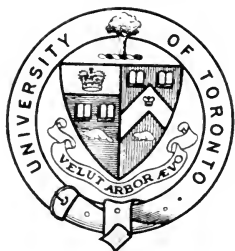




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# THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

TO THE  
SEPARATION OF EAST AND WEST

BY THE  
REV. A. R. WHITHAM, M.A.

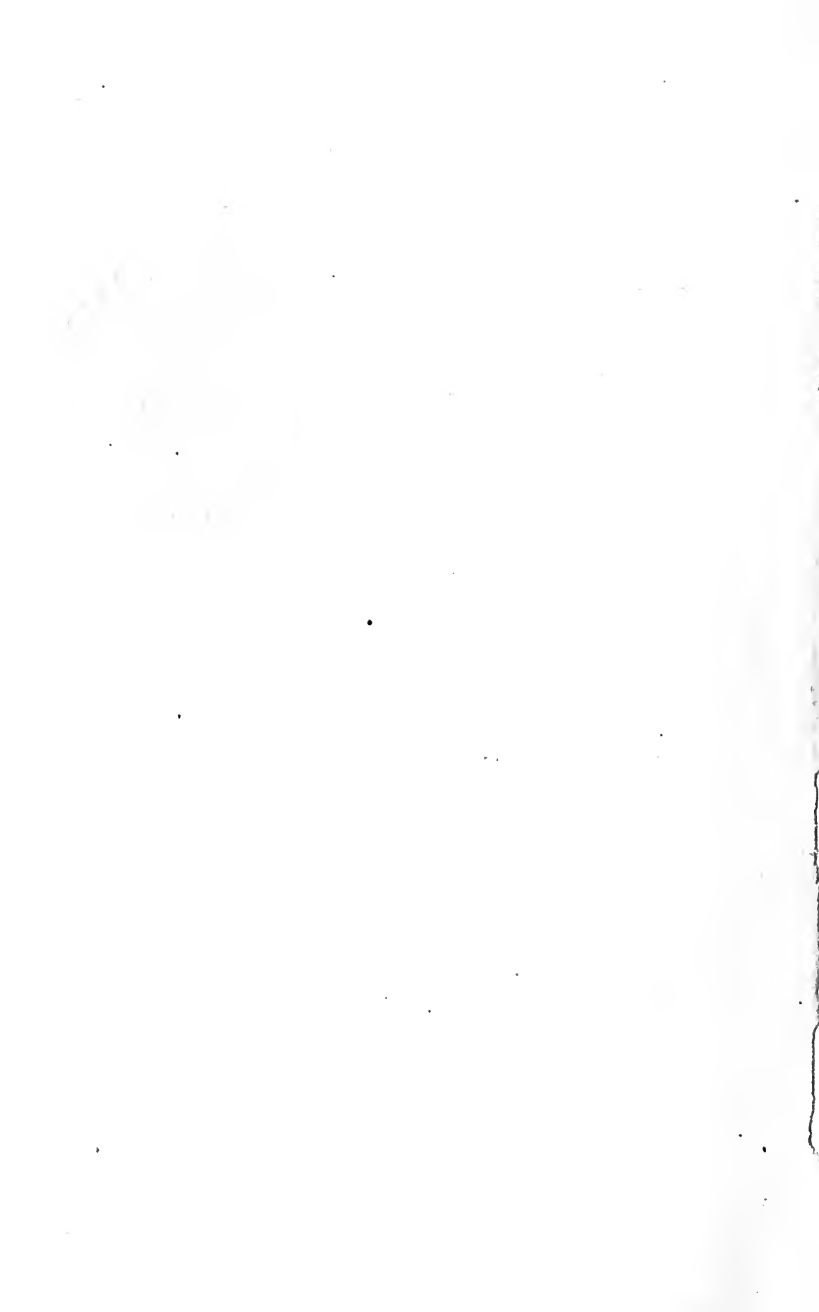
PRINCIPAL OF CULHAM COLLEGE,  
RECTOR OF EAST ILSLEY, HON. CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH  
AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE PRIMUS OF SCOTLAND

*Antiquam exquirete Matrem*

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RIVINGTONS  
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LONDON

1920



## P R E F A C E

THIS book is an attempt to provide in a popular and readable form a history of the Christian Church from the Apostolic age to the separation of East and West. It is based upon a course of lectures formerly delivered at Cuddesdon, which some of the hearers were good enough to desire to have in a more complete and permanent form. The author has always felt that Church History has suffered from the tendency to divide it into periods, either for examination purposes, or through ecclesiastical prejudice. Before detailed study is attempted, it is surely better to gain a connected view, if only in outline, of a long stretch of history; the whole if possible, but at least as far as the point where modern conditions begin.

The encouragements and warnings of Church History were perhaps never more needed than at the present time, when doctrinal restatement and ecclesiastical reconstruction are so much in the thoughts of Christians.

The questions appended to each chapter will serve in any case for drawing attention to the main points of interest. If the book is used for class purposes, they may be used for essay subjects or for written answers. The books suggested under the 'subjects for further study' are not in any sense intended as a bibliography, for which larger works like Schlaff's *History of the Church* or Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography* may be consulted. They are merely

mentioned as helps to the student, in most cases easy of access.

The author's grateful thanks are due to Mr. C. H. Turner of Magdalen College, and to Dr. B. J. Kidd, Vicar of St. Paul's, Oxford, for their kindness in reading the proofs and making many valuable criticisms and suggestions.

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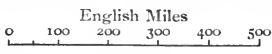
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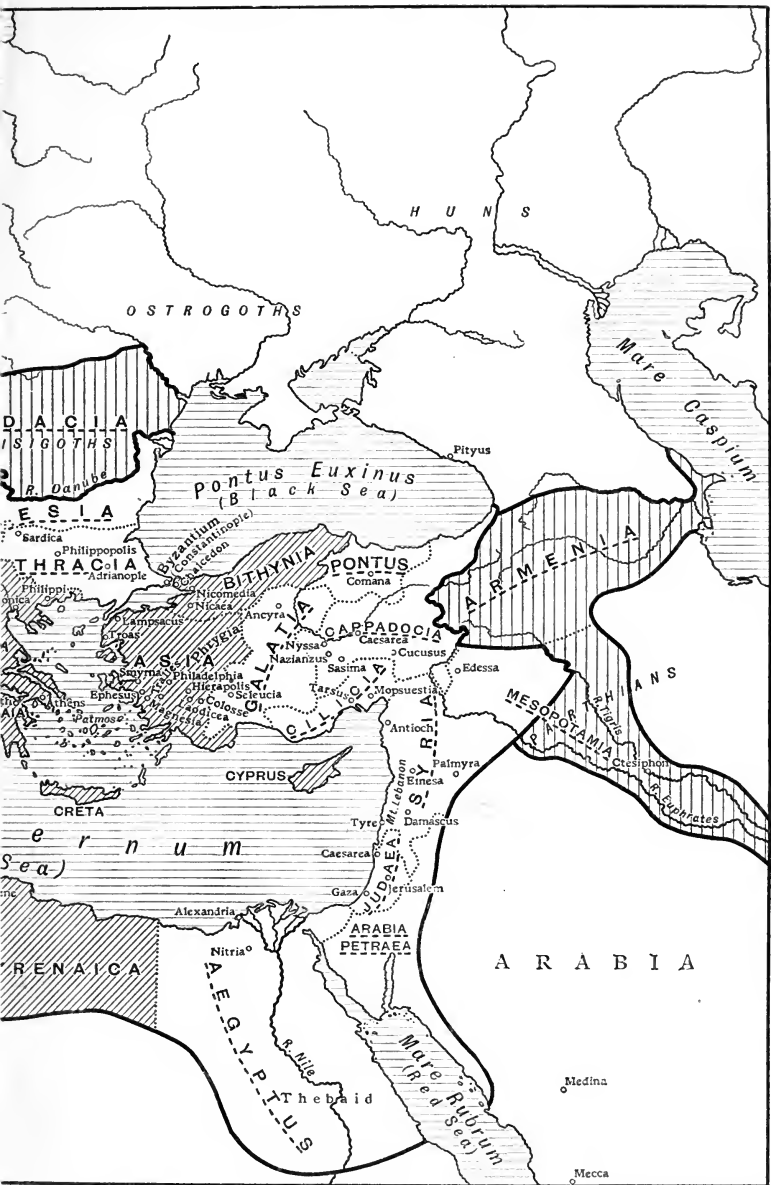
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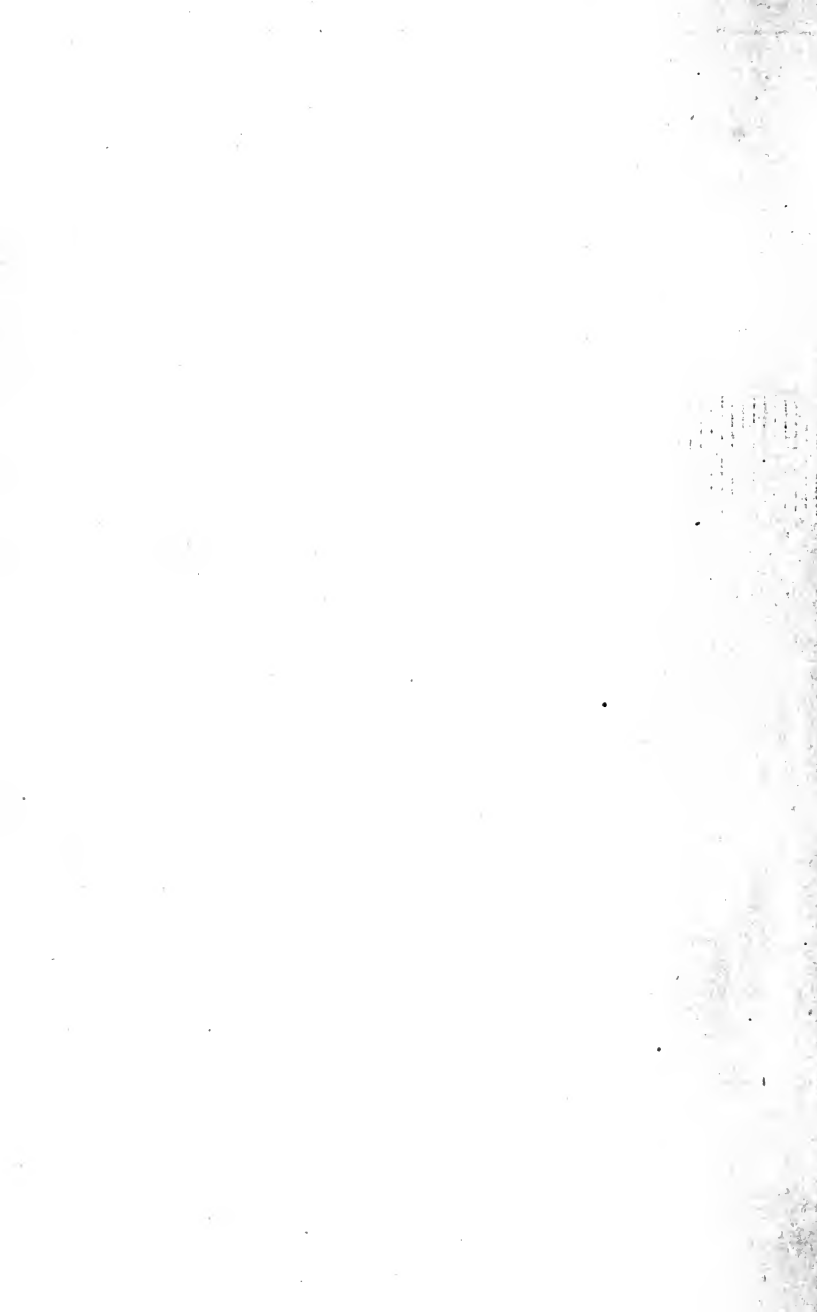


Map to illustrate  
**HISTORY OF THE CHURCH**



- Boundaries of the Roman Empire.....—————
- Imperial Provinces..... BRITANNIA
- Senatorial Provinces.....
- Temporary Provinces.....





# THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## CHAPTER I. THE WAY PREPARED

THE birth of the Christian Church was a new thing in history. The student, whatever his standpoint, can scarcely fail to find in it an incalculable element which defies analysis. Nevertheless, like all historical events, the Church had its roots in a soil prepared long before. It is comparatively easy to trace in the previous course of religion, politics, society, and thought certain predisposing causes, without which, humanly speaking, the Church could not have been. These antecedents do not really explain the origin of so new and amazing a development, though they made it possible. The non-Christian inquirer will have to be content to make the most he can out of them. To the Christian they fall into their place as part of a Divine plan. He believes that all history, like the whole of nature, is one continuous and purposeful progress, and that the wisdom of God so directed the world's course that the Church, at the appointed time, found all things ready for her appearance.

First among such preparations, and most direct, stands the history of the Jewish people and their religion. Religion was the one great contribution of that mysterious and gifted race to the development of humanity. Jewish sacred literature laid the foundations of Christianity. The books of the Old Testament, written at various times during a period of at least eight centuries, and from curiously varying points of view, had combined to teach the highest conceptions of God and His requirements which the world had known. And Christianity, springing as it did directly out of Judaism, adopted and developed this teaching, but did not change it.

The first dogma of Judaism was the unity of God. In contrast with the competing divinities of the heathen world, national **The theology of Israel.** river and the woodland, gods of the great natural processes of birth and death, gods of the works and ways of men, the Jew had learned that there was one only God, universal, almighty, supreme, eternal, a personal living God who had direct relations with mankind. It may be that this 'ineffable Name' had as a matter of history been a development from the original tribal God of the Hebrews—whom they knew as 'Jahweh.' But the result is far greater and more important than the processes.

Again, this one God was recognised as a moral being. God is 'holy.' This was as profound a distinction between the God of the Jews and the divinities of the nations as His unity. For the Gentile gods, though philosophers and poets might attribute to some of them moral qualities like truth and justice and benevolence, were, as generally understood and worshipped, either immoral or non-moral. They were propitiated or made enemies, not by the righteousness of the worshipper but by his sacrifices and ritual observances. In contrast with all that, God was to the Jew essentially holy and righteous. And He had imposed on His creatures a like law of holiness and righteousness, for He had made man 'in His own image.' Although, as the Jew believed, He had revealed to Moses a system of worship and sacrifice which bore considerable resemblance to the systems current in the heathen world, yet sacrifices, as the prophets had taught, were valueless unless accompanied by purity and justice on the part of those who offered them. Jehovah might have a chosen people, but He had no favourites and no respect of persons. He could not be pacified for wrong-doing by offerings of bulls and goats.

Again, the God of the Jews was a God of loving *purpose*. He was preparing 'redemption,' 'salvation' for Israel, and through Israel for mankind at large. And in many different ways, with varying distinctness, the hope of Divine redemption from the evils of the world was gradually connected in the Old

Testament with the figure of a personal Redeemer, a Messiah, an anointed King and Prophet and Priest, whose triumph would be achieved through suffering.

Most important of all, from the point of view of Christian history, the Jewish religion was embodied in a religious society.<sup>1</sup> At first this was conceived as a nation, united by common ties of blood and history, ruled by a king of her own. When the Jews lost their monarchy and their national independence, though the national idea persisted, and indeed tended in some ways to become narrower and more exclusive, yet a wider and a more spiritual conception is to be noted, that of a sacred congregation, an *ecclesia*, marked off from the world by outward observances like circumcision and other ritual, and by the strict observance of the Mosaic Law, but a theocracy rather than a monarchy. Without question it was this conception which dominated the minds of those who first preached Christianity. To the first Jewish recipients of the Gospel of Him who was Himself a Jew of the royal tribe and line, the organisation of believers as an *ecclesia*, a Church, was, apart from all question of revelation, an obvious and natural thing. The new *ecclesia* with its distinctive sacraments and social life was the continuation and development of the old. So S. Paul, writing to the Gentile Christians in Rome (Rom. xi.), describes their position as that of branches from a wild olive-tree, grafted upon a cultivated olive, as a compensation for the loss of some of the original branches. The Gentile Church is not regarded as a new creation, but an addition to the already existing *ecclesia*. The same thought occurs in a Roman writer of the second century. In the 'Shepherd' of Hermas (p. 57, n.) the vision is seen of a very aged woman, in glittering raiment, holding a book, and sitting on a great white chair. The seer thinks her at first to be 'the Sibyl,' but is told that she is the Church. 'Why then,' he asks, 'is she so aged?' 'Because,' is the reply, 'she was created before all things: and for her sake the world was framed.'

