or at least of obtaining the wealth and honors of the Catholic prelacy; such anti-christian pride they bitterly censured, and even the rank of elders or presbyters was condemned as an institution of the Jewish synagogue.”*

Their proselytes soon became numerous, and they established churches throughout the “provinces of Asia Minor, to the westward of the Euphrates.” Sylvanus, after having labored in this

* Gibbon ch. 54.

cause for twenty-seven years, "retired from under the tolerating government of the Arabs, and fell a sacrifice to Roman persecution."

Simeon, a Greek minister, armed with military and legal power, "appeared at Colonia to strike the shepherd, and, if possible, reclaim the lost sheep to the Catholic fold. By a refinement of cruelty, he placed the unfortunate Sylvanus before a line of his disciples, who were commanded, as the price of their pardon and proof of their repentance, to massacre their spiritual father. They turned aside from the impious office; the stones dropped from their filial hands, and of the whole number only one executioner could be found,—a new David, as he is styled by the Catholics, who boldly overthrew the giant of heresy. This apostate, Justus was his name, again deceived and betrayed his unsuspecting brethren, and a new conformity to the acts of St. Paul may be found in the conversion of Simeon; like the apostle, he embraced the doctrines which he had been sent to persecute, renounced his honors and fortunes, and acquired among the Paulicians the fame of a missionary and a martyr."*

For a period of one hundred and fifty years this people sustained with patience all the sufferings that the most relentless bigotry could inflict.—Several of the emperors of Constantinople signalized their zeal for the form of religion, by persecuting the unoffending Paulicians; but it was reserved for the empress Theodora, who restored the images to the oriental churches, to manifest

* Gibbon, ch. 54.

her sanguinary devotion by waging against them an exterminating war. It was the boast of her flatterers, that, during her short reign, one hundred thousand Paulicians were extirpated by the sword, the gibbet, and the flames.

Many of them being driven from their homes found their way into Europe, where we shall find them introducing their religious views and establishing societies; some of them were driven by persecution to revolt and oppose by force of arms the sanguinary rulers of their country. In the mountain fastnesses of Armenia they fortified themselves, and long maintained their independence; but after a tedious and harassing warfare, their stronghold was taken, many were put to the sword, and a remnant of this once numerous people found on the banks of the Euphrates a refuge among the Saracens.*

It appears that a colony of Paulicians was settled in Thrace about the middle of the eighth century, and was in the tenth century augmented by a large reinforcement, who were, by the Greek emperor, John Zimisce, granted a free toleration.* In the eleventh century the Greek emperor, Alexius Comnenus, who was distinguished for his learning, undertook in person the difficult task of bringing over to the orthodox faith the Paulicians in Thrace and Bulgaria. He went to Philippolis, their chief town, and spent whole days in disputing with their principal teachers; but not content with the arms which logic and rhetoric supplied, he held out tempting rewards to those

* Gibbon, ch. 54.

who should renounce their principles, and inflicted severe punishments on the unyielding.

In order to avoid the persecution of the Greek church, or with a view to disseminate their principles, many of the Paulicians of Thrace and Bulgaria emigrated and spread themselves through several countries of Europe. Their first resting place was in Italy, whence, in process of time, they sent colonies into almost all the other provinces of Europe, where their opinions took root, and congregations were formed, which afterwards endured the most severe persecution from the Roman pontiffs. In Italy they were called Paterini and Cathari, and in France, Bulgarians.

The first religious assembly which the Paulicians formed in France was, according to Moshem, at Orleans, and its principal members were twelve canons of the cathedral, men eminently distinguished by their learning and piety. These canons and their adherents were accused by a monk of holding the doctrines of the Manicheans, upon which a council was held to try them, and they were condemned to be burnt alive. Dr. Moshem, with strange inconsistency, calls them a "pernicious sect;" yet he informs us that "even their enemies acknowledged the sincerity of their piety, although they blackened them with accusations which were evidently false."—He says they were "a set of mystics who looked with contempt upon all external worship, rejected all rites and ceremonies, and even the Christian sacraments, as destitute of any, even the least spiritual efficacy or virtue,—placed the whole of religion in the internal contemplation of God, and

the elevation of the soul to divine and celestial things; and in their philosophical speculations concerning God, the Trinity, and the human soul, soared above the age in which they lived. A like set of men proceeded in vast numbers out of Italy in the following ages, spread like an inundation through all the European provinces, and were known in Germany under the name of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, while they were distinguished in other countries by the appellation of Beghards."

The same author mentions another branch of this numerous sect who were converted or convinced of their alleged errors by a discourse of Gerard, bishop of Cambray and Arras, in the year 1030. They maintained in general, according to their own confession, *that the whole of religion consisted in the study of practical piety, and in a course of action conformable to the Divine laws*; and they treated all external modes of worship with the utmost contempt. Their particular tenets may be reduced to the following heads:

1. They rejected baptism, and more especially the baptism of infants, as a ceremony that was in no respect essential to salvation.
2. They rejected, for the same reason, the sacrament of the Lord's supper.
3. They denied that churches were more holy than private houses, or that they were more adapted to the worship of God than any other place.
4. They affirmed that altars were unworthy of any marks of veneration and regard.
5. They disapproved of the use of incense and consecrated oil in religious services.

6. They looked upon the use of bells in churches as an intolerable superstition. 7. They denied that the establishment of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and other ecclesiastical dignities, was of Divine institution, and went so far as to maintain that the appointment of stated ministers in the church was entirely unnecessary. 8. They affirmed that the institution of funeral rites was an effect of sacerdotal avarice, and that it was a matter of indifference whether the dead were buried in churches or in the fields. 9. They looked upon the voluntary punishment, called penance, so generally practised, as unprofitable and absurd. 10. They denied that the sins of departed spirits could be in any measure atoned for by masses, the distribution of alms to the poor, or a vicarious penance; and they consequently treated the doctrine of purgatory as a ridiculous fable. 11. They considered marriage a pernicious institution.— 12. They thought a certain sort of veneration was due to the apostles and martyrs, but considered the bodies of the confessors as no more sacred than any other human carcass. 13. They disapproved of the use of instrumental music in religious worship. 14. They denied that the cross, on which Christ suffered, was any more sacred than other kinds of wood, and refused to worship it. 15. They refused all acts of adoration to the images of Christ, and of the saints, and were for having them removed out of the churches. 16. They were shocked at the subordination and distinctions established among the clergy.

It is remarked, with much reason, by the editor of Moshem's History, that, "The 11th article, as here expressed, in relation to marriage, is hardly credible. It is more reasonable to suppose that these Mystics did not absolutely condemn marriage, but only held celibacy in higher esteem, as a mark of superior sanctity and virtue."

This account is more full and explicit, with regard to the religious opinions of the Mystics of the middle ages, than any I have met with; and corresponding as it does in several particulars with the opinions attributed to the Paulician martyrs, who suffered at Orleans, we may reasonably conclude that many of these views were entertained by the kindred sects of Cathari or Puritans, who were then so numerous in several parts of Europe.

It is remarked by Hallam, in relation to the Catharists, whom he styles "a fraternity of Paulician origin," that "their belief was a compound of strange errors with truth; but it was attended by qualities of a far superior lustre to orthodoxy, by a *sincerity*, a *piety*, and a *self-devotion*, that almost purified the age in which they lived." "It is always important to perceive that these high moral excellencies have no necessary connexion with speculative truths." The same author observes, that in tracing the revolutions of popular opinion, he is inclined to attribute a very extensive effect to the preaching of these heretics.—They appear in various countries nearly during the same period; in Spain, Lombardy, Germany, Flanders and England, as well as France. Thirty unhappy persons, convicted of denying the sacra-

ments, are said to have perished at Oxford by cold and famine, in the reign of Henry II. In every country the new sects appear to have spread chiefly among the lower people, which, while it accounts for the imperfect notice of historians, indicates a more substantial influence upon the moral condition of society than the conversion of a few nobles and ecclesiastics." *

The Albigenses of Languedoc are, by some authors, considered a branch of the Paulicians, and by others they are identified with the Waldenses. The former opinion is embraced by Moshem, Gibbon, and Hallam; the latter by Jones and Peyran.

After consulting such authors as are within my reach, I have come to the conclusion expressed in a note to Moshem's account of this sect in the thirteenth century. He says the term Albigenses is used in two senses, of which one is general, and the other more confined. In the more general and extensive sense, it comprehends all the various kinds of heretics (or dissenters from the church of Rome) who resided at that time in Narbonne Gaul, i. e. the southern part of France.

The term Albigenses, *in its more confined sense*, was used to denote those heretics who inclined towards the Manichean system, and who were otherwise known by the name of Catharists, Publicans or Paulicians, and Bulgarians. This appears, evidently, from many incontestable authorities, and more especially from the Codese Inquisitionis Tolosande, (published in Leinberch's

* Hallam's Middle Ages, p. 506.

History of the Inquisition) in which the Albigenses are carefully distinguished from the other sects that made a noise in that century.* I am therefore obliged, in this case, to dissent from the opinion expressed by Jones, in his excellent History of the Waldenses, who considers the Albigenses as a branch of that church. I am the more inclined to consider the Albigenses a different sect from the circumstance of their defending themselves when attacked, which appears not to have been done by the Waldenses, so early as the thirteenth century. Gibbon says it was in the country of the Abigeois, in the southern provinces of France, that the Paulicians were most deeply implanted; and the same vicissitudes of martyrdom and revenge which had been displayed in the neighborhood of the Euphrates, were repeated in the thirteenth century on the banks of the Rhone.†

In the year 1163, “a synod was convened at Tours, a city of France, at which all the bishops and priests of the country of Toulouse, in Languedoc, were strictly enjoined to forbid, under pain of excommunication, every person from presuming to give reception or the least assistance to the followers of this heresy, to have no dealings with them in buying or selling, that thus being deprived of the common necessities of life they might be compelled to repent of the evil of their way.” And further, “that as many of them as could be found should be imprisoned by the

* Moshlem's Ecc. History, 13th century.

† History of Decline and Fall, chap. liv.

Catholic princes, and punished with the forfeiture of all their substance.”

Many of these persecuted people having fled into Spain, the king, Ildelonsers, issued a severe and bloody edict for their expulsion. Notwithstanding the severe measures adopted to expel them from France, they continued to increase, and in the “year 1200, the city of Toulouse and eighteen other principal towns in Languedoc, Provence and Dauphiné, were filled with Waldenses and Albigenses.”* Finding the persecuting decree of the synod insufficient, the Court of Rome proceeded to anathematize the Waldenses, Puritans and Paterines, and the Catholic princes were called upon to assist the bishops with the power of the sword. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, a crusade was preached against the Albigenses, and the soldiers who engaged in this “holy war” were promised not only the plunder of their innocent victims, but a plenary indulgence for all their sins, and a certain passport to heaven. At this stage of the proceedings a discussion was proposed, or agreed upon, in which umpires were chosen, and some of the pastors of the Albigenses engaged in argument with the Pope’s legates, and others of the Catholic clergy.