Before the birth of Christ, these splendid and characteristic conceptions of Jewish religion had spread far beyond Palestine.

Ever since their captivity in Babylon the Jewish race had found a home, without losing individuality, in other countries and among other races. Large numbers never returned to Palestine, but remained in Assyria and Babylonia. The conquests of Alexander the Great had not only spread Greek culture over the near East, but had also carried the Jews into new centres. Both Alexander and the successors of his rule in Syria and Egypt had shown special favour to the Jews. Their industry, aptitude for trade and finance, and law-abiding ways (when out of their own country) seem to have made them acceptable as colonists. A large number were settled by Alexander in his new capital at Alexandria and by Seleucus at Antioch. They spread also westwards, and established themselves in Rome. Almost wherever S. Paul journeyed, he found in the towns a synagogue where the Gospel had its first hearing. Although the Jews were never a popular element in society, and their exclusiveness and peculiar customs made them a mark for the satirists, and often objects of suspicion to their neighbours, they maintained their position and their separateness in a remarkable way. They seem to have won the privilege everywhere of practising their own religion without hindrance, and, as a rule, without much attempt to make them conform to the established heathen cults. The one instance to the contrary, the deliberate attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greek King of Syria in the second century B.C., to abolish the Jewish religion and worship, was a conclusive failure. It only succeeded in raising up an extraordinary national and religious opposition, ending in the re-establishment of the Temple, the deepening of the national spirit, and almost a revival of an independent Jewish monarchy in Palestine, in the family of the Maccabees or Hasmonaeans. The rulers of Rome were too much of statesmen to risk a repetition of such a blunder. There can be no doubt that at the time of Christ, the Jews had made the Graeco-Roman world familiar with the phenomenon of a nation within a nation, a religious community holding itself largely aloof from ordinary society. And what is still more important, it seems clear that the char-



acteristic features of Jewish religion, in spite of its curious observances, had made a great impression on many of the more thoughtful and religious-minded heathen. Almost every synagogue, outside Palestine, seems to have had its fringe of Gentile hearers, 'the God-fearers,' who without actually seeking incorporation into Israel, looked to Israel and her scriptures for guidance and inspiration. And it is notable that the preaching of S. Paul and his companions in the Acts was usually rejected by the Jews, and welcomed by the God-fearers.

These widely scattered Jews living outside Palestine were known as the Diaspora or Dispersion. Those in Syria, Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt were called 'Hellenists,' **The** as they had adopted the Greek language and often **Hellenists.** bore Greek names. The Greek they used was that popular form, known as 'the Common Dialect,' which had spread, through the conquests of Alexander, all over the near East. The most notable monument of Greek-speaking Judaism is the translation of the Old Testament made at Alexandria in the course of the third and second centuries B.C., called the Septuagint. Greek, as these learned translators used it, naturally to some extent adopted the idioms of Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> Another feature of these Hellenists proved of great importance in the spread of Christianity. Living, as they did, far away from Jerusalem and the Temple and the leading rabbinical schools, and in close contact with the heathen world, they naturally tended, notwithstanding their real loyalty to Judaism, to develop a wider and more liberal outlook than that of the Jews of Palestine. The latter, especially under the influence of the Pharisees, became more and more narrow, and more bitter in their feelings towards the Gentiles and their Roman masters. But the Hellenist saw points of agreement as well as discord. A Jewish school grew up, especially

<sup>1</sup> The Greek of the New Testament was probably not influenced by Hebrew or Aramaic as much as was formerly supposed by scholars. It seems now to be proved by inscriptions and correspondence discovered on Egyptian papyri and *ostraka* (pot-sherds) that the New Testament diction, for the most part, represents the common non-literary Greek as spoken by the common people.

at Alexandria, which thought of and taught Judaism as a philosophy, having features of agreement with the Greek philosophic systems. Such tendencies are seen in the Book of Wisdom, and especially in the writings of the great Alexandrine Jew, Philo, of the first century A.D., who may be well described as a Jewish Platonist.

From the beginning of the Church, it was the Hellenists who were most attracted to the Gospel. Its first preaching on the Day of Pentecost moved the foreign Jews 'from every nation under heaven,' much more than the narrower-minded inhabitants of Jerusalem. The Hellenists became ardent missionaries. S. Stephen and probably all the Seven of Acts vi. belonged to this class. S. Paul himself, though his education at Jerusalem had imbued him with the strict principles of Pharisaism, belonged by birth to the Hellenists, as his home was at Tarsus in Cilicia. And Antioch, the great Hellenistic city of Syria, soon overshadowed Jerusalem as the centre of Christian activity and progress. Thus, both by the great truths of their religion, by their dispersion over the civilised world, by their separation as a sacred nation from Gentile society, as well as by the attraction they exerted upon some of the most thoughtful elements of that society, the Jews prepared for the coming of the Christian Church. As a whole, indeed, they repudiated the Gospel; and they proved the most bitter enemies of the Church, most of the earlier persecutions being stirred up by them. But a man's foes are usually those of his own household, and it was just because the Church owed so much to Judaism that it had to suffer so much at the hands of the Jews.

But besides this direct preparation through the religious genius, the institutions, and the literature of Israel, there are at least two other lines of preparation to be noticed, indirect, but to the Christian not undesigned. There was the influence of Greek thought and culture, and the more outward and palpable influence of Roman rule and organisation.

The greatness and the brilliancy of Hellenic achievement

need neither description nor comment. Though its active period was comparatively short, its fruits last through all time.

'Her citizens, imperial spirits,  
Rule the present from the past :  
On all this world of men inherits  
Their seal is set.'

Greece provided the language, the most graceful and subtle tongue in the world, for the writings of the New Testament, and for the Church's earliest appeal to men. The clearness of Greek thought, Greek skill and acuteness in the use of words, were of the greatest service in providing the Church with a vocabulary and in defining Christian doctrine. The width and liberality of Greek culture helped to preserve the Church, almost from the first, from the narrowness and exclusiveness which generally mark a persecuted sect.

Before the Church came into being at all, Greek philosophy had done much to prepare men's minds. The philosophers, especially the Stoics, had lifted the thoughts of the better sort of people above the common superstitions of mythology and idolatry. Educated religious thought was setting generally towards monotheism. Indeed, for many in the educated classes, philosophy had practically taken the place of the old religions. And even though it had little definite to offer the religious instinct, philosophy had at least tended to make men serious and compel them to think. The great problems of the nature of God, His relation to the universe, the meaning and end of human life, the ideals of human society, were all earnestly and persistently discussed. The Church found men at least prepared to hear what answer she had to give to such insistent questions.

But the Greek religions were by no means dead ; and in one remarkable development they had to some extent anticipated Christianity. The Greek 'mysteries' were akin **The Greek** to the sacramental system of the Church ; and **mysteries.** the ideas that they represented reappear in a purified form in the Church's teaching. These 'mysteries' were secret rites revealed only to those who had passed through a course of initiation and instruction. Originally, perhaps, the private

religious ceremonies of certain families, they became wider in their appeal and influence. They were found in different shapes in the various countries bordering on the Eastern Mediterranean: the most important and best-known being those performed at Eleusis in Attica. Other important 'mysteries' were those of Phrygia and Samothracia. At Eleusis they were connected with the worship of the divinities of the lower world, especially Demeter and her daughter Persephone. Their leading aim apparently was to cast light and hope upon the life beyond the grave and to prepare men for it. Their celebration was preceded by fasting, sacrifice, confession of sin, and ritual washings. Then a species of play or pageant was performed, in which the loss of Persephone, carried off by Pluto, and her restoration to her sorrowing mother set forth the hope of some ultimate triumph over death. Other 'mysteries' of Asiatic origin were of a more directly sacramental character. The leading feature was a sort of pagan Eucharist. The sharing in a sacred meal or in the eating of a sacrifice was believed not only to bring the worshippers into some direct communion with the Deity, but to prepare and enable him to pass through death and attain to life hereafter.

We need not, with some early Christian writers, think of such religious rites as an imitation of Christianity by demons, in order to draw men away from it. Rather we may recognise in them an expression of fundamental human aspirations which were to find their satisfaction in Christianity.

But after all, it was as much by its failures as by its high attempts that Greek thought prepared for the Gospel. The **Greek failure.** interminable discussions of philosophy proved singularly barren in practical result. They neither satisfied the intellect nor purified the soul. The philosophers never appealed to the poor and ignorant who form the mass of mankind. Nor did Greek culture or its masterpieces of literature and art succeed in exerting any deep influence on character. The upper classes, on the contrary, became profoundly immoral. Similarly the high ideals of Greek statesmen and political thinkers ended in disappointment. Strife and faction and party-spirit ruined the promise of the free city-states. Plato himself, in a well-

known and memorable passage, had spoken of his ideal commonwealth as but an unrealisable pattern laid up in heaven. Without doubt many at the time of Christ were eagerly desiring some revelation of certainty with regard to the mysteries and problems which hedge round man's earthly life ; some more potent force to mould man's character for good ; some more binding cement for human society. The promises and gifts of Christianity would often be best appreciated by those who had been disciplined by failure to know their own need.

If Greece had taught men to think great thoughts, to appreciate beauty, to see visions, Rome supplied practical genius. Her vocation was to rule, to organise, to unify, to **Preparation** make visions possible by perseverance, energy, **of Rome.** severity. Hers was the first great empire in history in which the spectacle was seen of vast numbers of different races and languages brought under one central rule, organised and defended, not merely in the interests of the ruler, but for the common good, and, on the whole, with a view to the promotion of peace and justice.

At the time of the foundation of the Christian Church, the Roman Emperor ruled over all the countries surrounding the Mediterranean. The northern boundaries were the **The Empire.** line of the Rhine, and the Danube, and the Euxine or Black Sea : the southern, the long stretch of the African deserts. The western limit was the Atlantic ; the eastern the upper Euphrates and the Arabian desert. The different provinces of this Empire were ruled by imperial officials ; the older and more settled ones by proconsuls, ex-magistrates of Rome, nominally appointed by the Senate ; the others by legates or procurators directly appointed by the Emperor and supported by his soldiers. But all alike looked to the Emperor for their instructions and authority.

But even more important perhaps than these concentrated lines of government were the actual Roman roads. These highways connected every part of the Empire with **The roads.** the capital ; and there was a remarkable system of posts and means of travel. Consequently the civilised world was knit together in common intercourse and trade to a degree

impossible before, and after the fall of the Roman Empire, never realised again till the nineteenth century brought the railway, the steamship, and the telegraph. Travelling was swift and easy; and every one travelled. Books were common and cheap. New ideas spread quickly.

This wonderful organisation supplied involuntarily just the setting that was needed for the origin of the Christian Church. The first teachers and missionaries advanced easily along the Roman highways. They established themselves quickly in the great Roman centres of trade and civilisation. The sacred books were readily copied and passed from hand to hand, and from one country to another.

Moreover, Rome herself supplied a stimulus and an inspiration to the early teachers of the Church. The spectacle of her **Influence of Roman ideas.** unity of law, and to a large extent of language and religion, helped to the realisation of the fundamental ideal of Christianity, one Church and one faith, in which all nations and classes might equally find their share. At the same time the dignity and privileges of the Roman 'citizen' illustrated the Christian teaching of the value of the individual soul and the dignity of the Christian, whatever his station, who had been admitted by Baptism into the privilege of the Church.

We find that the first strongholds of the expanding Church were just in those places where Roman government and Greek culture had most combined; at places like Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth. The Jewish synagogues gave, indeed, the first opportunities as a rule for teaching; but very soon a wider field was touched, where much more success was won.

It is indeed one of the most interesting aspects of the New Testament, to study the influence of Roman organisation on the course of Christian events; as, for example, in S. Paul's use of his position as a Roman citizen, his appeal to Caesar, the influence won by him and other apostolic labourers among centurions, soldiers, and officials, the ease with which his letters were taken from place to place, and the remarkable way in which Christian envoys and workers found their way between places

as far distant as Colossae, Ephesus, Troas, Corinth, Rome. Nor can we fail to notice the growth in S. Paul's own mind of the conception of the Church, as his work developed and the field of his labours grew wider. The idea of the essential unity of the Church was not indeed imported from without ; it is found even in Judaism, and it is inherent in the teaching of Christ and the first instructions of the Apostles. The Church was from the first preached as a body with many members, and one head, Christ. But the idea of the Church as one society, of which every separate congregation or church was but the local embodiment, certainly becomes more prominent in those epistles which were written from Rome (Eph., Phil., and Col.).

Thus in many ways the providence of God was vindicated ; and S. Paul's expression as to ' the fulness of the time,' in which the Incarnation took place, was justified at once. The title on the cross of Christ, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, the three great languages of learning, government, and religion, was an involuntary prophecy. Christianity was rooted in Judaism ; it appealed to the lofty aspirations of human desire, and the pathetic depths of human need, as the Greek mind had realised them ; and it found the machinery and ideals of the Roman Empire in harmony with its own methods, an instrument fitted to its purpose.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What were the leading and permanent features of Jewish religion ?
2. What changes are to be noted in (1) the political conditions and (2) the thought of the Jews, during the later period of their history before Christ ?
3. What was the position of the Jews in the Roman Empire ?
4. What was the condition of Greek religion at the time of Christ ?
5. Describe concisely the extent and constitution of the Roman Empire.
6. What features of the Roman Empire proved most advantageous to the spread of the Christian Church ?

## SUBJECTS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

All the above questions might form a starting-point for study. Among a multitude of authorities, the following may be suggested :

- Lux Mundi* : Essay on *The Preparation in History for Christ*.  
 Edersheim. *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Book i.  
 Bruce. *Apologetics*, Book ii.  
 Döllinger. *The Gentile and the Jew*.  
 Duchesne. *Early History of the Christian Church*.  
 Ramsay. *S. Paul, Traveller and Roman Citizen*.  
 „ *The Church in the Roman Empire*.  
 „ Articles on the *Diaspora* and *The Religion of Greece* in  
     Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* (extra vol.).  
 Westcott. *The Gospel of Life*.  
 „ *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*.  
 Pater. *Marius the Epicurean*.



## CHAPTER II. THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD

THE Christian Church was founded on the Day of Pentecost, probably in the year 29 A.D. For its progress during the first thirty years the Acts of the Apostles is almost the sole authority, though there are of course a number of incidental allusions to the course of history in the epistles. The authenticity and general accuracy of the Acts are now established beyond reasonable doubt. But it is clearly a selected history, arranged with considerable art and literary power, to illustrate especially the careers of the two chief Apostles, S. Peter, who is the principal figure in chapters i.-xii., and S. Paul, with whose imprisonment at Rome, A.D. 58-60, the book somewhat abruptly concludes. Possibly the author had in view a third book to complete his trilogy.

**The Acts.**

After the Acts there is no extant history of the Church till the great work of Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Caesarea, in ten books, completed about A.D. 323. Eusebius was not only a man of wide learning and sound judgment; he had unique opportunities for collecting information, owing to his friendship with the Emperor Constantine. He certainly had access to some authorities now no longer extant, and he gathered together traditions which otherwise would have been lost. For example, Eusebius had before him the *Memoirs* of Hegesippus (Eus. ii. 23, etc.), a Christian Hebrew of Palestine who visited Corinth, and lived for some time at Rome. These *Memoirs*, in five books, were written probably before the year 189 (the end of the Roman episcopate of Eleutherus, the last Bishop of Rome he mentions). They seem to have been a collection of personal reminiscences, and traditions gleaned from Jewish and other sources, arranged on no particular system. Eusebius also had the *Chronicon* of

**The History  
of Eusebius.**

Julius Africanus (Eus. vi. 31). This author has much more claim to be considered a Church historian than Hegesippus. His *Chronicon* is a history of the world from a Christian point of view from the creation to the year 221 A.D. Julius was a friend and elder contemporary of Origen, and he may have survived till nearly the middle of the third century. He lived for some time at Emmaus, and was instrumental in persuading the Emperor Heliogabalus to rebuild the village under the name of Nicopolis. He was evidently a man of weight and position, and a considerable scholar and traveller. He was also the author of a work called *Cesti* (perhaps = 'stitchings' or 'embroideries'), a compilation of notes on many subjects, such as medicine and agriculture.

Another early Christian writer, the subject of much controversy, of whom Eusebius made use, was Papias of Hierapolis (Eus. iii. 39). He was the author of five books called *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord*, written in the early part of the second century. This was not a history, but apparently a sort of commentary on the Gospel history. Papias endeavoured to get information by questioning those who had known the Apostles; and though Eusebius considers him a man of 'limited intelligence,' some of the most interesting ancient traditions with regard to the Apostles and Evangelists are contained in his work.

It is the use and preservation of such authorities as these, rather than any great ability as a historian, that make the work of Eusebius so valuable. It is a mine of collected information for the student, and probably on that account more valuable than if Eusebius had made more philosophic use of his materials.

After the writings of the New Testament, we possess a very thin but fairly continuous stream of Christian writings, such as **Other authorities.** the Epistle of S. Clement (first century) and those of S. Ignatius, and the works of S. Justin Martyr and S. Irenaeus in the second century. To these must be added the great work of the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, who wrote after the fall of Jerusalem his *Jewish War* and his *Antiquities of the Jews*; and the contemporary allusions in the heathen writers, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny (see pp. 21, 65).

From the beginning of the third century the information becomes fuller, and the Church writers more lengthy. But at the best the period from the end of the Acts to the close of the second century is obscure, and we can often only conjecture from what we see of the Church in the New Testament, compared with its condition when it emerges to fuller view in the third century, as to what had happened in the interval.

The results of the expansion of the Church as recorded in the Acts may be briefly summarised as follows. A new and most important centre was established at Antioch, through **The Church** the efforts of Hellenistic Jews who had embraced **in the Acts.** the Gospel. Here Gentile converts were freely admitted to the Church without circumcision. Here, too, the name of 'Christians' was first given, probably at first as a popular nickname, and was afterwards adopted by believers themselves. This may seem a small matter, but it really implies the recognition of the independence of the Church. It was no longer thought a mere sect of Judaism. From Antioch we see the Gospel spreading into the very centre of Asia Minor, the Roman province of Galatia. Crossing into Macedonia, the pioneers carried their message along the western coast of the Ægean, establishing churches at Philippi and Thessalonica, and elsewhere; and finally at Corinth, the most important centre of the commerce of the Mediterranean. A little later the Church was established at Ephesus, the greatest port of Asia and a very stronghold of heathenism; and also in the cities of the Lycus valley, Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. Before the end of the Acts, it is clear that, in addition to the far inland churches of Asia Minor, there was a fringe of Christians on every shore of the Eastern Mediterranean. The Acts ends with S. Paul's two years' sojourn in Rome itself, where, although a prisoner, he was busily employed in building up a church of which the foundations had already been laid some years before. From 1 S. Peter we may conclude that the Gospel had been preached also in the northern and central provinces of Asia Minor, probably by S. Peter himself.

It is also easily gathered from the Acts that the Gospel was

never preached except as embodied in a society, bound together by sacraments and by adherence to the apostolic teaching. It is this fact that distinguishes Christianity from a philosophy, or even from a mere system of religious belief and worship. These scattered congregations, though not at first brought under any fixed common organisation, were evidently regarded as parts of a larger whole ; they looked naturally to their apostolic founders for guidance and rule, and for the appointment of their own local officials.

The most important problem which emerges in the course of the Acts is the relation of the Gentile converts to the Jewish **Catholic and Jewish Christianity.** Christians. The latter continued to practise the Law of Moses, keeping Jewish feasts and Sabbaths, practising circumcision, and observing Jewish rules of food. The stricter members of the Church of Jerusalem wished to impose their rules on the Gentile converts. In their eyes such converts were to be treated still as proselytes who desired admission into the sacred society of Israel. The question of the admission of these Gentiles into full Christian privileges was in effect settled at a fairly early date by S. Peter himself, who baptized at Caesarea the centurion Cornelius and his household (Acts x.). But the missionary work of S. Paul and others from the Antioch base brought the larger question to a head. At the Council of Jerusalem, about the year 47 A.D., a preliminary settlement was made (Acts xv.). Although some uncertainty attaches to the exact significance of the 'necessary things' which were imposed on the Gentile Christians, the main question was settled on lines agreeable to S. Paul and the Church of Antioch. Gentile converts need not be circumcised nor consider themselves bound to observe the Mosaic Law. It was, however, only the beginning of a long struggle for freedom and catholicity. Not only was S. Paul for the rest of his life pursued by the animosity and intrigues of the 'Judaising' Christians of Palestine ; Judaic Christianity, as it has been called, outlasted the first generation of Jewish believers. The latter continued to keep the seventh day Sabbath, as well as the Christian 'Lord's Day' on the first day of the week—

whereas these Gentile brethren kept only the Lord's Day. But the two destructions of Jerusalem (pp. 27, 75) and the scattering of the Jews tended to make an end of Judaic Christianity; and gradually the Church, as a whole, realised and practised her inherent independence and catholicity.

In the Acts also we see the anticipation of later persecution. S. James, the brother of S. John, suffered death at the hands of Herod Agrippa I., and S. Peter narrowly escaped the same fate (Acts xii.). Everywhere the Apostles suffered from Jewish slander and intrigue, and were in danger of their lives from the same unscrupulous Pharisaic spirit which had attacked the Founder Himself. And the first brush of conflict with the imperial power is seen significantly enough in the words of the people of the Roman colony of Philippi, as they dragged Paul and Silas before the duumvirs. 'These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans' (Acts xvi. 20, 21).

For the history of the Apostles and their immediate companions after the Acts there are no materials except a few allusions in the latter part of the New Testament, and some traditions collected by Eusebius and others. The Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Tim. and Titus) seem to necessitate a second period of missionary work for S. Paul after his release from his two years' imprisonment in Rome. Eusebius states this as a tradition in his time, and illustrates the fact of a second imprisonment by quotations from 2 Tim. iv. Perhaps, after leaving Rome, the Apostle fulfilled his old intention of visiting Spain. S. Clement of Rome speaks of him as reaching the 'farthest limit of the West,' and the Muratorian fragment<sup>1</sup> expressly mentions Spain. Then apparently he revisited the East, preaching in Crete, where he left his companion Titus in general charge of the Christian congregations; and visiting Ephesus, where Timothy was

**Traditions  
of the  
Apostle  
S. Paul.**

<sup>1</sup> An imperfect document of the latter part of the second century, containing a list of the canonical books of the New Testament and various notes. It is called after the Italian scholar Muratori, who discovered it at Milan and published it in 1740.

appointed to the oversight. Perhaps he also went inland as far as Colossae—where, in writing from Rome to Philemon, he had expressed the hope of staying for a time. He alludes also to a stay at Corinth, at Miletus and at Troas, and to his intention of spending a winter at Nicopolis in Epirus. He was again arrested, probably in connection with the Neronian persecution (p. 20), tried twice at Rome, and put to death by beheading (as a Roman citizen). A constant and trustworthy tradition places the scene of his martyrdom at Tre Fontane on the Ostian Way, about three miles outside the city.

Very early and constant tradition connects S. Peter also in his later years and his martyrdom with Rome (*see* pp. 141-2).

**S. Peter.** Eusebius (ii. 25) quotes the statement from Gaius, a Roman Christian of the early third century (perhaps the same person as S. Hippolytus), that the bodies of S. Peter and S. Paul were preserved at the Vatican, and on the Ostian Way. It was believed that the surviving Apostles decided to leave Jerusalem after twelve years' residence, and arranged among themselves for a division of their sphere of labour. Parthia, it is said, was assigned to Thomas, Scythia to Andrew, Asia to John; Bartholomew is said to have preached in India. Thaddaeus<sup>1</sup> had previously been sent shortly after the Ascension by Thomas to Edessa, in N.W. Mesopotamia, where he converted King Abgarus. Eusebius preserves two apocryphal letters, one written by Abgarus to Jesus Christ, inviting him to come to Edessa and heal his disease, and another purporting to be our Lord's answer, promising after His Ascension to send a disciple to him (Eus. i. 13).

S. John is the subject of some interesting legends. He is said to have laboured in the province of Asia, and to have been banished in the persecution of Domitian to the island of Patmos, in the Ægean, where he saw the vision recorded in the Apocalypse (*see* pp. 31, 38). Tertullian (*de Praescr.* 36) states that he was first sentenced to death and was

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius calls Thaddaeus one of the Seventy: but there is probably some confusion. Thaddaeus himself appears in the Gospel under his other names, Lebbaeus (in some MSS. of S. Matthew only), and (?) Judas (the son) of James.

plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil, but was miraculously preserved. (This was said to have happened outside the Latin gate at Rome, hence the commemoration in the Church Kalendar for May 6.) When released from exile he took the oversight of the Church of Ephesus, where he died in extreme old age, having survived until the reign of Trajan (98-117). He was buried at Ephesus; but a fantastic story, which was believed even as late as the fourth century, told that he was not really dead, but only in a trance, and that the ground where he was buried still heaved with his breath! This no doubt arose out of a mistaken interpretation of our Lord's words in S. John xxi. 21. Eusebius (iii. 31) quotes a mysterious statement about S. John from Polycrates, a later Bishop of Ephesus, to the effect that 'John, being a priest, wore the high-priest's mitre' (literally, the plate of gold which the Jewish high-priest wore on the front of his mitre). S. John was not a Jewish priest, and if the story is literally understood, we must conclude that he wore this as a Christian bishop.

Other beautiful stories of S. John, which may well be true, are those of his constant repetition in his old age, when he was unable to preach, of the words, 'Little children, love one another,' of which he said, 'It is the Lord's command, and it is enough'; and of his conversion of the robber chieftain. This robber was a Christian who had fallen away through evil companions. S. John had noticed him when a young man, at some church which he was visiting, and had specially commended him to the care of the bishop. On returning at some later time he inquired what had become of the trust committed to the bishop. He was told of the man's lapse, and of his present wicked life. S. John asked for a horse, and rode away to the mountains to find the lost sheep. He found him, and besought him to repent. The robber wept bitterly, confessed his sin, and was led back by S. John to the Church. The Apostle did not leave him until by most earnest prayer and fasting and exhortation he had made sure of his repentance and restoration.

S. James, not one of the Twelve, but the first cousin or half-brother of our Lord, had, as we see from the Acts, received the charge of the Church of Jerusalem. The story of his martyr-

dom is recorded by Hegesippus and is preserved by Eusebius (ii. 23). It is also alluded to by Josephus. James was much

**S. James.** venerated for his strictness and holy life of prayer, even by the unconverted Jews, being called by them 'the Just.' He was a life-long Nazirite, and was permitted even to enter the 'holy place' in the Temple, where he was so constantly at prayer that his knees became, it is said, as hard as those of a camel. But at one Passover feast, as Jewish animosity against the Christians increased, he was seized by Scribes and Pharisees and placed upon the pinnacle of the Temple, and ordered to dissuade the people from 'being led astray' by Jesus. But he bore witness with a loud voice to Jesus, and was thrown down and stoned, and finally despatched by a blow from a fuller's club. (There is perhaps here a combination of two traditions, as to the exact manner of his death.) He prayed for his murderers in the words of our Lord Himself, 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do.' His martyrdom was regarded as the final crime of the Jews, and Eusebius notes that immediately after that Vespasian began the siege of Jerusalem. This, however, seems an exaggeration; S. James was murdered in 61.

S. Mark is said to have preached in Egypt, and founded and presided over the Church of Alexandria (Eus. ii. 16). He was certainly also for a time the companion of S. Peter at Rome. Philip the Apostle is stated by Polycrates to be buried at Hierapolis, but the allusion he makes to Philip's virgin daughters makes it probable that this was the Philip 'the evangelist,' one of the Seven, mentioned in Acts xxi. 8.

In the year 64 or 65 came the first outburst of heathen persecution. It was the direct act of the Emperor Nero. A **The** great fire had destroyed a large part of Rome, **Neronian** of which the mad Emperor was himself suspected **persecution.** to be the author. He wished, it was said, to have a scenic background for the recitation of his poems on the burning of Troy. To divert this suspicion he made scapegoats of the Christians, though it is not stated that he actually charged them with incendiarism. They were evidently



by this time a large and prominent body, and had fallen under popular dislike, for reasons which will be presently suggested. Probably also the Jews, who were in favour with Nero, through his wife Poppaea, seized the opportunity to lay fresh charges against the Christians. A large number were seized and put to horrible deaths, dressed in skins and worried by wild beasts, crucified, or burnt to death in the Vatican gardens—to serve as torches while the Emperor, dressed as a charioteer, took part in circus performances for the admiration of the mob.

This is recorded by the Roman historian Tacitus (*Ann.* xv. 44). His description, written about half a century later, displays a curious aloofness and want of sympathy, quite worthy of Gibbon. Tacitus probably reflects the fashionable attitude of the cultivated Roman world of his time towards Christianity. Nero inflicted, he says, 'the most elaborate punishments upon those people, hated for their crimes, who were commonly styled "Christians."' The author of this name was one Christus, who had been put to death, during the reign of Tiberius, by the procurator Pontius Pilate. The deadly superstition, checked for the moment, was beginning to break out again, not only in Judaea, the original source of the evil, but even in the capital itself, the centre where all horrible and shameful things converge and find supporters.' The first to be apprehended, he says, turned informers (this is probably false; unless these were Jews arrested on suspicion), 'and on their evidence a vast multitude were convicted, not so much on the charge of incendiarism but as haters of the human race.' Nero's conduct, however, he adds, even though those punished were guilty, and worthy of the most extreme measures, raised some feeling of pity; it was felt that they were suffering not so much for the public good, as to gratify the cruelty of an individual. It was apparently in the course of, or as the outcome of, this persecution, that S. Peter and S. Paul both suffered martyrdom.

Although it is clear that Nero's attack was not directly on religious grounds, it set a precedent for persecution which lasted for two and a half centuries. During this period the Roman

government endeavoured at intervals to stamp out Christianity, and Christians were regarded as more or less outlaws who were a fair mark for attack, either by the populace or by Roman officials. The causes of this long and deep-seated enmity between the Empire and the Church require careful study. The inconsistency between the atmosphere of the New Testament and the tone of Tacitus might well seem preposterous and ludicrous. Even if the high spiritual level of primitive Christian life had not been maintained, it might reasonably be asked, how could the innocent meetings of innocent people at one another's houses, for prayer and sacrament and encouragement in good works, be possibly associated with 'crimes' and 'hatred of the human race'?

I. No doubt the first cause of suspicion in the eyes of Roman society and Roman officialism was the refusal of Christians to take part in the state religion. What this religion was in itself is difficult to define. Its foundation no doubt lay in primitive Italian superstitions and nature-worship, and in religious rites associated with certain families or guilds. The worship of the sun and the heavens and the reproductive powers of nature are almost universal features of primitive religion. Moreover, the early Italian peoples associated every act of man's life from birth to death, and every operation of agriculture or war, with some tutelary deity. The chief god of Rome was Jupiter (originally the god of the sky), 'the father of gods and men,' and other deities of great repute were Mars and Venus. These and all the inhabitants of the heavens had been identified by the poets with the gods of Greece. The philosopher regarded all gods as either identical or different aspects of the One. The man of the world believed in none of them; any elevating or moral influence which they might have had in early times had long vanished, except in remote country districts.

Nevertheless, the Roman religion figured largely as an institution bound up with the history and greatness of the Empire. Its priests were state-officials; its guilds and confraternities

were encouraged by the state ; public functions and service in the army were connected with sacrifices to the state-gods. To refuse to recognise the state-gods was thought equivalent to being a traitor to Rome.

In other respects, however, Rome was very tolerant of foreign worships. The Greek gods had long been familiar, even the strange cults of Isis from Egypt, or of Cybele from Asia Minor, were permitted. The Persian worship of the sun-god Mithras took a wide hold, especially in the army. Mithras, represented as a warrior slaying a bull, seems to have become the favourite deity of the legionaries. Nor was any attempt made by Roman state-craft to interfere with the religions of the provinces. To this, however, there was one exception. The importance of religion in binding together a community was recognised by the Emperors ; but instead of attempting to force Jupiter or other Roman gods on the Empire, a new religious bond was established in the worship of the Emperor himself. From the time of Augustus onwards, temples were erected in the provinces to the reigning Emperor, and sacrifices were offered to him as the embodiment of the genius of Rome. For a provincial to refuse to take part in such worship would certainly cast doubt on his loyalty. Caligula even endeavoured to transform the Temple at Jerusalem into a shrine for his own statue, but Jewish resistance proved too strong for him.

But provided that a man acquiesced, even with a sneer of contempt, in the state-worships, he might be a devotee of any other worship, which the law of the Empire was willing to recognise as a *religio licita* ; a permission which seems to have been liberally given, and only refused if a religion were thought to be of a flagrantly immoral or seditious tendency.