While the controversy was proceeding, and Arnold Hot, on behalf of the Albigenses, after making an eloquent defence of their doctrines, was calling on the Catholics to defend themselves, it was announced that the “army of the crusaders

* Jones’ Church History, vol. ii, p. 113.

was at hand." The papal forces immediately proceeded, with warlike weapons, and fire and fagot, to put an end to the controversy which the arguments of the priests had failed to decide.

The armies employed in this service by Pope Innocent III., destroyed above two hundred thousand of the Albigenses in the short space of a few months. Raymond, Count of Toulouse, in whose territories they chiefly resided, still humanely extended to them his protection, which drew down upon him the resentment of the Pope, who issued a bull of excommunication against him, and absolved his subjects from their oaths of allegiance. Raymond not being intimidated by these wicked measures, an army of one hundred thousand crusaders was brought against him, which induced him to make his submission to the Pope, who imposed upon him the most humiliating conditions. Notwithstanding the count's submission, the immense army of the crusaders still proceeded with their work of devastation and bloodshed. Raymond had a nephew by the name of Roger, Earl of Beziers, who took up the sword to defend himself and his subjects. His capital, the city of Beziers, being invested by the enemy, was compelled to surrender, and every individual, to the number of twenty-three thousand, put to the sword.

There being many Catholics among the inhabitants, the crusaders hesitated as to what they should do with them; when application being made to the Abbe of Cisteaux, the commander, he replied, "Kill them all,—the Lord knoweth them that are his."

The Earl of Beziers, foreseeing the result of the seige, made his escape, and withdrew to the city of Carcassonne. Here he was again surrounded by the papal army; but the place being strongly fortified, he was enabled to defend himself, until at length he was induced, by the most solemn oaths and promises of safety, to entrust himself to the Pope's legate, in order to negotiate a peace, when he was treacherously seized and thrown into prison, where he soon after died, not without exciting strong suspicions of being poisoned. The inhabitants of the city were thrown into the greatest consternation by the loss of their leader. "A report, however, was circulated, that there was a vault or subterraneous passage somewhere in the city, which led to the castle of Cabaret, a distance of about three leagues from Carcassonne, and that if the mouth or entry thereof could be found, Providence had provided for them a way of escape. The entrance of the cavern was found, and at the beginning of the night they all began their journey through it, carrying with them only as much food as was deemed necessary to save them for a few days." "It was a dismal and sorrowful sight," says their historian, "to witness their removal and departure, accompanied with sighs, tears and lamentations, at the thoughts of quitting their habitations and all their worldly possessions, and betaking themselves to the uncertain event of saving themselves by flight. Parents leading their children, and the more robust supporting decrepit old persons, and especially to hear the affecting lamentations

of the women." They, however, arrived the following day at the castle, whence they dispersed themselves through various provinces, and many sought a refuge in foreign countries.

This relentless and desolating war was continued, with various success, for a period of twenty years; and it has been estimated that a million of persons, bearing the name of heretics, were put to death.* During most of this time the crusading army was commanded by Simon, Earl of Montfort, who succeeded the Abbe of Cistaux. This nobleman, with the approbation of the Pope, claimed all the possessions of Raymond, the Earl of Toulouse; but the latter succeeded, at last, in regaining possession of his capital and most of his territory. On his death, which took place in 1221, he was succeeded by his son, the young Count Raymond, who soon after banished the Inquisition from his territory. This drew upon him the wrath of Pope Honorius III., who directed his emissaries to proclaim another "holy war," and called upon Louis, King of France, to assist in crushing the Albigenses. After enduring the horrors of a cruel and desolating war, Raymond was at length taken by treachery, and from this period the Albigenses ceased to exist in any considerable numbers in France. Those who escaped with their lives fled for refuge to the valleys of Piedmont and other places, wherever they could find an asylum.

After one of the terrible conflicts which took place in the crusade against the Albigenses, a

* Jones, vol. 2. p. 149, who cites Mede on the Apocalypse and Newton on the Prophecies.

singular disclosure was made, which throws some light upon the history of those times. After the battle of Murat there was found among the slain, belonging to the Albigenses, a knight in black armor. "On examining, behold, it was discovered to be Peter, King of Arragon,—that very monarch who had formerly been engaged in negotiating between the Pope's legate and the Earl of Beziers. There, also, lay one of his sons, and many of the Arragonian gentlemen and vassals, who, while ostensibly supporting the Roman church, had, in disguise, been fighting in defence of the Albigenses."

CHAPTER III.

History of the Waldenses previous to the Reformation.

The Waldenses or Vaudois were, during the middle ages, a numerous people, originally settled in the Valleys of Piedmont, but afterwards spread through several nations of Europe. We learn from the letters of Jean Rodolphe Peyran, one of the pastors of the modern Waldenses, that the term used in that country to designate an inhabitant of the Valleys is Vaudés; and that Vaudois in the French and Waldenses in the Latin are corresponding terms.

He says they should not be considered as reformed churches, but rather as evangelical or apostolic, because they have never been connected with the image worship of Rome, but have, on the contrary, protested against it from the earliest ages.

This agrees with a statement quoted by Peyran from a French historian, who says, "those who were called Manicheans, and afterwards Vaudois, Albigenses, and Lollards,—and who so frequently reappeared under a variety of other names, were a remnant of *the primitive Christians of Gaul*, who were attached to many ancient usages, which have since been changed by the court of Rome, and ignorant of many opinions which that court has established in the course of

ages." "For instance, *these primitive Christians* were unacquainted with the worship of images." It is very remarkable that these men, almost unknown to the rest of the world, should have persevered constantly from time immemorial in customs which in all other places have passed away. It is with customs as with languages; an infinite number of ancient terms are preserved in distant cantons, while in the capitals and large cities language varies from age to age. The people in the vicinity of Turin, who inhabit the caves of the Vaudois, preserve the dress, the language, and almost all the rites of the age of Charlemagne.*

The antiquity of the Waldensian church and some of its distinguishing tenets are incontestably proved by the following extract from a poem called *La Noble Loicon*, written in the old Provençal language about the year 1100:

Que non vogli mandir ne jura, ne mentir,
 N'occir, ne avoutrir, ne preure de attrui,
 Ne s' avengeur deli suo ennemi,
 Los dison qu'es Vaudes, et los feson morir:†

that is, whosoever refuses to curse, to swear, to lie, to commit adultery, to steal, to be revenged of his enemy, they say he is a Vaudois, and therefore they put him to death.‡

There is also abundant evidence in Catholic writers to show that the Waldenses may be traced

* *Nouvelles Lettres sur les Vaudois*, par Jean Rodolphe Peyran, p. 133.

† These verses are quoted in Hallam's *Middle Ages*, p. 507, with the orthography somewhat different.

‡ Jones, *C. H.* ii. 27.

to a still higher antiquity. The inquisitor Rienerus Sacco, who wrote in the thirteenth century, says, "this sect is the most ancient of all, some persons asserting that it has existed since the time of pope Sylvester, (A. D. 335) and others tracing its origin even to the time of the apostles."*

Claudius Seissel, archbishop of Turin, in a book which he published *against the Vaudois* in the year 1547, says, that "after much research he finds it impossible to fix the exact antiquity or origin of this sect;" and he freely acknowledges "that there is great reason to conclude that the sect of the Vaudois has been in existence many centuries, because all sorts of people at various times have tried in vain to root them out, yet in opposition to the opinions of the whole world they have still continued unconquered and invincible."

He further observes that the Vaudois or Waldenses owe their origin to Leo, a pious man, who being shocked at the avarice of pope Sylvester, (A. D. 335) and the excessive donations of Constantine, was no longer willing to continue in communion with the bishop of Rome, and was followed by great numbers of good men.† From this cause it is supposed by some that the Waldenses were formerly called Leonists; but by others this title is derived from Leo of Ravenna, who protested against the papal power in the reign of Charlemagne. The inquisitor Rienerus Sacco‡ bears witness to the purity of their morals,

* Peyran's Letters, p. 28.

† N. Lettres sur les Vaudois, p. 28. Appendix to do. 154.

‡ N. Lettres, S. V., p. 22.

saying that they lived justly before all men, that they had good sentiments respecting the Deity, and that they blasphemed only the church of Rome and the clergy, to which the laity willingly consented. He adds in another place, that the Cathari (or Manicheans) were few in number, there not being more than four thousand of them in the whole world; but those who “are sometimes called Leonists, and at others Vaudois, were an infinite number, and that he having often assisted to examine these heretics had counted forty-one of their schools in the diocess of Padua, and ten in Rubac or Clemma.”

I shall add but one more testimony to the antiquity of the Waldensian church, which is that of Malte Brun, the celebrated geographer.

He says, in his description of Savoy, “twenty-two thousand Vaudois residing in the Valleys of the Alps, *who for at least twelve centuries* have professed a worship analagous to the reformed religion, bear in silence the privation of their privileges as citizens.”

Piedmont, the district in which they reside, derives its name from two Latin words, *pede montium*, signifying the foot of the mountain.

It is about one hundred and fifty miles long and ninety broad; and bounded on the north by the Valais, a canton of Switzerland, on the east by the Milanese, south by the county of Nice and territory of Genoa, and west by France. It contains many lofty mountains belonging to the chain of the Alps, and enclosing among them a number of fertile and secluded vallies. The whole country is “an interchange of hill and dale, mountain

and valley, traversed with four principal rivers, the Po, the Tanaro, the Stura, and the Dora; besides about eight and twenty rivulets great and small, which winding their courses in different directions, contribute to the fertility of the valleys and make them resemble a watered garden.”*

Piedmont contains many beautiful and fertile vallies, where the smiling verdure of meadows, and rich luxuriance of orchards, are strikingly contrasted with the rugged grandeur of the surrounding mountains. Some of the vallies are so completely encircled by steep ridges and precipitous rocks, as to be only accessible by narrow passes; and the inhabitants thus shut out from the world are defended by the bulwarks of nature.

It has been remarked by an intelligent historian that it would seem “as if the all-wise Creator had from the beginning designed this place as a cabinet wherein to put some inestimable jewel, or in which to reserve many thousand souls which should not bow the knee before Baal.”†

The Vaudois formerly occupied a large portion of Piedmont; but they have at different times been driven from some of the most fertile spots, and they are now principally confined to three of the valleys, Luzerna, Perousa, and San Martino, in the Province of Pinerolo. “The present population occupying fifteen villages or parishes, under the care of thirteen pastors, whose religious duties extend to one hundred and three hamlets annexed to the villages, amounts to [about] twenty thousand souls, besides one thousand seven hundred

* M. Brun's Geo. vol 3. Jones, i. 426. Peyran, Int. xvii.