The adherents of the foreign worships had no objection to a formal recognition of the state-gods. Not so the Jew and the Christian. The former, however, seems so to have impressed the Roman world with his national belief in the unity of Jehovah, and to have made himself so necessary to trade and society that, though unpopular and sometimes attacked, he was permitted to be exclusive in his worship. The Christian

had gained no such footing. Had he indeed been content to sprinkle a few grains of incense on the altars of the Emperor, he might have worshipped Christ with impunity. But to the Christian his God could never be placed in the same category as Isis or Mithras or Augustus. Christ was all in all, and every other religion was false. Moreover, the Christians were less tactful and fuller of missionary spirit than the Jews. They were bound before long to be regarded not merely as intolerant 'cranks,' but as people dangerous to society; and Christian denunciation of the sins of heathenism, their vivid predictions of the Second Advent and the approaching judgment of the world by fire, may have contributed to the belief that they were really 'enemies of the human race.'

2. A second cause of persecution is found in the nature and methods of the Church herself. Christianity was not a system of philosophy taught to inquirers, nor merely a method of worship. It was essentially a social religion. The Church was an organised society with her officials and her rules. It is true that, so far from being in opposition to the state, she had been taught by the Apostles to submit to 'every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake,' to pay tribute and taxes willingly, and to regard the civil power as itself divinely sanctioned. But this the Emperors could not believe. They suspected the Church of being *imperium in imperio*; a dangerous and powerful secret society, with the seeds of rebellion in it. It is indeed difficult to understand the extraordinary fear and jealousy with which the imperial government looked upon every sort of private organisation, however harmless. No clubs were permitted except for burial or other charitable purposes. Trajan, one of the most enlightened Emperors, even forbade a fire-brigade of 150 members in Nicomedia. These suspicions were aggravated in the case of the Christians by their exclusiveness, their refusal to offer sacrifice, and even sometimes to serve in the army. Moreover, there must come sometimes a real collision between the claim of the state and the law of Christ, and when this occurred, the faithful Christian had to obey Christ and take the consequences. It is a remarkable

evidence, however, of Christian sincerity that they never (unlike the Jews) were guilty of rebellion, nor attempted to rid themselves of tyrants by assassination.

3. The secrecy of the Church, the pains taken at first to conceal Christian beliefs and Christian worships, excited, as secrecy always will, the suspicions of the vulgar. **Christian** The worst was imagined, and it took centuries to **secrecy**. eradicate the absurd charges of witchcraft, cannibalism, and other horrible practices, which were constantly brought against the Church by the heathen. Except in the case of a systematic persecution by the Emperor, attacks on Christians were usually caused by some outbreak of the mob, attributing disaster to the spells of the Christians, or to the anger of the gods at their supposed crimes.

4. Persecution was often fomented by the Jews at first, and later by the heathen priests and magicians, sometimes, to their shame, even by the philosophers. The whole **Jealousy of pagan** elaborate system of heathen superstition, with its **priesthood** magic, its oracles, its soothsayings, its necromancy and spiritualism, arrayed itself against the Christians. An early example of this is seen in the case of Elymas in Cyprus (Acts xiii.): There is probably an allusion to the way in which heathen priests and magicians helped on the official attacks on Christianity in the remarkable pictures of the two beasts in Rev. xiii. The second beast 'with horns like a lamb,' who performs miracles and plays into the power of the first beast, is pretty clearly intended to represent the heathen priesthood.

5. The Christian believer will recognise another cause of persecution in the very nature of Christian truth. It inevitably produces a conflict. Like some chemical solvent it **A battle** separates mankind into two camps. This seems **inevitable**. to have been abundantly foretold by the Lord Himself, when He spoke of bringing 'not peace on earth but a sword,' and of setting even the closest relationships of life at strife with each other.

The heathen world felt instinctively that in the presence of such claims as those of Christ and His Church, no half-measures

or *laissez-faire* policy could be adopted. It must be a fight to the finish. And so from this point of view persecution was inevitable, as indeed, in one form or another, it is inevitable still.

It seems clear that for the first attacks on the Christians, various charges of crime were made the pretext. But at some little time after Nero's persecution, such charges do not seem to have been considered necessary. No formal official pronouncement on the subject was made by the Emperor (*see* p. 65) but the mere profession of the name of Christ became sufficient for a capital sentence. And this seems to have become the regular attitude of official Rome. Professor Ramsay gives about A.D. 80 as the probable date for this new policy. But a good deal depends on the date assigned to S. Peter's First Epistle, which seems to contain (iv. 14-16) a clear allusion to the distinction between suffering as an evildoer and suffering simply for 'the Name.'

The year 70 saw the most momentous event in the Apostolic period, the siege of Jerusalem, and the destruction of city and Temple. The turbulence and rebellious temper of the province of Judaea had grown worse and worse, until in 66 the Roman garrison were slain, and the attacks of Cestius Gallus, the prefect of Syria, were beaten off. Vespasian, afterwards Emperor, then began, by Nero's authority, the final war with the Jews. He wreaked a terrible vengeance on Galilee; but Jerusalem itself was not finally invested till 70, by Titus, the son of Vespasian. The delay was partly due to the troubled times through which the Roman Empire itself was passing. Nero's death was followed by a year of civil strife and bloodshed, during the brief reign of three Emperors, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Vespasian himself became Emperor in 69, and committed the reduction of the Jewish revolt to Titus. Meanwhile, the Christian Church in Jerusalem, remembering the Lord's warning, or receiving, as Eusebius relates, some supernatural guidance at the time, made good their escape from the city, and retired to Pella, a city in Decapolis some 50 miles away.

The final siege lasted only five months, a very short time considering the almost impregnable strength of Jerusalem and the slow nature of ancient sieges. It ran its course amid inconceivable horrors of famine, bloodshed, and party strife, as vividly described by Josephus. The defenders were divided into two opposing factions, one commanded by John and Eleazar, and the other by Simon, who, instead of making the most of the natural advantages for defence, fought furiously with one another. The narrow confines of the city were crowded with the multitudes which had assembled for the Passover. So great was the mortality within the walls that it was impossible to bury the dead, and they were thrown over the ramparts, even moving the horror of the besiegers themselves. The city was practically the prey of robbers and murderers within, while the Roman engines were battering the walls. Supernatural terrors added to the awfulness of the scene—a sword-shaped comet hung over the city, visionary armies were seen fighting in the skies, a mad prophet appeared who ceaselessly cried, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' the Temple doors were opened by no hand of man; the sound of the final departure of the angel-guardians, with the mysterious words, 'Let us depart hence,' was heard by the priests as they entered on the feast of Pentecost. All the terrible predictions of judgment both of the Old Testament and the Gospel seem to pale before the realities of these last and awful days of the Jewish nation. The Temple was taken and burnt on the very anniversary of its first destruction by the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar (July 15, 586 B.C.); but it took nearly another month of desperate fighting before the city was completely reduced. Its remains were levelled with the ground; and its miserable survivors were either put to death or reduced to slavery. Many were sent to the mines of Egypt, and many others to Rome, where they were employed in building the Colosseum. The well-known Arch of Titus still shows on its reliefs the seven-branch candlestick and the table of shewbread borne in the conqueror's triumph.

Vespasian is said to have also endeavoured to seek out all survivors of the line of David and to put them to death (Eus. iii. 12).

The effects of this terrible catastrophe on the Christian Church must have been great and permanent. In the first place it was **its effects on the Church.** a vindication of prophecy, written in blood and fire. It was well known that Christ Himself had predicted unparalleled sufferings for the Jewish nation, the total destruction of the Temple, and the preservation of His own followers. His words were fulfilled to the letter. This could not fail to make a deep impression both on the Christian Church, and those who were inquiring into her claims. Retribution had visibly fallen on those who crucified the Lord; and His own words had come terribly true.

A still more important result was that the Christian Church was now visibly and finally separated from Judaism. While Jerusalem stood with its Temple and its round of sacrifice and festival, the old dispensation could still claim to be in possession. Christianity might be plausibly represented by the Jew as a mere pretender, or be misinterpreted by the heathen as a mere sect. But now evidently a new era had begun. The Temple was never rebuilt; though Jewish nationalism was still to make another desperate struggle in the reign of Hadrian (p. 74).

Judaic Christianity was now doomed to extinction. Its adherents either gradually merged in the catholicity of the Gentile Church, or drifted into the obscure heresy of the Ebionites (p. 99).

The Christian Church of Jerusalem may have returned from Pella, but when a bishop is again found at Jerusalem, it was when even the very name of the city had been changed. A tradition indeed is recorded by Eusebius (iii. 11), that the surviving Apostles, after the martyrdom of S. James the Just, reassembled and elected as his successor Symeon, the son of Clopas, another relative of our Lord. But it is uncertain whether this was before or after the fall of the city. It has been conjectured with some probability that the Apostles at this Council took other steps for the organisation of the Church, her ministry and her forms of worship (Ragg, *Church of the Apostles*, pp. 91-93).

Similarly the exiled Jewish rabbis who had survived the great overthrow endeavoured at Jamnia in the same year (70) to gather up the fragments of Judaism, and here they settled finally,



from the strict Palestinian point of view, the Canon of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Roman Empire from 69 to 96 was governed by the Flavian dynasty (Vespasian, 69-79; Titus, 79-81; Domitian, 81-96). Without doubt the Neronian persecution had set a precedent for regarding the mere profession of Christianity as a crime to be punished with death. But there is no evidence of active persecution until the closing year of Domitian, though the Flavian Emperors viewed Christianity with disfavour. Probably the calamities which had fallen on the Jews prevented them endeavouring with any success to stir up popular feeling against their rivals.

But Domitian is universally represented as the second great persecutor of the Church, and as a second Nero, whom he certainly resembled in his mad vanity and the arbitrary cruelty of his later years. Opinions, however, differ as to whether his persecution about the years 95-96 was merely aimed at a few prominent individuals, or at a total proscription of the name of Christ. It may have arisen partly out of his attempt to enforce the taxation of the Jews, which Vespasian had inaugurated, and partly from his eagerness to promote the worship of himself in the provinces, especially in Asia. Like Vespasian he is said to have endeavoured to search out and kill the descendants of the line of David. He discovered, says Hegesippus (Eus. iii. 20), the grandchildren of S. Jude. He found on questioning them that they were very poor, with hands hardened by toil, and that they looked not for a temporal kingdom, but for a heavenly one which Christ would establish at the end of the world. He dismissed them with contempt.

But he put to death his own cousin, Flavius Clemens, and banished the wife of the same, Flavia Domitilla; apparently on a charge of 'atheism.' That by this is meant Christianity is now regarded as practically certain, as the tomb of Domitilla was regarded as that of a Christian martyr (Ramsay, *Ch. in R. E.*, p. 261). Another victim was a man of the highest official rank, M' Acilius Glabrio, who was first exiled and then put to

death. The tomb of his family has also been discovered among the Christian catacombs.

Early and unanimous tradition makes the banishment of the Apostle S. John to Patmos one of the events of this persecution. If so the vivid picture of the blaspheming and persecuting beast in Rev. xiii. was probably coloured by the efforts of Domitian and his official and priestly satellites to stamp out Christianity in Asia. Many modern scholars, however, refer this banishment and the writing of the Apocalypse to the reign of Nero. It has also been suggested that the explanation of the early tradition is that Domitian, long before he became Emperor, banished S. John, in the year 70, when he was acting for his father, Vespasian, as ruler of Rome: and that likewise it was Nerva (afterwards Emperor) who, as fellow-consul with Vespasian in 71, recalled the exile (Edmundson, *Early Church of Rome*). Hence may have arisen the tradition that it was in the course of Domitian's persecution that S. John was banished, and that it was Nerva when he came to the throne who restored him among those whom his predecessor had unjustly punished.

If the earlier date is adopted, and the unity of the Apocalypse is assumed, we must then consider that the primary allusion in S. John's description of the warfare of the beast against the saints is to Nero's persecution and not to that of Domitian.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Summarise briefly the history of the expansion of the Church as contained in the Acts of the Apostles.
2. What early authorities are made use of by Eusebius in his history of the Church?
3. What traditions are there respecting the Apostles outside the New Testament?
4. Describe the first persecution of the Church by the Roman Empire.
5. What was the general attitude of the Emperors towards the religions of the provinces?
6. What reason can you suggest for the hostility of the Emperors towards the Christian Church?
7. Describe the fall of Jerusalem, and show its importance in the development of Christianity.
8. What was the character of Domitian's persecution of the Church?

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

## 1. The Church History of Eusebius :

Greek text of Eusebius, edited by Bright. (Clarendon Press.)

English translation with (very valuable) notes. Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.

. 'Eusebius of Caesarea,' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

## 2. The conflict between the Judaic and the Catholic conception of the Church :

Hort. *Judaistic Christianity*.

## 3. The character of the imperial persecutions of the Church :

Ramsay. *Church in the Roman Empire*.

### CHAPTER III. THE AGE OF TRANSITION

THE close of the first century was a moment of special danger and trial for the Church. The death of the last of the Apostles confronted her with the problem of her future continuance. The enthusiasm of the first generation of teachers and witnesses had passed. Was the Church herself to change, to break up, to suffer the usual fate of human institutions? The outlook was certainly dark. There was the constant menace of persecution. It might have seemed most improbable when the first burst of courage had cooled, that the members of a widespread and scattered society could stand the strain, if not always of constant attack, at least of the sense of isolation and outlawry; the knowledge that home, and property, and life were always liable to forfeit at the word of an informer, the caprice of the mob, or the zeal of an official.

Again, would Christians continue in the same faith? It is a human tendency to change, and the intellectual atmosphere of the age was restless and favoured change. The Church was surrounded by competing philosophies and religions—one at least, the worship of Mithras, was a most formidable competitor. Was it likely that her witness would remain intact? Was it not much more likely that she would gradually merge in her surroundings, and survive only as a tendency, a school, or an attitude?

Once more, what guarantee was there for her *unity*? How could the apostolic 'fellowship' possibly continue in anything but name or sentiment among congregations as far apart as Egypt, Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul?

It is one of the unconsidered miracles of history that the Church did, as a matter of fact, hold tenaciously to her faith and her unity, and that persecution only riveted tighter the bonds

of fellowship. To the Christian it may seem sufficient explanation to point to the promise of the Lord that 'the gates of Hades' should not prevail against His *ecclesia*, and that the Holy Spirit would be continually present to guide and keep her. Indeed, apart from such supernatural assistance the history of the Christian Church presents an insoluble riddle.

But granting this as the ultimate explanation, it is still quite possible to point out certain secondary causes for the preservation of the Church's faith and fellowship during this time of transition. We may rightly find such causes in (1) the Apostolic writings; (2) the formation of the Creed; (3) the growth of liturgical forms of worship; (4) the settlement of the official ministry. The Scriptures and the Creed proved a safeguard against any alteration in the faith; the ministry preserved unity of organisation and discipline; and the liturgy preserved the norm of worship, which again is in itself one of the strongest forces making for unity. And all these things in the intense and eager life of the primitive Church developed with remarkable rapidity. As students get away from the influence of mere theory, and recognise facts, still more as they endeavour sympathetically to reconstruct in imagination the actual conditions of the Church life of the first century, they tend to assign much earlier dates than was once the fashion to the New Testament and to the characteristic institutions of the Church.

All the writings of the New Testament were probably produced in the course of the first century; though, as will be seen, not all were at first universally recognised by Christians as authoritative. Some, indeed, seem from the first to have been generally accepted. Others, from uncertainty as to their authorship, were for a time in some doubt.

It is probable, notwithstanding the poverty and illiterate character of perhaps the majority of the first Christians, that there was a considerable amount of writing even in the early years of the Church. Naturally one of the first subjects of such writing would be the life and words of the Lord Himself. 'Many,' says S. Luke (i. 1), had already 'taken

**Safeguards  
of the  
Church.**

**The Gospels.**

in hand to draw up a narrative of those things which had been certainly accomplished.' None of these narratives survive in any complete form except the four Gospels which the Church has unanimously and consistently recognised. There are indeed allusions to and fragments of other Gospels; but in most cases they were current only among heretical sects. There was a so-called 'Gospel according to the Hebrews' which is said to have been used by Jewish Christians, and of which some interesting fragments remain. A 'Gospel according to the Egyptians' is also mentioned, of which only a few quotations are found. And a considerable fragment dealing with the Passion has recently been discovered of a so-called 'Gospel according to Peter.' But these are all that have any claim to be compared with the canonical Gospels. The other apocryphal Gospels are clearly of a much inferior standard and of later date.

The four Gospels are finished and artistic productions, in which even earlier writings have been probably incorporated. For example, New Testament scholars have traced with some degree of certainty a document containing discourses of Christ (usually referred to as *Q* = *Quelle*, 'source,' or 'the non-Markan document') to which S. Matthew and S. Luke had access, and which they interwove with materials derived from S. Mark. And again, a large part of S. Luke seems to rest upon some independent narrative describing the latter part of our Lord's ministry.

S. Mark's Gospel is now usually considered the earliest. It is the work of John Mark, probably the cousin of S. Barnabas.

**S. Mark.** who accompanied him and S. Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts xiii.), who afterwards went to Cyprus, and is found later as the companion of S. Peter, and who was believed to have been the founder of the Church of Alexandria. Early tradition<sup>1</sup> states that S. Mark wrote this Gospel at the request of the hearers of S. Peter, to put on record what he had told them; and that S. Peter himself gave his approval afterwards to the work (Eus. ii. 15; iii. 39). This

<sup>1</sup> First given by Papias of Hierapolis, who quotes it from the mysterious and much disputed person whom he calls 'John the Presbyter.' Perhaps no other than S. John himself.

may be accepted as correct; and the date of the Gospel may be not much later than 50 A.D. We know, however, so little of the movements of S. Peter after his release from Herod's prison in 44, or of S. Mark's connection with his work, that any date previous to S. Peter's martyrdom may be correct; but not improbably it was some considerable time before that.

S. Matthew's Gospel presents problems which need not be discussed here. Early tradition, beginning with Papias (Eus. iii. 39), states that S. Matthew first wrote a Gospel in Hebrew for the benefit of those of his own nation. **S. Matthew.** But as the present Gospel has no appearance of being a translation, and the Hebrew original has entirely disappeared, it is now generally believed that the Greek Gospel is an independent work, perhaps not as it stands the work of S. Matthew the Apostle. But the earlier document of our Lord's discourses (already alluded to, 'Q') may have been the original S. Matthew's Gospel, especially as Papias described this Gospel as the *λόγια*, which may mean 'discourses.'

S. Luke, the Gentile physician, friend and travel companion of S. Paul, wrote the Gospel that bears his name, and the Acts. Recent investigations have confirmed the accuracy of the latter in a remarkable way; its abrupt ending **S. Luke.** suggests that it was finished very shortly after the release of S. Paul from Rome, 60 A.D.; in which case the Gospel, which is clearly prior, may have been written several years before this, perhaps during S. Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea 55-57. The care and accuracy shown in the Acts suggest that the Gospel was also the result of painstaking study and investigation. In addition to the use of S. Mark, of 'Q,' and of the independent record already alluded to, S. Luke probably had personal acquaintance with the Blessed Virgin, with other women mentioned, and with the officials of Herod's court; and he diligently collected and selected his materials. He states in his preface that he has 'traced the course of all things accurately from the very first.'

As often pointed out, these three 'Synoptist Gospels' (so called because they follow the same general lines of arrangement)

bear the marks of the individuality of their writers, and were intended for different types of readers; especially, S. Matthew evidently has in view the Jewish Christians, and the fulfilment of Old Testament Messianic prophecy. But too much stress should not be laid on these differences. The figure of Christ is the same throughout; the course of His ministry is described in much the same way, and all give extraordinary prominence to His Passion and Death.

The problems of the authorship and historical accuracy of the Fourth Gospel are beyond the scope of the present history.

**S. John.** It is sufficient to say that the universal belief of the Church is that it was the work of S. John the Apostle, written in the last years of the first century. This, 'the most wonderful book that was ever written' (Ramsay), differs widely in its contents and style from the other three Gospels. It describes for the most part the work of our Lord in Judaea and Jerusalem rather than in Galilee; it contains discourses of a more theological character, and its purpose is plainly to emphasise the Divinity of Christ, as not only the Messiah but the Incarnate Logos or Word. But it seems to assume the narrative of the Synoptists not only by its extraordinary omissions, but by its occasional corrections. And it bears the marks of an eye-witness in a high degree. These are quite as vivid and more subtle than those which characterise S. Mark's Petrine reminiscences. They repay the closest study, especially in those passages which repeat matters already recorded by the Synoptists—*e.g.*, the narrative of the Passion. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of such a book in deepening and steadying the faith and devotion of the primitive Church towards its Founder and the witness of His Apostles.

It must always be remembered that these Gospels were not intended for primary instruction (*see* S. Luke i. 1-4), but for confirming and instructing those who were already within the Church. This accounts for many puzzles—things left unsaid, knowledge assumed, selection of a limited number of events for a particular purpose. Especially the disproportionate space given to the Lord's Passion and Death is only explicable when



we remember that the first readers had already been taught of that Death as the Sacrifice and Atonement for human sin.

The same consideration applies to the Epistles. They are all in the first instance addressed to believers ; they were read in the Christian assemblies, and passed on from one congregation to another. As the living voice of the Apostles ceased, their letters naturally became standards of faith and life, and perhaps even in the lifetime of their writers they came to be ranked as ' Scripture.'

All the thirteen Epistles of S. Paul were soon recognised as authoritative: so, too, were 1 S. Peter and 1 S. John. Early opinions differed as to S. James, 2 S. Peter, S. Jude, and 2 and 3 S. John (Eus. iii. 25). Again, there was

some uncertainty as to Hebrews and the Apocalypse. These two require some separate consideration. The splendour, the width, the originality of the Epistle to the Hebrews obviously place it in the very first rank of Apostolic writings. Its Christology and its teaching of the essential unity of the Old and New Covenants were contributions of the highest value to the thought of the first generation of Christians. But both its destination and its authorship are unknown. It was this latter fact which caused the Church long to hesitate as to full acceptance: for a writing to be accepted must be, it was thought, the genuine work of one of the original Apostles. But Hebrews was long attributed in the West to S. Barnabas (still one of the most likely conjectures); in the East it was thought to be the work of either S. Luke or S. Paul. But finally the East accepted it as the work of S. Paul, and by the fourth century this view had become current also in the West. Without doubt the epistle emanated from the Pauline circle, and equally without doubt, the actual author was not S. Paul. In it we see the process of some other mind, working out with real originality on new lines the thoughts of S. Paul. As to its destination, the most probable supposition is still that it was addressed to the Christians of Jerusalem during the fateful years immediately preceding the final siege. It is quite possible, on the other hand, that it was addressed to the Jewish Christians of the Church

in Rome. S. Clement of Rome makes so much use of it that he was even suggested as its author. But the allusions to sufferings which have fallen short of actual martyrdom (cp. xii. 4) do not suit the Neronian persecution; and it is difficult to see how a letter addressed to Roman Christians could so entirely ignore the Gentile majority in that Church. In any case, however, the allusions to the Levitical system as still existing seem to necessitate a date before A.D. 70.

The Apocalypse, as already noted, may belong either to the time of Nero or that of Domitian. (It is possible that writings of both periods may be combined in it.) Accepted **Apocalypse.** originally as the work of the Apostle S. John, some doubt was cast upon it in the third century by the fastidiousness of the Alexandrians, especially Dionysius (Eus. vii. 25), and Eusebius speaks of it (iii. 25) as rejected by some. This doubt was, however, only a phase or a fashion, and the general judgment of the Church attested the book. Its importance from our present point of view is very great. The Book of Daniel, whatever its original date, was one of the most important factors in strengthening Jewish resistance to the pre-Christian anti-Christ, Antiochus Epiphanes. The Apocalypse is coloured throughout with reminiscences of Daniel and of that great Maccabean struggle which the seer finds repeated on a more terrific scale in the battle between heathenism and the Church. He calls his work a 'prophecy,' and it merits this title not merely in the sense of prediction, but as a pictorial setting forth of the great recurring principles of history from the Divine standpoint. In vivid and startling figures, which have stamped themselves indelibly on Christian thought and imagination, the Apocalypse describes the eternal sovereignty and triumph of Christ and His saints: the hostile forces marshalled against Him and them; the dragon, 'that old serpent,' the beast who persecutes and blasphemes, and the second beast who deceives; the Divine judgments on sin, the rewards of faithfulness and sanctity, the eternal moral purpose which runs through all man's history, of which Christ alone has the key, the heavenly ideal, the new Jerusalem which is even now

being realised—'coming down from God out of heaven,' in the Church of the redeemed—these compelling, entrancing pictures must have done much to console and hearten Christians in 'the great tribulation,' to enable them to confront successfully those mighty forces of the world which seemed about to crush the Church out of existence. Each successive Christian generation has read its own lesson in the Apocalypse, but the believer will recognise a special fitness in this gift of the ascended Lord to His struggling Church at such a momentous period of her history—when first love was cooling, when the pilot stars seemed dim, and the beast was making war upon the saints and 'prevailing' against them.

The recognition by the Church generally of an authorised list or 'canon' of sacred books, in a special sense 'inspired' by the Holy Spirit, was, as we have seen, a matter of gradual growth. But the foundation was present already in the Canon of Old Testament writings which the Church inherited from Judaism. At first these and these only were alluded to as 'Scriptures.' But even here there was not quite the same hard and fast line between the canonical and the uncanonical as in later ages. There were two canons current among the Jews, the shorter Palestinian canon and the longer Hellenistic or Alexandrian canon, which contains the Apocrypha. It seems clear that it was the latter which the early Christian Church for the most part accepted. The writers of the New Testament never indeed quote the Apocryphal books expressly as 'Scripture,' but they make considerable use of them indirectly, not only in a Hellenistic writing like the Epistle to the Hebrews, but even in such an entirely Judaic-Christian writing as the Epistle of S. James.

In view, then, of this vagueness even about the Old Testament books, we need not be surprised that there was for long some uncertainty among Christians as to the exact limits of the canon of the new 'Scriptures' which they added to the old. No doubt the majority of our present books, as we have already seen, were classed as Scripture before the end of the first century, as the Epistles

**The Canon  
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**Formation  
of N. T.  
Canon.**

of S. Paul are in 2 S. Peter iii. But doubts remained well into the fourth century. In the time of Eusebius there were still evidently three classes of current Christian writings claiming to be 'Scripture': (1) those generally accepted by the whole Church—*ὁμολογούμενα* ('admitted'); (2) those on which a difference of opinion existed, *ἀντιλεγόμενα* ('attacked'); (3) those which were generally considered spurious, *νόθοι*—either as being forgeries, or heretical. Finally some of the second class were excluded, though still held in high repute, such as the Epistle of Clement, the 'Shepherd' of Hermas, and the Epistle of Barnabas (*see* p. 61); and others definitely accepted. The earliest known list is that of the Muratorian Canon (p. 17). Its date is about A.D. 170 and it contains all our present books except 1 and 2 Peter, S. John's Epistles, S. James, and Hebrews, and adds 'the Apocalypse of Peter.' But its fragmentary condition makes its omissions of little account. The Syriac translation of the second century contained all except 2 Peter, 2 and 3 S. John, S. Jude, and the Apocalypse. Origen in the third century gives all except S. James and S. Jude. S. Athanasius enumerates our list exactly in 367, and the Third Council of Carthage (397) definitely sanctions the same list.

The stability of the Church did not rest alone on the actual writings of the Apostles. She owed her very existence to the necessity of bearing witness to definite truths about

#### The Creed.

God, and His great manifestation of Himself in human life through the Incarnation, which she had received from the Apostles. The Triune nature of the Godhead; the Deity and Humanity of Jesus Christ; His Birth of the Virgin; His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension; the new mission of the Holy Ghost; the certainty of forgiveness; the new life, and the resurrection of the dead, as conferred on man through the Church, must all have been parts of that 'teaching of the Apostles' in which believers 'continued stedfastly' from the beginning (Acts ii. 42). And it is certainly to be noted in the New Testament that there is evidence that this teaching was regarded as a coherent whole called 'the Faith,' and was summarised in more or less settled forms. (Cp. Rom. vi. 17; 2

Tim. 1. 13; S. Jude, 3.) Such forms were especially used in connection with Baptism. The candidate for Baptism was entering a society pledged to a definite faith and witness, and a primary condition of entrance was the profession of this faith. Hence naturally arose the Baptismal Creeds. They varied in language in the various centres of the Church; but were all the same in substance, usually short, and based on the baptismal formula. Those about to be baptized in the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were required to profess their faith in this Name, according to the recognised form, or Creed, which was known as the *παραθήκη*, or 'trust,' or the 'symbolum,' or 'pass-word.'

There is no reason to suppose that the additions which were made by degrees to these original epitomes of Christian belief were in any real sense new. They were either **Additions to traditional parts of the Apostles' teaching which the needs of the time brought into prominence and which were therefore added to the Creed, or they were explanations to prevent the sense in which the Church understood her formula being perverted by false teaching. The merely affirmative Creed of the first days of simple faith tended to become defensive as errors grew and threatened. This process will be clearly seen in the construction and development of the 'Nicene Creed.'**

The Apostles' Creed is the developed form of the Baptismal Creed of the Roman Church. Its earliest known form <sup>1</sup> cannot be later than the first half of the second century, and doubtless rests upon a much earlier original. The additions with which we are familiar have been traced for the most part to the Church of Southern Gaul, and to a time in which the Nicene Creed had temporarily replaced the older Creed at Rome in the administration of Baptism (between the fifth and eighth centuries). About

<sup>1</sup> I believe in God the Father Almighty. And in Christ Jesus His only Son, our Lord, who was born from the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried: the third day rose again from the dead; ascended into the heavens, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, whence He will come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost, the holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh.

the middle of the eighth century the Creed, as we know it, appears complete.

These historical changes in the contents of the Creed must not be allowed to obscure the practical certainty that from the days of the Apostles onwards there existed in the Church everywhere a well-known and traditional summary, not committed to writing, of the teaching which they had delivered. The Scriptures directly or indirectly illustrated and confirmed this 'Creed,' and naturally its phrases tended to be accommodated to the language of the Scriptures; but the Creed was in itself an independent and primary witness and safeguard of Christian belief and Christian unity.

Few things could have had more influence in binding together the Church than its common acts of worship. And from the **Christian** first these tended to follow regular and settled forms. **Worship.** Among the marks of the infant Church was its steadfastness in 'the breaking of the bread and the prayers' (Acts ii. 42), phrases which seem to imply some common and well-known order. The frequency of the gift of 'prophecy' at first no doubt prevented the crystallisation of the Church's devotion in written formulas. But it is clear from S. Paul's Epistles that he felt the necessity of keeping even 'the prophets' in order (cp. 1 Cor. xiv.), and that he desired a settled and orderly style of conducting the Christian assemblies. Christians inherited from Temple and synagogue the use of the Psalter and other liturgical forms, and the Founder Himself had given a form of prayer in the Lord's Prayer.

But the distinctive Christian rite from the first was the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. It is not recorded that Christ had Himself laid down any form of service for this, though **The Service** such is not impossible; but at least His own **of the** words of institution formed a liturgical nucleus. **Eucharist.** And it seems clear that as early as the apostolic age the general lines which the service was to follow were laid down and accepted. At first indeed the service is wrapped in mystery, for no written records survive, and the greatest secrecy was observed lest the heathen should gain access to the Christian

'mysteries.' But when the earliest account of the service is found in writing in the First Apology of S. Justin Martyr about A.D. 150 (p. 79), it is already elaborate, and shows the same general construction with which later Christian usage makes us familiar. The same may be said of the instructions given in the Church Order of Hippolytus, less than a century later, and in the Catechetical Lectures of S. Cyril of Jerusalem (about 347). When the Church emerges to fuller view we find established various groups of 'liturgies,' or forms of the service of the Eucharist. These, although used in quite different regions of the Church,<sup>1</sup> all present the same general features, though varying in detail. The conclusion seems obvious that there must have been one common original; and this in all probability was arranged by the Apostles themselves. We may reconstruct with some degree of certainty this archetypal service of the Eucharist. It no doubt consisted of two parts; the first included psalmody and the reading of the Scriptures (at first the Old Testament only, but soon extracts from the apostolic writings were added), followed by a sermon and prayers. After this, those who were not yet baptized withdrew; and then followed the second part, the actual Communion service. The elements of bread and wine for the service were brought forward; the celebrant addressed the worshippers, bidding them 'lift up their hearts' and 'give thanks unto the Lord'; he then in a lengthy prayer offered intercessions for all, both living and departed, and proceeded to a recital of the work of God's redemption through Christ: this found its climax in the repetition of Christ's own words at the Last Supper, and the invocation of the Holy Spirit's blessing upon the bread and the cup. To this prayer all responded 'Amen'; its phraseology at first was left to the inspiration of the celebrant, but it tended naturally to fall into fixed forms. Another feature common to all such services was the angelic

- <sup>1</sup> 1. The Oriental Liturgy—which includes the liturgy of S. James and the Byzantine.
2. The Alexandrian—or liturgy of S. Mark.
3. The Roman—or liturgy of S. Peter.
4. The Gallican.
5. The Nestorian.

hymn from Isaiah vi., 'Holy, Holy, Holy.' All the worshippers exchanged 'the kiss of peace,' men with men, and women with women, and partook of the consecrated bread and cup; and some form of thanksgiving, probably a psalm, no doubt followed.