† Sir Samuel Moreland's Hist. of the Churches of Piedmont.

Roman Catholics.* The villages are for the most part situate in the valleys, the hamlets on the declivities of mountains; and whilst the former are in some instances surrounded by vineyards and meadows, the latter are exposed to a scorching sun in the summer, and are encompassed in winter for some months by deep snow, which, while it envelops the hamlets in its white mantle, demands the greatest caution on the part of the inhabitants, as it fills up the ravines and conceals the precipices from view.”†

The inhabitants of these valleys are generally poor, frugal, and industrious. In many places the declivities of the mountains are so steep that they are obliged to build walls to support the soil, and prevent it from being washed down by the heavy rains.

They have to break up the ground by manual labor, since no cattle can be used to plough; and they are compelled to carry the hay and corn on their backs, and thus to perform the labors which in other countries are assigned to beasts of burden. Thus, by means of unwearied perseverance, they succeed in gaining a scanty subsistence, consisting chiefly of rye, buckwheat, and chesnuts.

Such is the account given by geographers and travellers of the condition of the Waldenses in the present century; but in ancient times they were a much more numerous people.

There is no reason to suppose that the Waldenses were entirely separated from the Catholic church earlier than the ninth century, although

* Int. to Peyran's *N. Lettres sur les Vaudois*, xviii.

† Int. to *N. L. V. Peyran*, xix. and xxx.

they denied the supremacy of the pope, and opposed many of the ceremonies which had been introduced. In this respect they were not alone; for we find that "nine bishops of Italy and Switzerland, in the year 590, rejected the communion of the pope as an heretic;" and in the latter part of the eighth century Paulinus, bishop of the church of Aqulea in Italy, opposed the papal usurpations, and condemned the decrees of the second council of Nice, which had established the worship of images.*

The first eminent pastor among the Waldenses of whom we have any account was Claudius, bishop of Turin. He was born in Spain, and had been chaplain of Lewis the Meek, king of France and emperor of the West, by whom he was appointed to the bishoprick of Turin in the year 817.

He was celebrated for his knowledge of the scriptures, and began to preach with great zeal against the superstitions of the age, such as *images, relics, pilgrimages, and crosses*.*

He denied the supremacy of the pope, saying, "He alone is apostolic who has the doctrines of the apostles, and not he who boasts of sitting in the chair of the apostle."†

This course produced a great clamor among the monks, and drew upon him so much hatred as to endanger his life; but he still continued to labor in the good cause, and with so much success, that the valleys of Piedmont in the neighborhood of Turin were filled with his disciples.†

* Jones C. H. i. 431.

† N. L. Peyran, p. 33.

It is stated by Catholic writers, that the Waldenses preserved the opinions of Claudius in the ninth and tenth centuries; but there is no record of the exact time when they finally separated from the Catholic church.

Although the church of Rome was then sunk to the lowest point of superstition and ignorance, the papal power had not yet acquired that despotic sway which afterwards enabled it to tyrannize over the consciences of men. This may account for the circumstance that Claudius was not excommunicated or put to death.

The inhabitants of the valleys who had embraced the views of Claudius continued for some years after his death to live in peace and security, and their numbers are supposed to have been augmented by immigration from other districts. But the bishops of Milan and Turin being informed of their numbers and prosperity, bethought themselves of bringing them again under the yoke of clerical authority.

Accordingly the scaffold was erected, and the fires of persecution were lighted at Turin, in order to compel these inoffensive people to renounce their opinions and embrace the Catholic faith. Some of them suffered martyrdom, and others fled from persecution to sow in other lands the seeds of their faith, which soon sprung up and produced an abundant increase of proselytes.

About the year 1140 a number of these reputed heretics were discovered near Cologne in Germany, who appear to have been men of exemplary lives and pious sentiments; but because they re-

jected the traditions of the church, and exposed the vices of the clergy, they were seized and burnt to death. They stated that great numbers every where entertained the same sentiments.*

In the year 1159 a company of about thirty men and women who spoke the German language appeared in England, professing similar sentiments, who were taken up and through the instigation of the clergy condemned by Henry II. to undergo a cruel and ignominious punishment, and then to be turned out in the fields destitute of food or shelter, where they died of cold and hunger.

In the year 1110, Peter de Bruys preached the gospel in Languedoc and Provence, and great numbers were convinced by his ministry. After a service of twenty years, he too suffered martyrdom.

But previous to this time a considerable body of dissenters who bore the name of Paterines appeared in Italy, in the cities of Milan, Modena, Ferrara, Verona, and many other places. They taught that "a Christian church ought to consist only of good people; that it is not right to take oaths, nor to kill mankind; that faith without works will not save us; that the church ought not to persecute any, even the wicked; that the law of Moses was no rule to Christians; that there was no need of priests, especially wicked ones; and that the ceremonies, orders, and sacraments of the church of Rome were futile, expensive, oppressive, and wicked."† The Paterines were de-

* Jones, i. 482.

† Ibid, i. 498.

cent in their deportment, modest in their dress and manners, and their morals irreproachable.— They were not eager to accumulate wealth, and avoided commerce because it exposed them to temptation, choosing rather to live by labor and useful trades. They were always employed in spare hours either in giving or receiving instruction. Their bishops and officers were mechanics, weavers, shoemakers, and others, who maintained themselves by their industry. About the year 1040 they became a very numerous people in Milan, which was their principal residence; and here they flourished at least two hundred years.*

In the twelfth century the number and zeal of the Waldenses were much increased by the labors of Peter Waldo of Lyons, a celebrated teacher of religion, who has by some writers been erroneously considered the father of the Waldensian church. This mistake has probably arisen from the coincidence of names, and from the circumstance that until his time these dissenters had remained in comparative obscurity.

It appears that about the year 1160 the doctrine of transubstantiation began to prevail in the Roman church; that is to say, the people were taught to believe that the wafer and wine consecrated by the priest and eaten by the people, were the identical body and real blood of Christ, and not the mere emblems as had been formerly believed.

When this new doctrine, which was first broached in the ninth century, became fully established,

* Jones, i. 498. Extracted from Robinson's *Ecc. Res.*

the priests and people bowed down and worshipped the God who was thus supposed to be present in a corporeal form. This is termed the sacrifice of the mass, and the bread thus worshipped is called the host, which is offered up every day by the papists as a sacrifice for sin.

When Peter Waldo beheld this ceremony he was so struck with its absurdity and impiety, that he opposed it in the most courageous manner. It is stated that he had then no intention of separating from the church of Rome, nor of becoming a reformer; but a circumstance afterwards occurred which had the most important consequences in his life. "One evening after supper, as he sat conversing with a party of his friends, one of the company fell down dead on the floor, to the consternation of all present." This evidence of the uncertainty of human life so deeply affected him, that he could not escape from the convictions which overpowered his mind. He had recourse to the sacred volume for instruction and consolation, and through the powerful operation of divine grace attained to the saving knowledge of God.

At that time there was no translation of the scriptures in the vernacular tongues, the Latin Vulgate Bible being the only one known in Europe, and even that was accessible to but few.— Happily for Waldo and for the world, his education and circumstances enabled him to surmount these obstacles; he not only read it himself, but he caused the New Testament to be translated into French, and thus procured for the common people the inestimable treasures it contains.

In proportion as he became acquainted with the scriptures he perceived more clearly the mass of superstition and idolatry that prevailed, and he began to preach against the corruptions of the church of Rome and the vices of the clergy.

Multitudes flocked to his ministry and gladly received the word of Truth. The clergy were incensed at this boldness in a layman, and alarmed at the prospect of their craft being endangered. Pope Alexander III. being informed of these proceedings anathematized the reformer and his adherents, and through the instigation of the priests a violent persecution was stirred up, which compelled Waldo in the year 1163 to quit Lyons, and dispersed his flock, who fled into different countries carrying with them every where the principles of their faith, which took root and multiplied. Waldo himself settled in Dauphiny, where he preached with such success, that great numbers embraced his doctrines, who were afterwards denominated Leonists, Vaudois, Albigenses or Waldenses; these various names being applied in different countries to people professing nearly the same doctrines.

Being still persecuted from place to place, Waldo retired to Picardy and from thence to Germany, where his labors were attended with abundant success: he at length settled in Bohemia, where he finished his course in the year 1179, after a ministry of twenty years. There is no doubt that he was instrumental in raising up, or at least in confirming that large class of dissenters known by the names of Bohemian Brethren and Moravians.*

* Jones, vol. ii., 13 and 31.

Numbers of the followers of Waldo fled to Piedmont, taking with them his translation of the scriptures, which was an inestimable gift to the faithful Waldenses.

There is abundant evidence to prove that the Waldenses, or dissenters professing the same principles, spread throughout Europe; and that great numbers especially of the poorer classes embraced their principles, although in doing so they became exposed to the severest persecution instigated by the monks and priests of the established religion. In the valleys of the Pyrenees these dissenters were very numerous, and they were found in Spain in the thirteenth century, where vast numbers were put to death by the Inquisition.

In England they appeared under the name of Lollards, who were the precursors of the Wickliffites,* so called from the celebrated reformer John Wickliffe, the first person who translated the scriptures into the English language.

The rapid spread of these doctrines which were denominated "heresy," caused the utmost alarm at the court of Rome; to arrest their progress the most learned doctors of theology entered into controversy with the dissenters, but the weapons of logic and sophistry were found to be powerless, when opposed to the plain language of scripture and the conclusions of common sense. It was then determined by the adherents of the papacy that as the work of extirpating heretics could not be done by argument, it must be accomplished by physical force; and to effect this object they insti-

* *Nouvelles Lettres sur les Vaudois*, p. 7.

tuted the "Holy Office," or as it is more generally termed the Inquisition, the most terrible engine of oppression that human depravity ever invented. This fearful tribunal was first suggested by Dominic, a Spanish monk, about the commencement of the thirteenth century. His design was approved by pope Innocent III., and Dominic was appointed chief inquisitor. The Inquisition was introduced into France, but soon afterwards expelled by the indignation of the people. In Italy its desolating effects still continue to be felt, but in Spain and Portugal its ravages have been most revolting and destructive.

In the united kingdoms of Castile and Arragon there were eighteen inquisitorial courts, each having its counsellors, secretaries, sergeants, and other officers; and besides these there were twenty thousand familiars dispersed throughout the kingdom, who acted as *spies and informers*.—"By these familiars persons were seized on bare suspicion, and in contradiction to the established rules of equity they were *put to the torture*, tried, and condemned by the inquisitors, without being confronted by their accusers," and even without being informed of the crimes alleged against them.