Ceremonial developed rapidly in the early ages of the Church. Symbolism is a natural method of religious expression, and there were both precedents in Judaism, and examples which may have had some influence, in the various heathen cults. From the very first, Christians had no use for a bare and merely intellectual style of worship. Even the 'many lights' which S. Luke specially notes at the apostolic Eucharist at Troas (Acts xx.) were probably not only for the purpose of giving light (why mention them if that were all?), but were intended to express joy and a festal gathering. The sign of the Cross is of very early origin, and was not merely used in prayer and worship, but as a symbolical pass-word by which one Christian knew another, and as a visible consecration of every action of life. Incense appears in Christian worship at a fairly early date.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of the use of distinctive vestments at the Eucharist is still a disputed and obscure problem. Vestments, which bear a family resemblance in spite of their variations, have been used throughout the Christian Church for many centuries. It has been supposed by some that these were suggested by the dress of the Jewish high-priest, by others that they were intended to represent the garments of Christ, or to be symbolical of the events of the Passion. At present the accepted though somewhat prosaic theory is that they are simply a survival of the official dress, or even of only the ordinary 'best clothes' of the society of the later Roman Empire. The earliest allusions to the dress for celebrating the Eucharist seem to imply merely the best and cleanest ordinary garments. On the other hand, the natural and proper feeling which prompted this led in fairly early times to the use of more splendid garments, usually of

<sup>1</sup> It was probably used at Rome in the fourth century. See *Liber Pontificalis* (Life of Sylvester).



white, though Constantine is said by Theodoret (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 23) to have given to Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, a 'sacred garment' of gold thread.

Whatever uncertainty may surround the liturgical development of early days, there can be no doubt of the importance of the Eucharist, and the powerful influence of the Eucharistic service in holding together the Christian body. It was the centre of the common life of the Church. Without question it was the one characteristic act of worship on the Lord's Day. It preserved the mysterious and joyous sense of Divine Presence and Divine union; making the Christian feel that for him all things had become new, that he was in possession of secrets hidden from the world, and for which he could count the world well lost. Similarly, the Eucharist was a power equally great in maintaining the one faith. The words of institution themselves enshrine the central Christian beliefs in the Incarnation and the Atonement. And the whole progress of the ancient liturgies kept in a vivid manner before the eyes and minds of the worshippers the priestly intercession of Christ, His enduring sacrifice, His present gifts of grace, and the common hope of the resurrection of the body and the life eternal.

A still more obscure subject is that of the Agapé ('Love'), the common meal in which early Christians joined. At first there appears to have been some confusion between this and the Eucharist, which at Corinth led to scandals severely rebuked by S. Paul (1 Cor. xi.). But a few years later the distinction was clearly drawn, and the Agapé was placed after the Eucharist. But it early fell into disuse, though curious parallels to it may be noted in the 'pain béni' of the French Church, and the attempts of the Methodists to restore it, in their 'love-feasts.'

**The Agapé.**

The continuance of any society is impossible without order and rule, and to ensure these there must of necessity be recognised officers. One of the most interesting questions in the early history of the Church is the origin and development of her official ministry; an institution which must have been one of the most

**The Ministry of the Church.**

powerful factors, humanly speaking, in maintaining unity and steadfastness.

The problem has been sadly complicated by controversy ; but it is perhaps not so difficult as it has often been made to appear by party-spirit, and by lack of historical sense, or even of common sense. To begin with, it is unquestionable that from the time that fuller information comes to hand, *i.e.* from the end of the second or beginning of the third century, we find an official ministry established universally in the Church, responsible not only for teaching, presiding at acts of worship, and administering sacraments, but also for government and discipline. These officials do not hold office by heredity (like the Jewish priests), or by mere popular election ; nor merely because of their personal eminence. They are definitely set apart for it by Ordination ; the laying on of hands by other already existing officials, with prayer for the spiritual gift which is held necessary for the due performance of their office. They are understood in this way to derive their power from above and not from beneath, and to be in direct and continuous succession from the Apostles. Moreover three ranks or orders of this ministry are everywhere recognised, those of episcopus or bishop, presbyter or elder, and deacon. The bishop is regarded as supreme, and as the one really responsible ruler of the Christian flock committed to him. Presbyters and deacons are his deputies. The bishop in his own sphere is the normal unit of Church organisation. He is the direct representative of the Apostles and of Christ. He alone has the power to ordain to any of the orders of ministry.

This ministry of the three orders, in which the apostolic office was believed to be continuously handed on and exercised, has been in possession since the third century at the latest. How far can its origin be traced in the earliest period of the Church's history ? Clearly the Apostles believed themselves and were acknowledged to be the divinely appointed teachers and rulers of the Church. But there would naturally be almost from the first some devolution of office. Even if Christ Himself had left behind no instructions on this matter, precedents would be readily suggested from the

**Evidence  
of N. T.**

Old Testament, *e.g.* from the appointment of subordinate officials by Moses in the wilderness, or that of the seventy elders (Exod. xviii. ; Num. xi.).

The first recorded step in this devolution is the appointment of the Seven (Acts vi.). These men were by command of the Apostles chosen by the general body of Christians, but received their office by the hands and prayer of the Apostles. Their work was primarily administrative, to ensure the right distribution of the alms of the Church, but it seems also to have included authority to preach and baptize (Acts vi.; viii.).

Later in the Acts we meet with another class of officials, called by a double name, 'presbyters,' *i.e.* 'elders,' or 'episcopi'; the first derived from the well-known officers of the Jewish synagogue; the second implying general 'oversight,' from Gentile civil officials (cp. Acts xi. 30; xiv. 23; xx. 17, 28). No explanation of this office is given; S. Luke evidently assumes it to be well known to his readers. These elder-episcopi appear in the New Testament both as forming a ruling and consultative body in conjunction with the Apostles (Acts xv.), and as put in charge of Christian congregations, whether as a body or as individuals (Phil. i. 1; Col. iv. 17). They become very prominent in the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Tim. and Titus), where their qualifications and duties are described. Some, but not apparently all of them, preached and taught (1 Tim. v. 17); all of them had to some extent authority to rule. It has been conjectured with much probability that one function common to all of the elder-episcopi was, in the absence of the Apostles, to preside at and consecrate the Eucharist, 'the breaking of the bread.' This Sacrament was so intimately bound up with the very existence of a Christian congregation that it seems only natural that its ministration should have been from the first safe-guarded, and committed only to duly authorised persons.

In conjunction with the elder-episcopi appear the 'deacons,' a subordinate office, which the Church of later days generally assumed to be the same as that of the Seven already described.

Thus the New Testament presents us with a system of Church government through the Apostles and officials appointed by them;

and, indeed, with something analogous at first sight to the three orders. The apostle seems to be in the place of the bishop of later days; the elder-episcopi naturally suggest the second order, that of the presbyter or priest; the deacons are clearly the third order.

But the crucial question is this. Did the supreme office of the Apostles end with themselves; or did they take any steps **Episcopacy** to perpetuate it, as distinct from and superior to **in N. T.** that of the elder-episcopus? If so we have clearly the origin of the later 'bishop.' If not, then the primitive form of Church government after the death of the Apostles was simply that of the elder-episcopi and the deacons. The bishop must have been only a development for convenience' sake out of the elder. He was merely a ruling elder, and there was no real distinction in office. That is the Presbyterian contention, and it appeals to the evident identity of elder and episcopus in the New Testament and in the earliest Christian writings, and also to the fact that no bishop is mentioned at some Church centres, *e.g.* in the letter of S. Clement to the Corinthians.

But, on the other hand, the universal belief and practice of the later Church is strong presumptive evidence that there were from the first three orders and not merely two, in spite of the vagueness of the titles, and that the Apostles intended this. In the New Testament itself it is clear that the title 'Apostle' was extended to more than the original Twelve. It was not only claimed by S. Paul on the ground of a direct Divine mission: it was borne by men like S. Barnabas who were pioneers in missionary work, or like S. James who appears as the head of the Church in Jerusalem. Again, both Timothy and Titus appear in Ephesus and Crete as taking the place of an Apostle, with full power of rule and administration, and with authority to ordain elders and deacons. In their office we have something very closely corresponding to that of a later bishop. In these cases the Apostles clearly appointed men to an office corresponding to their own, and with authority over the elders and deacons. It may be that this apostolic precedent developed with great rapidity (as did other Church ordinances) after the death of

the Apostles. As early perhaps as 107 the letters of S Ignatius (p. 68) assume without any question that the three orders exist and are distinct. The bishop to Ignatius is the supreme representative of Christ and the centre of Church unity: the elder and the deacon have no status apart from him.

But how are we to account for the fact that the same official is described both as 'elder' and 'episcopus'? There are two considerations that help to understand this. First, the Apostles during their lifetime must have overshadowed every other sort of official. In the narrow limits of the New Testament, with its merely incidental references to Church order, we could scarcely expect to see clearly defined any permanent organisation capable of acting apart from the Apostles. Secondly, institutions invariably precede terminology. Things come before names. It was natural that in the apostolic age titles of office should be used somewhat loosely. The Apostles speak of themselves as 'elders,' and even as 'deacons.' The elder might naturally be called 'episcopus' from the point of view of his own congregation.

If due allowance is made for these peculiar conditions of the time, it does not seem unreasonable to conclude, in view of later developments, that the Apostles not only delegated some of their powers to subordinate officials (the elder-episcopi and the deacons), but that they really laid the foundation of the three orders; and that the apostolic representative, the bishop, existed as distinct from and superior to the elder, before his office had a fixed and exclusive title. As the Apostles passed away the bishop rapidly became recognised as their successor, endowed with their authority of teaching and ruling and 'laying on of hands.' The concluding steps would be (1) the stereotyping of the title; (2) the universal extension of the episcopate over the Church; (3) the settling of the bishop in a defined sphere or diocese.

Such an origin and development of the bishop's office seems to harmonise best with all the facts. It explains as nothing else can the remarkable unanimity of the later Church as to the official ministry and its three orders. And it is in

accordance with the weighty statement of S. Clement of Rome in the first century (p. 54): 'Our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. Therefore, having received perfect foreknowledge, they established the aforesaid (elder episcopi and deacons), and afterwards they gave an injunction, so that in case of death other approved men might in succession receive their ministration.' He goes on to speak of ministers 'appointed either by them (*i.e.* the Apostles), or by other men of reputation with the consent of the whole Church.' S. Clement plainly believed that there is a ministry of regular succession appointed by the Apostles, and though he calls the same officer both 'elder' and 'episcopus,' his 'other men of reputation' seem practically to be what the later Church called exclusively 'episcopi,' or bishops. Another piece of evidence that S. Clement, despite the looseness of his terminology, recognised three orders is that he quotes as an Old Testament analogy to the Christian ministry the three offices of high-priest, priest, and levite.

May we not fairly conclude (1) that the official ministry given ordination is of apostolic origin, and (2) that episcopacy as the later Church knew it was not a mere human development out of the office of the elder-episcopus, but was part of the original apostolic institution?

Two other objections remain to be considered: the first, against the conclusion just stated that elder and bishop have always been in essence distinct orders; the second, against the more fundamental belief that ordination by the laying on of hands to an official ministry was the rule in the earliest times.

S. Jerome (*Comm.* on Titus i.) states that bishop and elder were originally the same office; and further (*Ep.* cxlvi.) that for some two hundred years the presbyters of Alexandria simply elected one of their number to be bishop apparently without any further consecration: But this latter statement is entirely unsupported by other writers, and it is difficult to harmonise with the words of eminent Alexandrine

like Origen and S. Athanasius. Moreover, S. Jerome makes it with a distinct animus ; he was anxious to exalt the presbyterate and show its importance, as a counterblast to the arrogance of the deacons of Rome (p. 270). If it is historically true, it may only mean that the presbyters of Alexandria were really bishops, and had been so ordained on the understanding that any one of them might be called upon by his brethren to assume the supreme office. In any case such an exception to the universal rule makes that universality all the more remarkable.

The other objection is concerned with what some German scholars have styled 'the charismatic ministry.' It is urged that side by side with the official ministry there existed also the freer ministry exercised by men of eminent spiritual gifts, who were recognised as lawful ministers in the Church without any special ordination, and were allowed to celebrate the Eucharist. It is pointed out that S. Paul in his list of spiritual gifts does not speak of apostles, elders, and deacons, but of 'apostles, prophets, teachers,' etc. But it is by no means clear that he is speaking of *offices* ; his words refer rather to 'gifts,' which vary with the individual. Again, the celebration of the Eucharist appears in 1 Cor. xiv. to be part of the office of the 'prophet' ; and in the Didaché (p. 62) the 'prophet' is recognised as a lawful celebrant. It is indeed quite possible that in some cases individual gifts (*charismata*), especially in the way of prophecy, may in the apostolic age have been recognised as carrying with them the right to minister in the congregation. But there is really very little evidence for this, apart from the Didaché (which is of doubtful value) : and in any case such a ministry disappeared rapidly, and gave place to the regularly ordained ministry.

But the whole conception of a 'charismatic ministry' is probably based on a misconception. The primitive Church assumed that a 'charisma,' or special spiritual gift, was required for any sort of office or work in the Church. The bishop, presbyter, or deacon equally required a 'charisma' with the prophet or teacher. Nor was the gift of prophecy at first regarded as constituting any sort of distinct class or order. Prophecy might

be the endowment of any one in the Church, from the Apostles downwards.

As a matter of history there are *no* definite cases of individuals being recognised as lawful ministers without the laying on of the hands of an Apostle, or of one commissioned by an Apostle, or in succession to an Apostle. On the contrary, there are very definite instances, such as those of Colluthus and Aerius in the fourth century, where the ordination by an elder instead of a bishop was declared by the Church to be null and void.

The existence of this ordered system of Church government carried with it from the first a strict and regular discipline, which again tended to preserve unity and stability. **Church discipline.** Candidates for Baptism were kept for a long time under instruction and probation, during which they were known as 'catechumens.' If after Baptism they failed in their new obligations either by a lapse into idolatry, or by any grave moral offence, they were suspended for a time from Christian privileges and especially from Holy Communion. Nor could they be restored until they had professed penitence, performed penance, and received absolution. At first this took place publicly; but in later days private confession and absolution became the recognised way of return to communion with the Church. But in either case it was probably the regular officials of the Church who would both pronounce sentence, and remove it after confession and penance; thus exercising the power given by the Lord to His Apostles of 'remitting and retaining.'<sup>1</sup> The severest penalty the Church could inflict was total excommunication. The impenitent sinner was thus regarded as being delivered to Satan (1 Cor. v. 3-5), *i.e.* sent back into the world of darkness and evil from which his baptism had set him free.

<sup>1</sup> From this use of confession and absolution was developed the universal use in the later Church of the 'sacrament of penance,' as a preparation for Holy Communion. Originally intended only as the means of restoration for those under penance, it gradually became imposed as of obligation upon all members of the Church.



## QUESTIONS.

1. What were the internal perils of the Church after the death of the Apostles?
2. What safeguards against these were developed?
3. What are the characteristics of the four Gospels?
4. Trace briefly the formation of the Canon of the New Testament.
5. What is the origin of the Creeds?
6. What was the distinctive act of worship of the Church? Describe its main features.
7. How does the official ministry of the Church appear in the N. T.?
8. What difficulties arise in a comparison between this and its later development?
9. What is the probable history of the development of the Three Orders?
10. Sketch the disciplinary system of the primitive Church.

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The Problem of the Gospels :  
*Gospels* in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.  
 Westcott. *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*.  
 J. A. Robinson. *The Study of the Gospels* (useful for beginners).  
 M. Jones. *The New Testament in the Twentieth Century*.
2. The Formation of the N. T. Canon :  
 Westcott. *Canon of the New Testament*.  
*New Testament Canon* in Hastings' *Dictionary*.
3. The nature and development of the Christian Ministry :  
 Lightfoot. *Philippians*, Dissertation i.  
 Gore. *The Church and the Ministry* (ed. by Turner, 1919).  
 Whitham. *Holy Orders*, in *Oxford Library of Practical Theology*.  
 Swete. *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry* (recent and most valuable).
4. The History of the Creeds :  
*Creed* in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.  
 Gibson. *The Three Creeds*.  
 Swete. *The Apostles' Creed*.
5. The Liturgical Worship of the Church :  
 Duchesne (S.P.C.K.). *Christian Worship*.  
 Brightman. *Liturgies, Eastern and Western*.

## CHAPTER IV. EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

SEVERAL important Christian writings have survived, which with more or less certainty have been attributed to the first century, and which were held in such esteem that they were for a time on the margin of the New Testament Canon.

*The Epistle of S. Clement to the Corinthians.* This letter is written in the name of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth. The factious spirit which S. Paul had condemned (1 Cor. i., etc.) had broken out again and produced a serious quarrel, in which several presbyters had been wrongfully expelled. The letter in a tone of some authority exhorts the Corinthians to peace and to the restoration of the presbyters. Early and universal tradition says that the actual writer was S. Clement, who was Bishop of Rome in the last years of the century. Hence the epistle is usually dated about 95 A.D. But it is also argued that the date may be earlier, even before 70 A.D., for apparently the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing. Possibly Clement wrote it before he was made bishop, and when he was acting as a sort of secretary to the Roman Church.<sup>1</sup>

The epistle must have been widely read in the Church services, and not merely at Corinth; for it is included in one great MS. of the New Testament (in the British Museum—Codex A—Alexandrian of the fifth century). This was for long the only ancient copy of the epistle known, and the ending is defective. In 1875 the whole epistle was discovered in an eleventh century MS.

The epistle is lengthy and much more inclined to be 'wordy' than the New Testament epistles; but it is full of interest. The writer quotes largely from the Old Testament (LXX version);

<sup>1</sup> See Edmundson, *Bampton Lectures*, viii., and cp. *Eus.* iv. 23, where the letter is said to have been written 'through Clement.'

seldom directly from the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> But he was evidently well acquainted with the Epistle to the Hebrews, and uses much of its language and its thoughts. He also refers to 'the Epistle of blessed Paul the apostle—which he wrote first unto you at the beginning of the Gospel.' He alludes to the martyrdom of S. Peter and S. Paul as belonging to 'our generation'; and also to the (Neronian) persecution, in which suffered 'a vast multitude of the elect, who, through many indignities and tortures, set a brave example among ourselves.'

The contents may be briefly summarised. The writer speaks of the piety and zeal of the Corinthian Church, and contrasts with it their present strife. He warns them from Scripture, and from the recent persecutions, of the awful effects of jealousy and envy. (Probably it was Jewish intrigues that stirred up the Neronian persecution and the final attacks on S. Peter and S. Paul.) He confronts them with the great examples of Old Testament faith and repentance, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot, David, and the prophets, and especially with the lowliness of Christ Himself (quoting Isa. liii.). Then he appeals to the order and harmony of nature, the heavenly bodies and the seasons. All these are incentives, he says, to put away strife, to repent and return to peace and unity and holiness. He reminds them of the certainty of judgment and the resurrection. Further illustrations of the importance of unity and discipline he finds in the example of the Roman armies, and (like S. Paul) in the unity and subordination of the different members of the body.

**Contents.**

Coming to matters of Church order, he quotes the order of the Old Testament ritual, the Temple and the sacrifices and the ranks of the priesthood. Then (as already described, p. 50) he traces the ministry of the Church to the inspired institution of the Apostles themselves. It was they who not only appointed the first 'bishops and deacons,' but made provision for the future of the Church that these offices should continue.

<sup>1</sup> Twice from the Lord's words: a passage very similar to S. Luke vi. 35-38, and a somewhat free quotation of S. Mark ix. 42 (parallel in S. Matt. xviii. and S. Luke xvii.); he also refers to parable of the Sower.

Then comes some plain speaking. 'It is disgraceful, beloved, and too disgraceful, and unworthy of the life in Christ, to hear that the most stedfast and ancient Corinthian Church, because of one or two individuals, is in revolt against her presbyters.' He prefers indeed to make appeal to the highest of all principles, Christian love, of which, like S. Paul (1 Cor. xiii.), he says many noble and beautiful things. But there is a distinct note of severity in the epistle. 'If certain persons are disobedient to the things spoken by us, let them know that they will fetter themselves in transgression and no small peril.' The letter was sent by the hand of three envoys who are mentioned by name. There is no record of its effect, but apparently it had great weight, and more than half a century afterwards it is referred to in a letter of Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, in writing to Rome (Eus. iv. 23).

In spite of its prolixity and superabundance of quotations, the letter is weighty, and breathes the spirit of deep piety and largeness of mind. It is worthy of the Roman Church, and the influence of the imperial atmosphere is not wanting in it. The writer clearly looks upon the discipline of the Christian society as divinely ordered, and its ministry as appointed from above. And the Old Testament analogies he quotes, and the language he uses of the ministry, show also that he considered the Christian ministry as a *priestly* office. 'It will be no small sin to us if we cast out those who have without blame and holily offered the gifts of the bishop's office.'

Clement plainly alludes to the faith in the Trinity, as, for example, in the words, 'As God liveth, and the Lord Jesus Christ liveth, and the Holy Spirit, who are the faith and the hope of the elect.' Such words are practically a summary of the Creed. But perhaps the most beautiful feature of the letter is the reverence and devotion which the writer constantly shows to the Saviour Himself. He is 'the guardian and helper of our weakness,' the 'high-priest and guardian of our souls,' 'in love He took us unto Himself. He gave His blood for us by the will of God, and His flesh for our flesh, and His life for our lives.' And the recently recovered ending of the letter contains what

is perhaps a quotation from, or an adaptation of the Eucharistic prayer of the liturgy, giving thanks to the Father for creation and redemption, and interceding in Christ's name for all the needs of His people.

The so-called *Second Epistle of S. Clement* was long known only as a fragment ; but the full text was recovered in the same MS. as that of the First Epistle. It was then at once seen to be a sermon, not a letter, and in fact, the first Christian sermon extant after the New Testament. Lightfoot assigns it to the period A.D. 120-140. The sermon is spoken of as 'read,' and apparently its author was a presbyter, who preached it from manuscript in the Church service, after the reading of the Scriptures—('after the God of truth hath been heard')—the place for the sermon both in ancient and modern times. It contains frequent quotations from New Testament as well as Old Testament, and also two unrecorded sayings of Christ. Its purpose is twofold, to give glory to Christ, who is spoken of in words of glowing affection and gratitude, and to exhort the congregation to *repentance*. Already the Church was in danger of a mere external profession of Christianity, which thought lightly of sin, and temporised with the world. The congregation, addressed as 'brothers and sisters,' are warned not merely to give heed while they are being 'admonished by the presbyters,' but to remember after they get home, and also to come to church more frequently than they do. And repentance is to be shown by good works. 'Fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving better than both.'

The moral dangers of the Church, the failure to maintain a high standard of life, the tendency to fall away to the level of the heathen society around them, and consequently to deny Christ when persecution came, seem to have been much in the mind of the teachers of the second generation of Christians. They inspired one of the most remarkable and most popular books of the primitive Church, *The Shepherd*. This was written by one Hermas, who is said in the Muratorian fragment to have been a brother of Pope Pius of Rome (140-155). It has, however, been placed considerably

2 S. Clement.

The  
Shepherd of  
Hermas.

earlier by some scholars,<sup>1</sup> especially as it alludes to a Clement, who may have been the author of the epistle. *The Shepherd* has been compared to *Pilgrim's Progress*; perhaps a better comparison would be to *Piers Plowman*. Hermas speaks in his own person, and describes a series of 'visions' which he has received in the neighbourhood of Rome. The burden of the book is the need and value of *repentance* for sins committed after baptism. It begins with the story of a sinful thought conceived by Hermas himself. The book is divided into three parts—(1) a series of five visions, in which Hermas is convinced of his sin, repents, and is forgiven. He converses with the Church, which appears to him in the form of a very aged woman in glittering robes, seated on a white throne of snowy wool. He is told, in answer to his question, that she appears very old 'because she was created before all things, and for her sake the world was made.' In subsequent visions she appears to grow younger and more beautiful, because repentance brings the renewal of youth. He is also shown the Church under another figure. A great tower is being built up four square, founded upon the waters (of baptism). The builders are angels. Out of a vast number of stones some, being cracked, mildewed, or broken, are rejected and some are chosen, while others in various ways are reserved—as, for example, certain round stones, which are explained as being the rich, who must be cut square, by casting away their riches, before they can fit into the tower.

Hermas is then handed over to one who appears in the form of a shepherd, and is described as 'the Angel of Repentance.'

**The Com-** The second part of the book consists of twelve **mandments.** *commandments* given by this shepherd. (1) The faith and fear of God. (2) Simplicity in speech, in work, and in almsgiving. (3) The love of truth. (4) Purity: divorce is permitted, but not re-marriage after divorce, because the guilty partner, if penitent, must be taken back. Under this head, too,

<sup>1</sup> Edmundson, *Bampton Lectures*, viii., considers that it must have been written well within the first century, and that the Muratorian fragment is wrong—having perhaps confused the writer with one 'Pastor' ('Shepherd') who was also a brother of Pope Pius.

it is laid down that only one repentance and restoration is allowed to Christians who sin grievously. (5) Longsuffering. (6) Resistance to temptation and decision for righteousness. (7) Fear of God. (8) Temperance. (9) The putting away of a *doubtful mind*. This, like the following precept, is one of the characteristic lessons of the shepherd. Doublemindedness (cp. S. Jas. i. and Bunyan's 'Mr. Facing-both-ways') 'fails in all the works which it doeth.'

(10) The putting away of *sorrow*—'the sister of doubtful-mindedness and anger'—'most fatal to the servants of God.' This is probably the most original contribution which Hermas makes to Christian ethics. Sorrow, he says, crushes out the Holy Spirit, except that sorrow for sin which brings repentance. But even that must give place to a habit of cheerfulness; 'for the sad man is always committing sin,' and his prayer is never able to ascend to the throne of God. Sadness in prayer is like vinegar mixed with wine, which spoils it. 'Therefore cleanse thyself from this wicked sadness, clothe thyself with cheerfulness, thou shalt live unto God.'

(11) Beware of false prophets, who prophesy to men for money, only to please them, and whose life is not in accordance with the Holy Spirit.

(12) Conquer evil desires by good ones.

The third part consists of ten *Parables*, which develop more elaborately the thoughts contained in the first part, of the different elements in the visible Church, the saints **The Parables** who persevere, the impenitent sinners who are **of Hermas**. finally rejected, and the middle class, to whom the shepherd's warnings are principally directed, who are in various ways imperfect, and in danger of falling away altogether, but may still be restored by repentance.

One parable describes the Church under the figure of a great willow tree, from which a multitude are given branches by an angel. These branches are afterwards given back. The most of them are still green (Hermas regards the majority of the Church as still living in grace); some even have sprouted and borne fruit; but other recipients have their branches withered

wholly or in part ; some of those Hermas is told have still hope of repentance, but others are hopeless and apostate. The parable of the building of the tower also reappears in a more elaborate form. The tower when built is inspected by its lord ; he examines each separate stone, and finds some decayed or faulty, which are taken out. Of these some will be entirely rejected, but others may be repaired and still fitted into the masonry.

Hermas very rarely quotes the Scriptures, but his work is full of imagery and phrases derived from Scripture. Nor does he allude much to Church ordinances. While his theme is repentance, he says nothing of confession and absolution, though it would be unsafe to deduce from this that there was not some recognised method of penance and restoration within the Church of his time. He alludes however to ecclesiastical fasts, called 'stations,' and these are disparaged, not in themselves, but because of the unprofitable way in which they are kept. First he is told by the shepherd (in the spirit of Isa. lviii. 3-11) that true fasting means purity of heart and life ; and then that on a fast day he must take only bread and water, and give what is thereby saved to the widow, the orphan, and the poor.

Hermas was not a theologian, and some of his doctrinal statements are very loosely expressed. He apparently even confuses **Theology of Hermas.** the Son and the Holy Spirit. But it is not safe to base any conclusion on this as to real laxity of belief. Theology had not yet arrived at an exact terminology and precision of statement. When Hermas speaks of the Holy Spirit as becoming incarnate, he probably only means to distinguish between the spiritual nature of the Divine Son and His incarnate life. It is clear that Hermas was not regarded as unorthodox ; for though his statements were caught hold of by the Arians in later days, his book was not only a great favourite in the early Church, but specially recommended to catechumens. Hermas was concerned not with the teaching of doctrine, but with the maintenance of a high moral standard in the Church in a time of great danger when many Christians were tempted to be gloomy, half-hearted, and morally lax.



The so-called *Epistle of Barnabas* probably belongs to the first century. It is not a work of great value. Its main thought is indeed of high importance, the truth that the **Barnabas.** Christian Church is the real inheritor of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Jews, with whom the writer displays a great lack of sympathy, have entirely misinterpreted them, as is seen in the fact that their Temple has been destroyed. But to illustrate this he interprets the Old Testament in a strange and fantastic manner, as *e.g.* the ordinance of the Sabbath means, he says, not the hallowing of the seventh day, but of the thousand years of Christ, which come after the six thousand years which finish the period of the first creation. In the same mystical way he interprets the ordinances of the sacrifices, of circumcision, of the distinction of clean and unclean meats. Like the later Alexandrian scholars (p. 137) he fails to understand the historical value of the Old Testament ordinances as part of the gradual Divine education of the people of God. The treatise thus stands on an entirely lower level than the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is concerned really with the same subject, and is perhaps the genuine work of S. Barnabas.

The greatest historical problem of this early Christian literature is the date and position of the little treatise called the *Didaché*, or 'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles to the **The Didaché.** Nations.' It was known in antiquity, and given to catechumens to read: Eusebius speaks of it as belonging to the class of writings rejected as uncanonical. It was lost for many centuries, but rediscovered in the same MS. which gave the full text of S. Clement. It consists of two parts. The first is a moral treatise describing the 'two ways' of life and of death. The idea clearly proceeds from the Sermon on the Mount, which is quoted. (Cp. also the concluding part of the Epistle of Barnabas.) It is a warning to Christians against heathen sins, and an exhortation to Christian unity and charity. The second part is exceedingly interesting, as it gives instructions concerning the administration of baptism, fasting, prayer, the Eucharist, and the treatment of 'apostles and prophets.'

Baptism by affusion, pouring water thrice on the head, is

permitted in case of necessity—immersion being the normal practice. The Lord's Prayer is to be used three times a day, and Wednesday and Friday to be observed as fasts. The Eucharist is to be celebrated on 'the Lord's own day,' preceded by confession of sins. It is called a 'sacrifice,' and identified with the 'pure offering' of Mal. i. 11; and very beautiful forms of Eucharistic blessing and thanksgiving are given. No one who is not baptized is to partake of it, nor those who are not reconciled with their brethren.

A regular ministry of 'bishops and deacons' is spoken of, but evidently a ministry exercised by 'prophets' was still recognised. Prophets may use what form of Eucharistic thanksgiving they wish. But a false prophet or apostle is to be known by his life, and by his asking for money. Prophets are to receive food and to be given the first fruits of one's wealth and stores. But a travelling apostle or prophet, if he asks for hospitality for more than two days, is a false prophet; so too is he false if he, under pretence of Divine inspiration, asks for elaborate entertainment or for silver for himself. Evidently the order of prophets, though still recognised and respected, was on the wane. It gave too much opening to itinerant impostors and self-seekers. Thus the Didaché, whatever its date, is an interesting illustration of the reasons why the prophetic ministry gave place entirely to the official ministry of 'order.' Christians were evidently also liable to be imposed upon by travellers who tried to get entertainment as fellow-believers. They are told to entertain such for a day or two if necessary, but those who wish to stay longer must work for their bread. Those who wish to live in idleness are 'making merchandise of Christ.'

The Didaché has been dated variously from the first century to the fourth. The primitive character of its instructions and the existence of the 'prophets' point to an early date. Those who refer it to later times consider that it may have emanated from some Jewish sect of Christians who were trying to preserve the customs of the first days of the Church. It has been well described as 'a backwater in the development of Christian thought, lying outside the main current of the literature.' (Ragg, *Church of the Apostles*, p. 291.)

## QUESTIONS.

1. What was the occasion of the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians?
2. What are its chief arguments?
3. What evidence does it contribute to the problem of the origin of the Christian ministry?
4. Describe the Second Epistle of Clement.
5. What is the purpose of the 'Shepherd' of Hermas?
6. What Christian virtue does it specially emphasise?
7. Describe the contents of the Didaché.
8. What value can be assigned to its teaching?