Persons of the most infamous character were heard as witnesses against the most virtuous, and the zeal of fanaticism was invoked to induce servants to depose against their masters, children against their parents, and husband and wife against each other.*

* Voltaire's Univ. Hist., and Jones' Church Hist.

The sweets of domestic life were destroyed, confidence between man and man was at an end, and a gloomy and ferocious despotism brooded over the land which has changed the Spanish character from vivacity and buoyancy to distrust and reserve, and has reduced a nation once the most powerful in Europe, to the lowest state of degradation. Thousands and tens of thousands of the most virtuous citizens of Europe were tortured and destroyed by this inhuman tribunal. The poor Waldenses in France and Germany suffered severely, but maintained their principles with unshaken constancy in the midst of the most excruciating tortures, when stretched on the rack, or consuming at the stake.

At this time the Waldenses of Piedmont enjoyed peace and security under the paternal government of the Dukes of Savoy, who from the beginning of the thirteenth to near the close of the fifteenth century, a period of almost three hundred years, resisted all the efforts of the clergy to introduce the Inquisition into their territories. An attempt was made to establish this odious tribunal in Piedmont, but the people; who had heard of its cruelties in France, rose and put to death an inquisitor who had been sent by the pope to establish it. In Milan, Naples, and Venice similar attempts were made and resisted by the people.

About the year 1330 the Waldenses in several parts of Germany were grievously oppressed by an inquisitor named Echard, a Jacobin monk. This persecutor appears to have been more sincere than many of his brethren; for after inflicting great cruelties upon his unoffending victims he

was at length induced to examine the reasons for their separation from the church of Rome, when, being convinced of their correctness, he acknowledged his errors and joined himself to these persecuted disciples of Christ.

This course brought upon him the wrath of the other inquisitors, by whom he was pursued, taken, and committed to the flames. "His dying testimony was a noble attestation of the principles and conduct of the Waldenses, for he went to the stake charging it upon the church of Rome as a monstrous and iniquitous procedure to put to death so many innocent persons, for no other crime but their steadfast adherence to the cause of Christ."*

Notwithstanding the persecution they endured, the Waldenses continued to increase in Germany, and became so numerous that it was asserted, that "in travelling from Cologne to Milan, the whole extent of Germany, they could lodge every night with persons of their own profession."

Like the primitive Christians in the reign of Trajan, who were found enduring persecution in every city and every province of the empire, their numbers would have been sufficient to enable them to resist the malice of their adversaries; but their peaceable principles forbade them to rise in arms against the government. About the year 1370 a colony of the Waldensian youth of Dauphiny sought a settlement in Calabria, probably hoping to enjoy without molestation their religious privileges. They made application to the pro-

* Jones' C. H. p. 156. Perrin's History, C. ii. c. ii.

prietors for land to cultivate, which being granted, they speedily enriched and improved their respective districts, and by their industry, probity, and peaceable manners, gained the esteem and confidence of their landlords and neighbors.

The priests alone were dissatisfied. They found these colonists contributed nothing to support the church by masses for the dead and other popish ceremonies; and the foreign schoolmasters who educated the children of these strangers were highly respected and preferred to themselves.— They signified their intention of complaining to the pope, but the gentry resisted and remonstrated, until they found it expedient to relinquish their purpose. The consequence was that the Calabrian Waldenses enjoyed security and toleration until the year 1560, when they formed a union with the church of Geneva, of which Calvin was their pastor. The persecutions they endured after this union will demand our notice at a subsequent period. During the fourteenth century the Waldenses continued to spread through the various countries of Europe, and almost every where met with persecution from the priests and rulers; but their doctrines took root among the common people, and under various names continued to be maintained till the time of the Reformation.

In the year 1457, a considerable body of Bohemians who dissented from the established worship were permitted to settle on the crown lands of Litiz between Silesia and Moravia, where they formed a religious society called the *United Brethren*. Pious persons from various places,

and among them many Waldenses who had been driven from their homes, joined this society, which soon became a flourishing and happy community. Their prosperity, however, soon attracted the attention of the priests, and they were subjected to a severe persecution.

Their history and principles are recapitulated by Robinson, in his Ecclesiastical Researches, in the following language:

“ Authentic records in France assure us that a people of a certain description were driven from thence in the twelfth century. Bohemian records of equal authenticity inform us, that some of the same description arrived in Bohemia at the same time, and settled near a hundred miles from Prague, at Saltz and Launu, on the river Eger, just on the borders of the kingdom. Almost two hundred years after, another undoubted record of the same country mentions a people of the same description, some as burnt at Prague, and others as inhabiting the borders of the kingdom; and a hundred and fifty years after that, we find a people of the same description settled by connivance in the metropolis, and in several other parts of the kingdom. About one hundred and twenty years lower we find a people in the same country living under the protection of law on the estate of prince Lichtenstein exactly like all the former, and about thirty or forty thousand in number. The religious character of this people is so very different from that of all others, that the likeness is not easily mistaken. They *had no priests*, but taught one another. They had no private property, for they held all things jointly. They executed no

offices, and neither exacted nor took oaths. They *bore no arms*, and rather chose to suffer than resist wrong. They held every thing called religion in the church of Rome in abhorrence, and worshipped God only by adoring his perfections and endeavoring to imitate his goodness. They thought Christianity wanted no comment; and they professed the belief of that by being baptized, and their love to Christ and one another by receiving the Lord's supper.

“They aspired at neither wealth nor power, and their plan was industry. We are shown how highly probable it is that Bohemia offered them work, wages, and a secure asylum; which were all they wanted. If these be facts, they are facts that do honor to human nature; they exhibit in the great picture of the world a few small figures in a back ground unstained with the blood, and unruffled with the disputes of their fellow creatures.” This testimony corresponds with the statement of Peyran in his letters concerning the Waldenses, who considers the Brethren of Bohemia and Moravia as a branch of the Waldenses, who are said to have emigrated to Bohemia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

We will now return to the main body of the Waldenses living in the valleys of Piedmont.

After having enjoyed the protection of the dukes of Savoy for nearly three hundred years, they were again subjected to cruel persecution through the instigation of the clergy. In the latter part of the fifteenth century pope Innocent VIII. issued a violent bull against them, in which he directed Albert de Capitaneis, archdeacon of Cremona, to

extirpate them, and "to tread them under foot as venomous adders." He accordingly proceeded to the south of France, where he raised an army which he marched to the valley of Loyze; but the inhabitants fled at his approach and concealed themselves in their mountain caves. He discovered their retreats, and placed quantities of wood at their entrances, which he caused to be set on fire. By this means four hundred children were suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their dead mothers; and multitudes were dashed headlong on the rocks below, or butchered by the soldiery. On this occasion more than three thousand men, women, and children were destroyed. In the year 1488, he advanced with an army of eighteen thousand men to attack the valleys of Piedmont, where he was joined by many of the Piedmontese Catholics, who were allured by the hope of plunder, and the promise of having their sins remitted for so meritorious a service. The inhabitants of the valleys defended the narrow passes of the mountains, and repelled the invaders. The duke of Savoy being informed of these proceedings was touched with compassion for his subjects, who sent him a deputation explaining the motives of their conduct, and craving his protection. "He accepted their apology and forgave them what had passed. But having been informed that their young children were born with black throats; that they were hairy, and had four rows of teeth, with only one eye and that placed in the middle of their forehead,—he commanded some of them to be brought before him at Pignerol; where being satisfied by ocular demonstration that the Walden-

ses were not monsters, he blained himself for being so easily imposed upon by the clergy of the Catholic church as to credit such idle reports, and at the same time declared his determination to protect them in the possession of those privileges which had been allowed to their ancestors."

Notwithstanding the duke's good intentions towards them, the inquisitors who had established themselves in a convent near Pignerol continued to harass them, and as often as they could lay hands on any of them, delivered them over to the secular power for punishment.

As we are now approaching the period of the Reformation, when the views, or at least the practice of the Waldenses were in some respects modified by their connection with the church of Geneva, it will be proper to close this chapter with a brief summary of their moral and religious principles. Voltaire, in his *Universal History*, in speaking of that branch of the Waldenses who inhabited the valleys between Provence and Dauphiny, says they cultivated the soil with such indefatigable industry, as to reclaim a great quantity of waste land.

He says, "in the space of two hundred and fifty years their number increased to near eighteen thousand, who were dispersed in thirty small towns, besides hamlets. All this was the fruit of their industry. There were no priests among them, no quarrels about religious worship, no law suits; they determined their differences among themselves. None but those who repaired to the neighboring cities knew that there were such

things as mass or bishops. They prayed to God in their own jargon, and being continually employed they had the happiness to know no vice. This peaceful state they enjoyed for above two hundred years since the wars against the Albigenses, with which the nation had been wearied.

“When mankind have long rioted in cruelty, their fury abates and sinks into languor and indifference, as we see constantly verified in the case of individuals and whole nations. Such was the tranquillity which the Waldenses enjoyed when the Reformers of Germany and Geneva came to hear that there were others of the same persuasion as themselves.

“Immediately they sent some of their ministers (a name given to the curates of the Protestant churches) to visit them; and since then the Waldenses are but too well known.”* What the French historian means by their being too well known, refers to the dreadful persecutions they endured, which will be related in another chapter.

The moral principles of the Waldenses, which I consider the essential part of Christianity, appear to have been unimpeachable. Even the inquisitors who persecuted and put them to death acknowledged the spotless purity of their lives.

There are several of their confessions of faith extant, which were probably drawn up in times of persecution to vindicate them from the slanders of their enemies. None of these, however, are earlier than the twelfth century, nor are there any

* Voltaire's U II. ii. p. 338.

writings of theirs much older. From the most ancient of their writings, and the accounts of inquisitors who examined them, it does not appear that they dissented from the Catholic church on the nature of the Deity, or the incarnation of Christ. It is probable they assented to the Athanasian creed established by the first council of Nice in the year 325, and generally adopted in the Western churches before the Waldenses were known as a separate people.

It is said by D'Aubigné, in his history of the Reformation, that the Vaudois "contended for their lively hope in God through Christ, for regeneration and inward renewal by faith, hope, and charity; for the merits of Christ, and the all-sufficiency of his grace and righteousness."

But he adds, that "this primary truth of the justification of the sinner, which ought to rise pre-eminent above other doctrines, like Mount Blanc above the surrounding Alps, *was not sufficiently prominent in their system.*"*

This I take to be an admission that the doctrine of a vicarious satisfaction was not insisted upon by the Waldenses as it now is by some of the Protestant churches.

They rejected the sacraments of the Catholic church, except *baptism*, which they administered to adults only, and the *Eucharist*, which they considered as only *figurative* of the body and blood.† Their doctrine and practice with regard to the Christian ministry, are worthy of our especial attention.

* Voltaire, vol. i. p. 71. † Jones' C. II. vol. ii. p. 22: Also, Preface to 5th London ed. p. 26.

It is stated by Moshien, that they denied the supremacy of the Roman pontiff, and maintained that the rulers and ministers of the church were obliged by their vocation to imitate the poverty of the apostles, and to *procure for themselves a subsistence by the work of their hands*. They considered *every Christian as in a certain measure* qualified and authorized to instruct, exhort, and confirm the brethren in their Christian course. "The government of the church was committed by the Waldenses to bishops, presbyters, and deacons; for they acknowledged that these three orders were instituted by Christ himself." (The bishops were called *majoroles* or *elders*.) "But they deemed it absolutely necessary that all these orders should resemble exactly the apostles of the divine Saviour; and be like them, illiterate, poor, destitute of all worldly possessions, and furnished with some laborious trade or vocation, in order to gain by constant industry their daily subsistence."*

Milton, in a tract entitled "Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the church," says "those most ancient Reformed churches of the Waldenses, if they rather continued not pure since the apostles' days, denied that tithes were to be given, or that they were ever given in the primitive church, as appears by an ancient tractate inserted in the Bohemian history. The poor Waldenses, the ancient stock of our Reformation, without the help [of tithes] bred up themselves in trades, and especial-

* Moshien, C. H. 12th cent.

ly in physic and surgery, as well as the study of scripture, which is the only true theology, that they might be no burden to the church, and after the example of Christ might cure both soul and body, through industry adding that to their ministry which He joined to his by the gift of the spirit. So Peter Gilles relates in his history of the Waldenses of Piedmont. But our ministers scorn to use a trade, and count it the reproach of this age that tradesmen preach the gospel. It were to be wished they were all tradesmen; they would not then, for want of another trade, make a trade of their preaching; and yet they clamor that tradesmen preach, though they preach, while themselves are the worst tradesmen of all."*

This testimony of Milton is corroborated by that of the learned Jorton, an English historian and divine. He says of the Waldenses, "they said that the prelates and doctors ought to imitate the poverty of the apostles, and earn their bread by the labor of their hands. They contended that the office of teaching, confirming and admonishing the brethren belonged in some measure to all Christians."†

It appears from an ancient Catholic writer quoted by Peyran, that women as well as men were engaged in teaching religious truths. He says concerning the Vaudois, "men and women, small and great, night and day they cease not to teach and to learn." "By day the laborer teaches his companion or learns of him; and at night all the time they are awake they are employed in in-

* Jones' C. H. ii. 87, London ed. † Jones, ii. 89.

structing one another." Peyran, in speaking of certain theologians who in the eleventh century had been instructed by an Italian woman that the Eucharist was not changed into the body of Jesus Christ, says, I leave you to judge whether there was then in Italy another place besides the valleys where women knew this doctrine, and were able to teach it.*

An old inquisitor of the Catholic church, Rie-nerus Sacco, corroborates this view. He puts the following language into the mouths of the Waldenses: "The doctors of the Roman church are pompous both in their habits and manners; they love the uppermost rooms and the chief seats in the synagogues, to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi. For our parts we desire no such Rabbis." "They fight and encourage wars, and command the poor to be killed and burnt, in defiance of the saying, 'he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword.' For our parts they persecute us for righteousness' sake. They do nothing but eat the bread of idleness. We work with our hands.—*They monopolize the giving of instruction*, and 'wo be to them that take away the key of knowledge.' But *among us women teach as well as men*, and one disciple as soon as he is informed teaches another. Among them you can hardly find a doctor who can repeat three chapters of the New Testament by heart; but of us there is scarcely man or woman who doth not retain the whole."†

* Peyran's *Nouvelles Lettres sur les Vaudois*, p. 34.

† Jones' *C. H.* ii. p. 80.

Their testimony concerning oaths and war are thus stated by Moshien: "They adopted as the model of their moral discipline the sermon of Christ on the Mount, which they interpreted and explained in the most rigorous and literal manner; and consequently prohibited and condemned in their society all wars and suits at law, all attempts towards the acquisition of wealth, the infliction of capital punishment, self-defence against unjust violence, and oaths of all kinds."*

This is corroborated by Dr. Jortin's account of them, who says, they interpreted Christ's Sermon on the Mount according to the literal sense of the words; and they condemned war, law suits, the acquisition of riches, capital punishments, oaths, and even self-defence.† In further confirmation of these views the well known testimony of the United Brethren or Moravians against wars of every kind may be adduced. This society is a branch of the Waldenses founded in the year 1457, and continues to bear the same testimony to this day.

In one instance already related (in 1488) some of the inhabitants of the valleys defended the mountain passes to prevent the approach of an army sent to destroy the Waldenses; but I have seen no evidence to show that the members of the Waldensian church in any instance departed from their peaceable principles, previous to the time of the Reformation.

We have reason to believe that up to this time, during a period variously estimated *at from seven*

* Moshien, E. II. 12th cent.

† Jones' C. H. ii. 89.

to twelve centuries, they bore a faithful testimony against war; and although they suffered at times from persecution, there can be no doubt their sufferings were incomparably less than, during the same period, fell to the lot of any other people.

In order to estimate the temptations to which they were subjected, we must bear in mind that during a part of this time the whole of southern Europe was ravaged by hordes of northern barbarians; and that at a subsequent period when the spirit of chivalry prevailed, the world resounded with the clang of arms, a crusading phrenzy seized upon the people, and the dignitaries of the established church appeared as the leaders of invading armies.

CHAPTER IV.

History of the Waldenses since the Reformation.

It has been very generally supposed that when Luther began to preach against indulgences, nearly the whole population of Europe was completely devoted to the doctrines and worship of the church of Rome. This may have been apparently the case on the surface of society, but doubtless there was a deep under current, which, though almost unobserved, was sweeping silently and powerfully onwards. Hence, the Reformers found an answer to their appeals in the hearts of their hearers, for the work to which they were called had been prepared before them, and the fields were already white unto harvest.

This preparation had been greatly promoted by the labors of the Waldenses and other kindred societies, who were then very numerous, and had been scattered by persecution throughout all the nations of Europe. In the year 1530, George Morel, one of the pastors of the Waldenses, published memoirs of the history of their churches, in which "he states that at the time he wrote, there were above eight hundred thousand professing the religion of the Waldenses; nor will this appear incredible when we reflect that nearly two centuries before there were 80,000 of them in the small kingdom of Bohemia.*

* Jones' C. H., ii. 236.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the pontifical chair was filled by Alexander VI., who has been called the Nero of the papal throne. A more odious compound of vice and hypocrisy has seldom been exhibited before the world; and his son, Cæsar Borgia, whom he promoted to a high office in the church, was not less noted for his profligate morals and vindictive temper, which rendered him a terror to the Roman people. Alexander VI. died in 1503, and was succeeded by Julius II., who, after a reign of three years, died and was succeeded by Leo X., one of the most conspicuous, if not the most exemplary characters, of the sixteenth century.

He was a munificent patron of learning and the fine arts, easy and amiable in his temper, profuse in his expenditures, and not over scrupulous in the means he adopted to replenish his treasury. His taste for magnificent display induced him to put in requisition every means of raising money that had been devised by papal avarice; among the rest, the sale of indulgences was carried to a shameful extent, and became the means of opening the eyes of many to see the corruptions of an apostate church.

How great soever the crimes committed, or in contemplation, by any member of the church, all that was requisite, in order to obtain absolution, was the purchase of an indulgence. Tetzels, (a Dominican monk) the celebrated vender of indulgences in Germany, exclaimed in the ears of the people, "Draw near, and I will give you letters duly sealed, by which even the sins you shall hereafter desire to commit shall be all forgiven

you. I would not exchange my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven, for I have saved more souls with my indulgences than he with his sermons.”

“The very moment that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory and flies free to heaven.”* Luther was at this time a young Augustine monk, full of zeal for the Catholic church, “so infatuated and steeped in the Romish doctrines,” said he, “that I would willingly have helped to kill any one who had the audacity to refuse the smallest act of obedience to the Pope.”

But he was sincere; and when persons came to his confessional and acknowledged themselves guilty of the grossest crimes, he required them to repent and promise to reform before he could grant them absolution. When they refused to make such promises, and showed him the indulgences they had purchased, he was shocked and grieved at this abominable traffic in the souls of men, and did not scruple to declare his abhorrence.

This coming to the ears of Tetzal, he became furious with rage, and declared from the pulpit that he was ordered by the Pope to burn the heretics who should dare to oppose his most holy indulgences. “Such was the incident that gave occasion to the Reformation, though not the cause of it.”†

Luther, being singled out as an object of attack by the venders of indulgences, was induced to ex-

* D'Aubigne, *History of Reformation*, i. 212. † *Ib.* i. 231.

amine more closely the doctrines and practices of the church, many of which he found to be inconsistent with the plain letter of scripture and the dictates of sound reason, as well as inimical to the best interests of society. He was gradually led to see the necessity of a thorough reform; but finding no disposition on the part of the hierarchy to listen to his views, there was no alternative left him but unconditional submission, or a rupture with the church. He knew the dangers that awaited him if unsuccessful;—he was fully apprized that thousands of Christian martyrs had died in prison or perished in the flames for daring to question the infallibility of the Popes and the decrees of the councils. With undaunted courage, and a firm reliance upon Divine Providence, he went forward boldly in the work of reform, which shook the foundation of the Papacy, and embroiled in a sanguinary conflict some of the principal nations of Europe.

It is not the purpose of this treatise to enter into the particulars of that eventful contest, but reference is made to it here on account of the close connexion which afterwards took place between the Reformed churches and those of the Waldenses.

It is probable that Luther, when he commenced his arduous labors, was not aware of the true character, nor of the numbers of the Waldenses and other dissenters from the church of Rome. Their adherents in Germany were not among the rich or the learned, but generally lived in obscurity, and found in the consolations of religion the solace of their lives. They must have rejoiced

greatly at the boldness and success with which he attacked time-honored abuses and exposed the mischiefs of priestly domination; and it must have been equally rejoicing to the heart of the intrepid Reformer when he found so many thousands responding to his call, and spreading far and wide the truths which he taught.

But although it afforded joy and encouragement to the Waldenses, to be informed of the labors of Luther and his associates, it does not appear that they made any advances towards a union with the Reformers till the year 1530, being thirteen years after the Reformation commenced. At this time a deputation from the Waldensian churches of Provence visited Switzerland and Germany, and had an interview with the Reformers Œcolampadius, Bucer and Hallar. This led to a correspondence, and in the year 1540 a union took place, or at least, teachers of religion from Germany were received by the Waldensian churches in the south of France, which led to the most disastrous consequences. This portion of their history I will relate in the words of a *Roman Catholic writer* of undoubted credit.

“When the inhabitants of Merindole and Cabriare, at the report of those things which were done in Germany, lifted up their crests, and *hiring teachers out of Germany*, discovered themselves more manifestly than they had done before, they were brought to judgment by the Parliament of Aix, at the instance of the King’s Procurator; but being admonished by their friends, and deterred by the danger that undoubtedly attended their

trial, they failed to appear. And having been summoned for three market-days together, they were condemned as contumacious by a most horrible and immeasurably cruel sentence, on the 18th of November, about the year 1540. By that decree the fathers of families were condemned to the flames, and the estates, wives, children, and servants of the condemned parties confiscated to the use of the treasury. And because Merindole had hitherto been the usual den and receptacle of such sort of infected persons, it was ordered that all the houses should be laid level with the ground; that the subterranean caves and vaults, where they might be concealed, should be demolished and filled up; that the wood round about it should be cut down, and even the very trees of the gardens; that the possessions of those who dwelt in Merindole should not be so much as let for the future to any of the same family, or even of the same name with the former owners." The execution of this cruel decree was delayed for awhile, and on application to the King of France, he ordered his lieutenant general, in Piedmont, to inquire into it. Accordingly, after due inquiry, he made this discovery: that the Vaudois or Waldenses were a people who about three hundred years before had hired of the owners a rocky and uncultivated part of the country, which, by dint of pains and constant tillage, they had rendered productive of fruits and fit for cattle; that they were extremely patient of labor and want; abhorring all contentions,—kind to the poor; that they paid the prince's taxes and their lord's dues with the greatest exactness and

fidelity; that they kept up a show of Divine worship by daily prayer and innocence of manners, but seldom came to the churches of the saints, unless by chance, when they went to the neighboring towns for traffic or other business; and whenever they set their feet in them, they paid no adoration to the statues of God or the saints, nor brought them any tapers or other presents; nor ever entreated the priests to say mass for them, or the souls of their relations; nor crossed their foreheads, as is the manner of others; that when it thundered they never sprinkled themselves with holy water, but lifting up their eyes to heaven implored the assistance of God; that they never made religious pilgrimages, nor uncovered their heads in the public ways before the crucifixes; that they performed their worship in a strange manner and in the vulgar tongue; and lastly, paid no honor to the Pope or the bishops, but esteemed some select persons of their own number as priests and doctors.

When this report was made to Francis he despatched an arret to the Parliament of Aix, pardoned all past crimes, and allowed the Waldenses three months, within which they were required publicly to revoke their opinions. This respite was further extended by the King, but he, at length, having received false reports concerning them, and "being instigated by the Cardinal de Tournou, a bitter enemy to this sort of men, sent letters to the Parliament in January, 1545, whereby he permitted them to proceed against the Merandolians and other Waldenses according to law." The States of the Empire, by their letters

from Ratisbon, and the Protestant Swiss Cantons, interceded on their behalf; but the King was inexorable, and a military force under John Meinier, an enemy of the Waldenses, was sent to execute the cruel decree.

The most revolting scenes of cruelty and outrage were perpetrated by the soldiers; many of the inhabitants who fled with their women and children were pursued and slain; twenty-three villages were destroyed and their inhabitants massacred.

The King, afterwards, regretted these cruel measures, and "among the last commands he gave to his son Henry, he added this expressly—that he should make inquisition into the injuries done in that cause by the Parliament of Aix to the Provençals; and even before he died, he caused John Romano, a monk, to be apprehended, and commanded the Parliament of Aix to punish him; for he, in the examination of heretics, invented a new kind of torture, ordering the tortured parties to put on boots full of boiling tallow, and after laughing at them and clapping on a pair of spurs, he would ask them whether they were not finely equipped for a journey." *

Fifteen years after these horrid transactions in the south of France, that is, in the year 1560, the Waldenses in Calabria, a district in the southern extremity of Italy, "formed a junction with Calvin's church at Geneva. The consequence of this was, that several pastors or public teachers went from the neighborhood of Geneva to settle

* *Thuani Historia sui temporis*, lib. vi., quoted by Jones.

with the churches of Calabria.”* This spread an alarm among the Catholics, which reached the ears of the Pope, Pious IV. Measures were therefore undertaken for wholly exterminating the Waldenses in that quarter, which in enormity have seldom been exceeded. Two monks were first sent to the inhabitants of St. Xist, who assembled the people and by a smooth harangue endeavored to persuade them to desist from hearing these new teachers, whom they knew they had lately received from Geneva.

Instead of complying, however, the Waldenses forsook their houses, and as many as were able fled to the woods with their wives and children. Two companies of soldiers were instantly ordered to pursue them, who hunted them like wild beasts, crying “Amassa! Amassa!” that is, kill, kill,—and numbers were put to death.

Such as reached the tops of the mountains obtained the privilege of being heard in their own defence. They expostulated with their pursuers, referred to their harmless and irreproachable lives, and begged, if they could not be permitted to remain unmolested, they might at least be permitted to retire from the country with their wives and children; but stated, that if reduced to the necessity of defending themselves, they must do it at the peril of those who forced them to such extremities. This expostulation only exasperated the soldiers, who immediately rushing upon them in the most impetuous manner—a “terrible affray ensued, in which several lives were lost, and the military at last put to flight.”

* Jones, C. H., ii. 296.

The Inquisitors, on this, wrote to the Viceroy of Naples for more soldiers, who cheerfully complied. Proclamation was made throughout the kingdom of Naples, inviting persons to come to the war against the heretics.

The fugitives in the mountains were hunted and slain, the villages destroyed, some of the inhabitants condemned to the gallies, many slain and their wives and children sold or put to death. One of their pastors died in prison from starvation; another, named Lewis Pascal, was taken to Rome and burnt in presence of the Pope and cardinals. "Such was the end of the Waldenses of Calabria, who were wholly exterminated."

Let us now turn our attention to the main body of the Waldenses, inhabiting the valleys of Piedmont. We have seen that in the year 1488 they were attacked by an army led by Abert de Capetain, Archdeacon of Cremona, who was authorized by a papal bull to destroy them. They were, however, taken under the protection of the Duke of Savoy, who saved them from extermination, but could not prevent the Inquisitors from harassing them by putting to death some who travelled beyond their own districts, and came within the reach of their officers. This state of things continued till about the time of the Reformation, at the commencement of which, the attention of the Inquisitors being drawn towards Germany and Switzerland, the Waldenses enjoyed a season of repose, which lasted about thirty-eight years, until they formed a union with the Reformers, or became so far identified with them as to excite anew the jealousy of the Catholics, when

they were again subjected to a fiery persecution. This part of their history I will relate in the language of the continuator of Sleidan's History of the Reformation. "This people, about the year 1555, had *embraced the Reformation and had suffered it to be publicly preached*, though it was forbidden by the Council of Turin, which, the year following, sent one of its own members to inquire after the offenders and to punish them; to whom the inhabitants delivered the confession of their faith, declaring that they professed the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and comprehended in the apostles' creed, and admitted the sacraments instituted by Christ, and the ten commandments," &c. "On this, a solemn deputation was appointed concerning the sacrifice of the mass, auricular confession, tradition, prayers and oblations for the dead, and the ceremonies of the church and her censures, all which they rejected, alledging that they were human inventions and contrary to the word of God."

This confession was sent by the Duke of Savoy to the King of France, who, about a year after, returned an answer, that he had caused it to be examined by learned divines, who had all condemned it as erroneous and contrary to true religion; and therefore the King commanded them to reject the confession and submit to the holy church of Rome, and if they did not do so their persons and estates should be confiscated. But they, on the contrary, were resolved to stand by their former confession. They were, therefore, commanded not to admit any teacher who was not sent by the Archbishop of Turin, or the

Council there; and that *if any teachers came among them from Geneva* they should discover or apprehend them, upon pain of death or loss of all they had. For three years after this the Waldenses were let alone and no way molested; but this year, 1560, the Duke of Savoy, much against his will and inclination, was drawn by the Pope to make war upon them.

“The pastor of Perousa was taken and burnt with a slow fire, together with many of his flock, and the inhabitants were despoiled of all they had and forced to flee to the mountains. Being thus enraged with hard usage, in the month of July fifty of them set upon one hundred and twenty soldiers belonging to the Abbey of Pignerol, (where the Inquisitors were stationed) put them to flight and slew the greatest part of them; and about four hundred more of their party coming up, they took the Abbey of Pignerol and delivered all their people which were imprisoned there. In October following, news being brought that the Duke of Savoy was sending an army to destroy them, they resolved that it was not lawful to take arms against their prince, but that they would take what they could carry away and betake themselves to the mountains, and there await the good pleasure of God, who never forsakes his own, and can turn the hearts of princes which way he pleaseth. There was not one man amongst them who repined against this decree. In after-times *they had pastors who taught them otherwise*, and told them it was not their prince but the Pope that they resisted, and that they fought, not for their religion, but for their wives and children.”

The forces of the Duke of Savoy entered their borders, and the soldiers attempting to get above them, they betook themselves to their slings and maintained a fight against them (though they were but few in number) the space of a whole day, with no great loss. At last the general, finding they were not to be forced, gave them leave to petition the Duke of Savoy, "that they might live in peace, assuring him that nothing but utter ruin could have forced them to take arms against him; for which they humbly begged his highness's pardon, and begging the liberty of their consciences and that they might not be forced to submit to the traditions of the church of Rome, but might, with his leave, enjoy the religion they had learned from their ancestors."— "This petition was seconded by the Duchess of Savoy, who was a merciful princess, and had great power over the affections of the Duke. It being ever her judgment that this people were not to be so severely used, who had not changed their religion a few days ago, but had been in possession of it from their ancestors so many ages." Upon this they were received to mercy; but the soldiery fell upon them when they suspected nothing—and plundered them three days together.

Having sent a deputation to the Duke to petition for mercy, their deputies were required to ask pardon of the Pope's nuncio, and to promise to admit the mass, which they did. "On their return, when the principals understood what had been done, they wrote to the rest of the Valleys what had been done and desired a public consul-

tation or diet, at which it was agreed that they should all join in a league to defend their religion."

"And the next day they entered into the church of Bobbio and broke down the images and altars, and marching to Villare, where they intended to do the like, they met the soldiers, whom they pelted with their slings." After this they beat the captain of Turin in a second fight. By this time the whole army drew into the field, and the inhabitants of these valleys not being able to resist them, the soldiers burnt all their towns and houses, and destroyed all the people they took. After this a peace was concluded, but it lasted only four years, for in 1565, at the importunate request of the Catholic party, an edict was issued enjoining every subject throughout the dominions of the Duke of Savoy, within ten days, to appear before the magistrates and declare their readiness to go to mass, or quit the country in two months. The Protestant Princes of Germany, and especially the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, interceded on their behalf, and being seconded by the entreaties of the Duchess of Savoy, the Duke again relented, and "they enjoyed peace until the year 1571, when the Duke being drawn in to join several of the Princes of Europe in a league offensive against the Protestants; which he had no sooner done, than he began to molest his Protestant subjects in the valleys." The Duchess again interposed on their behalf, and the Waldenses were permitted to remain with little molestation until the death of the Duke, which took place in 1580.

He was succeeded by his son, Charles Emmanuel, who being waited upon by the deputies of the Waldenses, assuring him of their fidelity and asking his favor, he promised to protect them from molestation, which he did till the end of the century, being about twenty years.

In the Marquisate of Saluces, a tract of country at the head of the river Po, and separated from the Valley of Lucerne, in Piedmont, only by a single mountain, there was a settlement of dissenters from the church of Rome, who had for "many ages maintained the purity of the Christian profession, living in great harmony, and holding fellowship with the neighboring churches of the same faith and order.

This district of country had been under the jurisdiction of the Kings of France until the year 1588, when it was ceded to the Duke of Savoy. Previous to this time, "their external peace had been frequently invaded by the Kings of France, and their constancy and patience under sufferings put severely to the test; but if the French monarchs had chastised them with whips, it was reserved for their new sovereign, Charles Emmanuel, to do it with scorpions. In the year 1597, he made his pleasure known to his new subjects, that they should embrace the Roman Catholic religion. They replied by an humble petition, requesting him to allow them to enjoy their ancient religious privileges, and reminded him that even the Jews were allowed to live in peace and in the enjoyment of their religious worship. This answer was not without effect, for they remained undisturbed until 1601, when

an edict was issued, requiring all dissenters to appear before a magistrate within fifteen days and renounce their profession and attend mass, or depart out of the country within the space of two months, never to return, under pain of death.

This barbarous decree was put in execution, and more than five hundred families driven into exile. Some crossed the Alps and retired in Dauphiny, in France; others, to Geneva, while many sought a refuge among their friends in the valleys of Piedmont.

“From this period the Waldenses appear to have been tolerably free from persecution for half a century. But in the month of January, 1655, the tragedy of Saluces was re-acted over almost all the valleys of Piedmont, and with tenfold cruelty.”

In that month an order was issued by Andrew Gastaldo, doctor of the civil law *and conservator general of the holy faith*, by virtue of authority vested in him by the duke of Savoy, to require “every head of a family with its members of the reformed religion, of whatever rank or condition, in the valleys of Piedmont, within three days from the publication of the decree to depart and to be with their families withdrawn out of the said places,” and to be transported into the places allowed by his royal highness, under pain of death and confiscation of goods, unless they would embrace the Catholic religion. Notwithstanding their humble petitions for mercy, this inhuman decree procured by the Roman clergy was, after a feeble resistance, executed by a military force of six thousand men, assisted by a promiscuous

rabble of plunderers gathered from the neighboring states.

The massacre that ensued, estimated at six thousand persons, is described by eye witnesses and historians as horrible beyond measure.

All the Protestant nations of Europe were filled with grief and indignation; among them the English took the most active part, and the protector Cromwell, assisted by his secretary, the poet Milton, drew up a most able and touching remonstrance addressed to the duke of Savoy, which he sent by the hands of a special ambassador, Sir Samuel Moreland. He also addressed letters to the king of France and all the Protestant princes of Europe, and he caused collections to be taken up throughout England for the relief of the sufferers, which amounted to thirty-eight thousand two hundred and forty-one pounds sterling. Milton's feelings were so deeply interested for the fate of the poor Waldenses, that he composed the following touching little poem :

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

Avenge, Oh Lord! thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
 Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
 Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
 When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones,
 Forget not: in thy book record their groans
 Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
 Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that roll'd
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
 To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
 O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway
 The tripled tyrant; that from these may grow
 A hundred fold, who having learn'd thy way
 Early may fly the Babylonian woc.

The remonstrance of Cromwell, and the intercession of the Swiss and other friends of the Waldenses, induced the duke of Savoy to enter into a treaty in the year 1655, granting liberty to the scattered survivors to return to their homes, or rather to the desolated valleys where their homes had once been found. Notwithstanding the supplies sent them from other countries, they suffered for many years the most grievous wants, being harassed continually by their enemies, and the provisions of the treaty disregarded.

In the year 1663 another attempt was made to extirpate them, when they stood upon the defensive, and kept their enemies at bay until their friends in the Swiss Cantons interfered and prevailed upon the duke to renew the treaty of 1655. This state of things continued until 1672, when an event occurred which marks a striking difference in *their principles from* those which were *held by the ancient Waldenses*. The duke being at war with the Genoese, and his troops much worsted in the conflict, the Waldenses embraced the opportunity to show their loyalty and voluntarily enrolled themselves in the army, where they fought so valiantly as to turn the tide of victory in favor of their sovereign. The duke was so much pleased with their conduct, that he addressed them a letter of thanks, and promised them his "royal protection."

He continued to favor them till the time of his death, which took place in 1675, and his widow, who governed for ten years afterwards during the minority of her son, extended to them the same favor.

Victor Amadeus II. began to reign in 1685, and became connected by marriage with Louis XIV, king of France, "one of the most detestable and sanguinary tyrants that ever sat on a throne." It was he that revoked the edict of Nantz in the year 1685, and exposed his Protestant subjects, who then numbered about two millions, to the utmost rigor of persecution. Great numbers were put to death in the most cruel manner, and about eight hundred thousand persons compelled to leave the kingdom. Through his instigation the duke of Savoy, contrary to his own better feelings and judgment, issued an edict in 1686 "forbidding his subjects the exercise of the Protestant religion upon pain of death, the confiscation of their goods, the demolition of their churches, and the banishment of their pastors."

"All infants from that time were to be brought up in the Roman Catholic religion, under the penalty of their fathers being condemned to the gallies."

The inhabitants of the Swiss Cantons again interposed their good offices to save these afflicted people from the impending calamity; but all they could obtain for them was a temporary respite, and an edict permitting them to leave their country. This edict required them to demolish their churches, lay down their arms, and divide themselves into three bodies to be conducted out of the country. Having no confidence in the edict, and believing it to be intended to ensnare them, they refused to accept the terms, and prepared themselves for a stout resistance. They fortified the

passes to the valleys, armed themselves as they best could, and waited for their enemies.

The Waldenses under arms were about twenty-five hundred,—the army of the duke with his French allies much larger. After defending themselves vigorously the Waldenses were overcome by treachery and force, great numbers of both sexes and all ages were barbarously treated and put to death, and twelve thousand of the survivors, men, women, and children, cast into prison.*

By the entreaties of the Swiss ambassadors the prison doors were at length opened; but it was now the beginning of winter, and the poor emaciated and almost naked captives, reduced in number to about seven thousand, were compelled to take up their march across the snow-clad Alps to seek an asylum in Switzerland, where such as survived the hardships of the journey were kindly received and hospitably entertained.

Their beautiful valleys were depopulated, laid waste, and given to strangers. After remaining three years in Switzerland, a small but intrepid band, consisting of about eight hundred under the conduct of *Arnaud their pastor*, returned with arms in their hands, determined to reconquer their native country. Although opposed by far superior numbers, they were enabled to sustain *themselves until a rupture took place* between the king of France and the duke of Savoy, “when, joining the troops of their lawful sovereign, they proved

* Jones, ii. p. 450.

their loyalty, and were permitted to re-establish themselves on their small patrimonial estates." "Thus re-established they became the stock of the existing race of Vaudois, who are still to be found in the valleys of Piedmont."* Though much reduced in numbers and influence they are still interesting to the Protestant world as the descendants of that martyr band who during centuries of persecution, while darkness brooded over Europe, kept alive the sacred flame of religion, and prophesied in sackcloth. It must, however, be acknowledged that our interest in them is diminished by the consideration, that in one important particular, at least, they have not maintained the principles of their forefathers, who bore a testimony against the taking of human life, and would not fight even in self-defence. It is true that the circumstances in which they were placed were such as to try men's souls to the very uttermost; persecuted, robbed, imprisoned, and tortured, their homes demolished, and their wives and children butchered before their eyes, it is evident that nothing but the lamb-like spirit of Christ could preserve them from the shedding of blood. They performed prodigies of valor, but what did this avail them? they were driven from their country, and what is still worse, they were driven from their principles. Their ancestors had for many centuries been persecuted and sometimes reduced to the greatest extremities; but they still adhered to their peaceable principles, Divine Providence watched over them, and even when permitted to

* Sims' Introduction to Peyran's Historical Defence of Vaudois.

be exiled from their country, they became instrumental in spreading the knowledge of the Redeemer's kingdom.

One of the best and most satisfactory historians of this interesting people* brings their history down to the time of their last dispersion in 1686, and gives no account of the small band who returned under Arnaud, 1689, because (as he says in the preface to his fifth London edition) he does not consider this band who came from Geneva "*cquipped with arms and ammunition,*" to be of the same church as "*the meek confessors of Piedmont.*" It appears that those who now bear the name of Vaudois or Waldenses differ in several other particulars from that ancient church.

We learn from the narrative of Gilly, who visited Piedmont in the year 1823, that they are "partial to the Episcopal form of church government; and though particular circumstances have induced them to drop the title of bishop in its generally received sense, yet the Episcopal functions are retained." "At present," says he, "either the liturgy of Geneva or that of Neufchatel is read in the churches, according to the discretion of the pastor; but that of Geneva, which is a beautiful production, is principally followed. The rituals which are adopted in conformity to their intercourse with Switzerland, have a service for the communion, and *different forms for certain days and seasons.*" In order to carry out this system of forms, and to read this "beautiful liturgy" they must of course have a *paid ministry.*

* Jones.

Accordingly we learn from Simi's Introduction before cited, that out of Queen Mary's grant of five hundred pounds per annum, the sum of two hundred and sixty-six pounds per annum was granted for the *support of thirteen ministers* and their widows, after the return of the Vaudois to their native valleys in the year 1690. This grant was suspended in 1797, but has since been restored.

In 1708 collections were made in Great Britain "to enable the Vaudois *to maintain their ministers, churches, schools, and poor.*" A capital of ten thousand pounds was raised and invested in three per cent. bank annuities for this purpose, and the interest has been regularly remitted. Now let us contrast these modern Vaudois with the ancient Waldenses, as described by Jones in his preface before cited, p. xxv. He says, "they were dissenters,—Protestant dissenters; dissenters upon principle not only from the church of Rome, but also from all national establishments of religion. They existed by mere toleration from the civil government,—they acknowledged no earthly potentate as head of the church; they absolutely protested against every thing of the kind. They had no book of common prayer, no liturgy, no thirty-nine articles to guard them from error, heresy, or schism. They had no reverend gentlemen,—no privileged order of clergymen paid or pensioned for discharging the duties of the pastoral office among them. They paid particular respect to the Lord's words, 'Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren: And call no man your

father upon earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ; but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.' ”

It becomes an interesting inquiry to know when and from what cause arose this change of principles among the Waldenses.

I think it may be clearly shown that it took place soon after their union with the churches of Germany and Geneva, and originated in the employment of Calvinist ministers, who, contrary to the practice of the ancient Waldenses, received a salary for preaching. It has been already stated that the Waldensian churches of Merindole and Cabriare, in the south of France, “*hired teachers from Germany*” in the year 1540, and soon after a horrible persecution ensued, by which they were exterminated or expelled from their country. In like manner the Waldenses of Calabria, in the south of Italy, “formed a junction in 1560 with Calvin’s church at Geneva, and several pastors or public teachers went from the neighborhood of Geneva to settle with the churches of Calabria.”

This excited alarm and jealousy among the Catholics, who required them “*to desist from hearing these new teachers,*” which not being complied with, a horrible massacre ensued and the whole settlement was destroyed.

The main body of the Waldenses in Piedmont, “in the year 1555, *had embraced the Reformation,* and had suffered it to be publicly preached.”—This increased the bitter feelings of the Catholics towards them, who required them, “if any *teachers came among them from Geneva,* they

should discover or apprehend them upon pain of death." A severe persecution ensued, and the duke of Savoy, instigated by the pope, made war upon them. They resisted and a bloody conflict ensued, during which "the soldiers burnt all their towns and houses, and destroyed all the people they took."

When we reflect that the Waldenses of Piedmont had dissented from the church of Rome and borne an open testimony against its corruptions for at least seven hundred years previous to the Reformation, and although often persecuted their numbers continued to increase and spread to other countries, we may reasonably conclude that some change must then have taken place which increased the rancour of their enemies. Previous to that time "they prohibited or *condemned in their society all wars and suits at law, all attempts towards the acquisition of wealth, the infliction of capital punishments, self-defence against unjust violence, and oaths of all kinds.*"* Soon after the pastors from Geneva came among them they began to defend themselves; one hundred years later "they are said to have *fought more like lions than men,*" and subsequently they volunteered their services to fight the battles of their sovereign against the Genoese.

The character of a people is generally moulded, or at least modified by their religious teachers; and it has passed into a proverb, "like priest, like people."

The ministers of the ancient Waldenses did not follow preaching as a trade or profession; "they

* Moshier, i. 332.

were not paid or pensioned," but "they maintained," says Moshien, "that the rulers and ministers of the church were obliged by their vocation to imitate the poverty of the apostles, and to procure for themselves a subsistence by the work of their hands;" "they considered every Christian as in some measure qualified and authorized to instruct, exhort, and confirm the brethren in their Christian course."* It does not appear that they were learned in theology; they did not trouble themselves about those nice distinctions and speculative opinions which have embroiled the Catholic and Protestant churches,—but they had sufficient learning to read their bibles, which they did most diligently; and instead of looking to man to explain its mysteries, they looked only to Him "that hath the key of David; he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."

Let us now turn to the teachers of the Protestant churches of Germany and Geneva. Although I would not willingly disparage their services to mankind, nor detract from their well-earned reputation, yet I fully concur in the remark of a British historian, that "the Reformers, with all their zeal and learning, were babes in scriptural knowledge when compared with the more illiterate Waldenses, particularly in regard to the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and its institutions, laws, and worship in general. Luther, for instance, besides that both he and Calvin always contended for a form of national Christianity,—a

* Moshien, i. 332.

principle which, the moment it is received into the mind, must necessarily darken it as to the nature of the kingdom of Christ,—Luther, with all his zeal against popery, was never able to disentangle his own mind from the inexplicable doctrine of transubstantiation, which he had imbibed in the church of Rome. He, indeed, changed the name, but he retained all the absurdity of the thing. He rejected the word transubstantiation, that is, the bread and wine were not changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ,—but the body and blood of Christ were really and actually present in the elements of bread and wine, and were therefore literally eaten and drunk by the communicants.”* “And with respect to Calvin,” says the same author, “it is manifest that the leading, and to me, at least, the most hateful feature, in all the multiform character of popery, adhered to him through life; I mean the *spirit of persecution*. Holding, as I do, many doctrinal sentiments in common with Calvin, I am prompted to speak my opinion of him with the less reserve. I regard him as a man whom the Creator had endowed with transcendant talents, and have no doubt that he knew what ‘flesh and blood could never reveal to him.’” * * * * *
 “No mere man probably ever surpassed Calvin in his indefatigable labors, according to the measure of his bodily strength, in making known to others the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus, both from the pulpit and the press; and his bitterest enemies cannot deny that the progress of the

* Jones' Ch. Hist. ii. 237.

Reformation was wonderfully accelerated by his means. Yet with all these excellencies, Calvin was a persecutor! He *had yet to learn, or at least how to practice that simple lesson* of the kingdom of heaven, Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you do ye even so unto them. Calvin could never comprehend how another man could have as great a right to think wrong, as he himself had to think right! and that it is the sole prerogative of the *King of Zion to punish his enemies and the corruptors of his truth*. Upon this point his judgment was perverted by the principles of his education, and, unhappily for his own character and the cause of truth, his conduct was founded upon this erroneous judgment. His behavior throughout the whole affair of Servetus is too well known to need any explanation in this place; but I conceive it to be the imperative duty of every friend to toleration and the rights of conscience to express their marked abhorrence of this part of the character of Calvin.* The transaction here alluded to I will briefly notice. Michael Servetus, a Spanish physician who had settled at Vienne in France, published some works concerning the doctrines of Christianity, which gave offence to both Catholics and Protestants. "Having escaped from Vienne, and happening to come to Geneva in his retreat to Naples, Calvin 'procured his apprehension and imprisonment.' He was brought to trial. After various delays he was sentenced to be burnt alive, 'for having set himself in array against the Divine

* Jones, ii. p. 239.

Majesty and the Holy Trinity;’ and the dreadful sentence was executed that same day on which it was pronounced.” The writer of the article (entitled Calvin) in the Edinburg Encyclopædia from which I have extracted this account appears to be an advocate of Calvin, to whom, he says, “the daring impiety and presumptuous insolence of Servetus had become intolerable.” His impiety was, doubtless, a denial of the trinitarian doctrines, and his presumption consisted in thinking differently from his persecutors.

The same writer informs us that “the principles of toleration were as yet but imperfectly understood. Even those who formally recognized them had not imbibed their genuine spirit. And *the persecuting temper of popery was insensibly retained*, after men had discovered its corruptions and emancipated themselves in a great measure from its yoke. This was the case in every place where the Reformation existed, and with every sect of Christians that was possessed of power.” “It appears, too, that the proceedings against Servetus received the approbation of almost all the eminent ecclesiastics who then flourished.

The Reformed Swiss Cantons were unanimous in exhorting the council of Geneva *to punish the wicked man*, and to put it out of his power to increase heresy. *Farel, Viret, Bucer, Beza, Œcolampadius, and even the gentle Melancthon, approved of the measure.*”

Here we discern the cause why the Catholic priests and the pope were so much incensed against the Waldenses for receiving the Protestant teachers of Geneva; these teachers were of

the same spirit as themselves, "the persecuting spirit of popery was insensibly retained," and they were instrumental in changing the character of the simple and inoffensive Waldenses from the nature of the lamb to that of the lion.

So long as they remained under the teachings of their native barbs, or ministers, who were husbandmen and mechanics little accustomed to controversy, they excited less suspicion and alarm than afterwards, when under the pastoral charge of men versed in theology, and animated with an ardent proselyting zeal. It may be supposed by some, that there was nothing in the *doctrines* of the Reformers of Germany and Switzerland that led to persecution; but rather, that it was the result of education and the spirit of the age. From this sentiment I must dissent; for it appears evident to me, that any system of doctrines which *restricts the salvation of mankind to any set of opinions whatever*, must lead to persecution when supported by numbers and *accompanied by temporal power*. The religion of *Jesus Christ does not consist in opinions, but in principles*. He enjoined upon his followers no creed, he instituted no ceremonies; but he directed his disciples to wait for the teachings of the comforter or "Spirit of Truth," which, said he, will lead you into all Truth, and "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one towards another."

A man may conscientiously differ from others in opinion, he may even entertain erroneous opinions, (as most men probably do) but if *his heart is right towards God,—if the principles that*

actuate his conduct are the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance—then is he a disciple of Christ, and a subject of his spiritual kingdom.

Now it appears that these liberal and tolerant doctrines of Christianity were not clearly perceived by the Reformers; they taught that certain opinions which they held with regard to the trinity and atonement *were essential to salvation*, and when they became possessed of temporal power they were easily persuaded to exercise it in order to compel men to come into what they considered the fold of Christ.

The same intolerant views, when accompanied by temporal power, will always lead to persecution, and especially when the interests of the priesthood are endangered by the desertion of their followers.

From the facts here related, we may draw many instructive conclusions, to two of which only I will call the reader's attention.

First. The ministers of Christ, like the apostles and teachers of the primitive church, should not look to man for their reward, nor seek for their weapons in the schools of theology; nor should the people to whom they minister permit them to be "as lords over God's heritage," but require them to be "examples to the flock." 1 Pet. v. 3.

Secondly. The triumphs of the religion of Jesus Christ have always been achieved through suffering, and never by resistance or violence.

He did not exert his miraculous power to destroy his enemies, but he laid down his life to

save them; and the apostles, when brought under the baptizing power of the holy spirit, cheerfully followed in the footsteps of their Master. In like manner their successors, the martyrs of the primitive church and the faithful followers of Christ in each succeeding age, have been made willing to drink of the cup that he drank of, and thus "to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the church." Col. i. 24. Although we can but deplore the wickedness of those cruel men who have subjected the faithful to persecution and death, we must admire the wisdom and adore the goodness of God who so filled the hearts of his servants with divine love, that they could rejoice in the midst of sufferings, and triumph even in death over all the powers of darkness and wickedness of men.

But may we not boldly affirm that there is no other way in which the strongholds of superstition and error can be so effectually assailed as by the meek example and patient sufferings of the faithful. If we attempt to reclaim mankind from their errors by physical force, or even by harsh invective, we rouse in them the spirit of resistance and defeat our purpose; but he who is actuated by that meek and gentle spirit which breathes peace on earth and good will to men, becomes willing to suffer rather than contend; and thus addressing himself to the best feelings of the human heart he "overcomes evil with good," destroys error by the weapons of truth, and triumphs over hatred by the power of divine love.

THE END.



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