## SUBJECT FOR STUDY.

A study of the text of these writings:

Greek text in one volume, with English translations. *The Apostolic Fathers*. Lightfoot and Harmer.

## CHAPTER V. THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN DEFENCE

THE Roman Empire with the assassination of Domitian and the accession of Nerva (A.D. 96) entered upon its most prosperous and splendid period. Five virtuous and high-minded emperors in succession, three of whom were certainly also men of great ability, ruled the world for nearly a century (96-180). Gibbon gives his opinion that this was the period in history in which 'the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous'; and of the last two emperors, the Antonines, he thinks their united reigns were 'possibly the only period in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government.'

For the Church it was a time on the whole of growth and tolerance, though broken by martyrdoms, and ending in a bitter burst of persecution. And it was the age in which we first find the Church breaking her secrecy, and uttering formal protests to the imperial government against the ban placed upon her.

The aged and gentle *Nerva* reigned for less than a year and a half (96-98). No definite policy as regards the Church can be assigned to him. He endeavoured to reverse the tyrannical acts of his predecessor, and among the sentences he annulled tradition (p. 30) places that of S. John exiled to Patmos.

Nerva was succeeded, at his own choice, by one who had no claim of family to the throne, the Spaniard *Trajan* (98-117), the most distinguished of the imperial generals. He was a brilliant soldier and able administrator; the first after Augustus who materially advanced the frontiers of the Empire. His conquest of Dacia (the modern Rumania) is commemorated in the reliefs of the great column (erected 113) which still stands almost intact in Rome in the centre of the

'Forum of Trajan.' His name became proverbial with the Romans for goodness. 'Mayest thou be more prosperous than Augustus, and better than Trajan,' was the highest good wish that one man could give to another. Medieval legend told how Pope Gregory I., touched by the story of the Emperor's kindness to a widow's appeal, prayed for his soul until it was translated from hell to heaven, where Dante places him (*Par.* xx. ; cp. *Purg.* x.).

'Now doth he know  
How dear it costeth not to follow Christ :  
Both from experience of this pleasant life,  
And of its opposite.'

From Trajan came the first definite imperial regulation with regard to the Christian Church. Hitherto Christianity had certainly not been a *religio licita*, and the mere profession of Christ had been considered a capital crime, but there was no imperial statute constituting it such. Its proscription was a matter of custom and precedent, dating back to the days of Nero.

Matters came to a head in the famous correspondence between the Emperor and the distinguished scholar Pliny the younger, who was governor of Bithynia some time between Pliny's the years 103 and 113. Pliny wrote to the Emperor **letter.** to ask for guidance as to procedure in the case of those accused of being Christians. He states that Christianity is widely spread, and attracts a great number of all ages and ranks ; it affects the country districts as well as the towns ; the temples of the gods have been almost deserted, and the market for fodder for the sacrificial animals has fallen very low. What is he to do ? He has no experience, and has never been present at the trials of Christians ; he is not certain whether they are to be executed for the mere profession of the name of Christ, or for the ' crimes ' which are intimately connected with it. His own procedure hitherto, he says, has been to ask the accused three times whether he were a Christian or not, warning him of the consequences ; if he persisted he was ordered to execution, or if he was a Roman citizen he was sent to Rome to be judged. Matters had become more serious through anonymous accusations

involving a large number of persons. Some of these denied they had ever been Christians ; others were ready to renounce Christ and sacrifice to the gods and the Emperor. What is to be done in these latter cases ?

The most interesting part of Pliny's letter to us is what he says he has discovered by examining prisoners, as to the practices of Christians. They told him that their crime was no more than this. They had been accustomed on a fixed day to meet before dawn and to recite by turns a hymn addressed to Christ as a God ; they bound themselves by a ' sacramentum,' not indeed to commit any crime, but to abstain from theft or robbery or adultery, not to break faith, nor to repudiate a debt. After this was done it was their custom to depart, and again to assemble to take food, but food of an ordinary and innocent kind ; and even this they had given up after Pliny had published Trajan's edict forbidding clubs.

This was all that Pliny had been able to discover, even though he had put to the torture two women-servants whom the Christians called ' ministræ ' (no doubt, deaconesses). But reading between the lines, it discloses a good deal. ' Sacramentum ' may have meant to Pliny merely an ' oath,' or some solemn religious rite. There seems little doubt, however, that it was for the Christians a veiled allusion to their ' mystery,' the Eucharist. The fixed day on which it was celebrated was, no doubt, Sunday ; the time was no longer night, but in the early morning, preceded by antiphonal psalmody ; possibly the Commandments were recited, but at any rate Christians were solemnly admonished not to commit any sin unworthy of Christ. Then later in the day followed the Agapé or love-feast, now definitely separated from the Eucharist, and which Christians had been willing to discontinue, to avoid as far as possible falling under the Emperor's edict.

The reply of Trajan is terse and definite ; but clearly of the nature of a compromise between the common sense of a ruler who felt that there was not much danger in Christianity, and the necessity, as he thought, of maintaining the precedents set by previous Emperors.

No fixed rule, says Trajan, can be laid down to suit all cases. Christians are not to be sought out, but if accused and convicted they must be punished. Those who recant and sacrifice must be acquitted. Anonymous charges are to be ignored. They form a very bad precedent and are an anachronism (alluding to the evil of 'informers' under some previous Emperors).

This letter or *rescriptum* of the Emperor would have the force of an imperial law. Christianity is now clearly a crime in itself, but systematic persecution is discouraged—a somewhat illogical piece of state-craft. The rescript seems to have had some effect in checking official persecution. The great danger for Christians now lay in the hatred and suspicion of the heathen populace, excited by Jews, heathen priests, or those whose livelihood was threatened by the spread of Christianity. Christians accused definitely before a magistrate, and confessing Christ, could hardly escape sentence of death.

One most eminent Christian suffered martyrdom under Trajan, though the date and circumstances are somewhat uncertain. This was Ignatius, surnamed Theophoros S. Ignatius. (bearer of God), Bishop of Antioch. Scarcely anything is known of his early life; some fragments of tradition alone have been preserved, as, for example, that he was one of the little children whom our Lord blessed, that he had learned the faith from the Apostles themselves, and had been placed in the bishopric of Antioch, in succession to Euodius, by S. Peter himself. He is said to have been accused by the populace of Antioch of having caused an earthquake, and brought before the Emperor himself while he was staying at Antioch. The bishop boldly confessed his faith, and explained his name, Theophoros, by saying that he carried the Crucified within his heart. Trajan sentenced him to be sent to Rome and thrown to the lions in the Colosseum. The martyr publicly thanked God for the sentence, which, he said, 'bound him to the Apostle Paul with bonds of iron.' The date of this is variously estimated between 107 and 117. Trajan was in Antioch in 114; but opinion now inclines to the earlier date.

So far, however, all is legendary, but the journey to Rome brings the martyr into full historical view. It illustrates also the remarkable way in which different centres of the Church communicated with one another, and how easily and constantly messages and delegates passed between them. Ignatius, with two fellow-prisoners, was conducted from Antioch *via* Philadelphia to Smyrna, and thence to Troas, by a guard of ten soldiers, whom he himself describes as 'ten leopards who only grow worse as they are kindly treated.' Apparently the Christians of Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus had expected that he would be taken along the more southern road which passed through these places. But when it was found that another route was being taken, delegates from these churches, including in each case the bishop, were sent to Smyrna to greet the martyr. He received them and sent back to each church a letter. He also at the same time despatched a letter to the Church of Rome, to prepare the Roman Christians for his martyrdom, and to beseech them not to use their influence to deliver him from death.

He was then conducted to Troas, whence he wrote three more letters, one to Philadelphia where he had stayed on the journey to Smyrna, another to Smyrna, and a third to his late host, Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna.

From Troas he was taken partly by sea and partly by land to Rome. The only other stopping place known to us on his journey is Philippi. At Rome he suffered martyrdom as he desired, being thrown to the lions in the great amphitheatre, as a spectacle to the idle crowds of Rome—the traditional date being December 20.

These seven letters, in their two groups (Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, and Philadelphia, Smyrna, Polycarp), were known to Eusebius, but, though apparently much read, are comparatively little quoted in antiquity, with the exception of that to the Romans.

A long and remarkable controversy on the subject lasted from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, but it may now be regarded as practically certain that we possess



correct copies of all the seven. The question of their authenticity had been complicated by the labours of both forgers and abbreviators. At some early date, probably not long after the time of Eusebius, some ingenious person expanded the seven letters, and wrote six more. This set, which is known as the 'Longer Recension,' became familiar to the Western Church in the later Middle Ages. But in the seventeenth century the seven genuine epistles were rediscovered, first in a Latin translation made in England in the thirteenth century, and then in Greek in a MS. found at Florence by Voss.

The matter was however again complicated by the discovery in the nineteenth century by Cureton of a still shorter set of letters in Syriac, only three (Polycarp, Ephesians, Romans), and these abbreviated. For some time these were maintained to be the original letters, the source of the seven as well as of the longer recension. But the labours of the great scholar, Bishop Lightfoot of Durham, have now pretty conclusively proved that the seven are after all the genuine ones, and that the three are only an abridgment probably made by some heretic for his own purposes. It is interesting to note the great part that English learning has played in this matter. The correct text was preserved in the Latin translation of the thirteenth century, probably made by Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln. It was Archbishop Ussher who discovered this, and used it to confound Milton and other Puritans, who for obvious reasons (as will be seen) wished to prove the whole of the Ignatian writings to be spurious. In the later seventeenth century, Bishop Pearson again vindicated the seven letters; and, lastly, it was Bishop Lightfoot who enabled the Church to feel confident that these great treasures of the age of the early martyrs are indeed authentic.

There is no mistaking the importance and the value of these seven letters. Not only are they of thrilling human interest; they throw a flood of light on the teaching, organisa-  
 tion, and tone of the Church in Asia Minor, in the  
 years immediately following the death of S. John.  
 They are quite the most valuable early Church literature after  
 the writings of the New Testament. The writer was a repre-

The teach-  
 ing of  
 S. Ignatius.

sentative Christian, and occupied the position of head of the most important Church centre of the age. Probably he had been personally acquainted with the Apostles.

What, then, is the message which Ignatius gives at the crisis of his life to the Church of East and West? The key-note of his letters is *unity*. This is not only the safeguard against false doctrine within and persecution without; it is essential to Christian loyalty to Christ. The expression 'the Catholic Church' occurs for the first time in Ignatius (*Smyr.* 8). But the epistles are full of Christ, and all that the writer has to say about Church organisation and life centres in Christ. If either circumcised or uncircumcised 'speak not concerning Jesus Christ, I look upon them as tombstones and graves of the dead, on which are inscribed only the names of men.'

The unity of the Church in Christ must carry with it unity of ministry, of sacraments, of doctrine. As to *the official ministry* the testimony of Ignatius is most significant. He has no confusion of bishop and presbyter. He speaks perfectly definitely of the three orders, bishop, presbyter, and deacon, and not as a new thing which needs explaining, but as an established and fundamental institution which only needs loyal acceptance. 'Without these (three orders)' there is not even the name of a church (*Trall.* 3). To be subject to the bishop is to be subject to Christ. No one is to do anything in the Church without the bishop (*Smyr.* 8, *Phil.* 7, *Magn.* 7, *Trall.* 3, 7). It is not lawful to baptize or celebrate the Eucharist or even hold a 'love-feast,' without the consent of the bishop (*Smyr.* 8). 'Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop, or one to whom he himself commits it.' The presbyters are the council of the bishop; to obey them is to obey the Apostles, and they are to the bishop as the strings to the harp (*Eph.* 4).

The sacraments and especially *the Eucharist* figure largely in Ignatius. The 'bread of God,' 'the medicine of immortality' (*Eph.* 20), is evidently the central feature of the life of Christians in the Church. The bread is 'the flesh of the Saviour, which flesh suffered for our sins, and which

**The Eucharist.**

the Father raised up' (*Smyr.* 7) : the cup is 'for union with His blood' (*Phil.* 4).

The doctrinal statements of Ignatius are vivid and original in expressions, but perfectly in harmony both with the New Testament and with later definitions. He speaks of **Theology of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**; the Deity of Christ is **S. Ignatius**. a constant refrain : 'Jesus Christ our God,' 'the blood of God,' are characteristic phrases. The Virgin-birth receives remarkable testimony in more than one passage. 'Hidden from the prince of this world were the virginity of Mary and her child-bearing and the death of the Lord : those mysteries of shouting (*i.e.* to be now proclaimed aloud) which were wrought in the silence of God' (*Eph.* 19). 'Jesus Christ was with the Father before the ages, and in the end was made manifest' (*Magn.* 6). 'He is the Word of the Father, proceeding forth from silence' (*Magn.* 8). 'He died for us that, believing in His death, we may escape death' (*Trall.* 2).

Ignatius uses remarkable language in describing the union of the two natures in the one person of the Saviour. 'There is one physician, fleshly and spiritual, born and unborn, God in man, true life in death, born both of Mary and of God, first passible, and then impassible, even Jesus Christ our Lord' (*Eph.* 7). (Cp. also *Polyc.* 3.) The errors against which he warns the churches are (1) the spirit of schism and faction ; (2) Judaizing ; (3) Docetism, *i.e.* the error which was to appear prominently in a few years' time in the teaching of the Gnostics, the denial of the physical reality of our Lord's flesh, and of His bodily life, death, and resurrection. 'He suffered truly, as also He raised Himself truly, not as certain unbelievers say that His sufferings were in appearance only' (*Smyr.* 6). He goes on to illustrate this by reference to the bodily appearance of the Lord after the resurrection, the touching of His body by the disciples, and His eating and drinking with them 'though spiritually united with the Father.'

The attitude of Ignatius towards the Scriptures is also full of interest. The prophets of the Old Testament hoped in Christ and pointed to Him, and are saved by Him (*Phil.* 5, 9). The

Gospel is the completion of their preaching and superior to it. He alludes apparently to a written Gospel, whose authority **Knowledge of the Scriptures.** some factious persons were trying to disparage in comparison with the ancient writings. He quotes, somewhat sparingly, from the Scriptures himself, but his whole language is simply interfused with that of S. Paul's Epistles—pointing to constant study, and almost unconscious reproduction. There are remarkable traces also of a knowledge of S. John's Gospel, *e.g.* 'the bread of God,' 'the living water,' Christ 'the Word,' and 'the Door'; 'the world' and 'the prince of this world,' in S. John's sense, and a quotation from S. John iii.

The style of Ignatius is all his own; it bears marks indeed of the hurry and tension of a journey in chains to death, but it glows and sparkles with life and zeal. There is something of the Oriental love of imagery and of piling up phrases; but there is also terseness, vigour, and epigrammatic power.

The personality of the writer comes out most brilliantly in the Epistle to the Romans. In this case alone, curiously enough, Ignatius does not mention the bishop of the church addressed; but he certainly assigns a supremacy (of 'love') to the Roman Christians, and he crowds adjective upon adjective to express his admiration for them. But he fears lest they may in their mistaken love try to rescue him from death. Ignatius is on fire for martyrdom: death will be the crown of his endeavour and the attainment to Christ and to true discipleship. 'I am God's wheat,' he says, 'and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread,'—'It is good for me to die for Jesus Christ's sake rather than to reign over the lords of the earth. Him I seek who died for us: Him I desire who rose again. The pangs of birth are upon me—hinder me not from life.'

Trajan was succeeded in 117 by his relation and adopted heir, Aelius Hadrianus. The Emperor Hadrian proved one of the ablest rulers and most remarkable personalities who ever wore the purple. One of the most cultured scholars of his age, poet and philosopher,

he seems to have been skilled in almost every branch of art and learning. He had a passion for travel, and no part of the Empire was unvisited or uncared for by him. He was a most able and economical administrator; and with the exception of the last few months of his life, when he was suffering from painful disease, he showed himself merciful, sympathetic, and large-minded. He left enduring memorials of himself, in Britain, in the great wall from Carlisle to Newcastle, built with the intention of keeping the Scots in their own country; at Rome in the great mausoleum, which in the Middle Ages became a fortress, and is now known as the Castle of San Angelo; and at Tivoli in his magnificent villa, with its enclosure of ten miles circuit, in which he collected memorials and representations of all the art and civilisation of his Empire.

But Hadrian's disposition was fickle, moody, and superstitious. The lines he is said to have composed on his gloomy and painful death-bed, an address to his 'poor little soul,' seem well to fit both his genius and the characteristic heathen outlook into the unknown.

'Fickle, roving, charming sprite,  
The body's guest and comrade bright,  
Whither goest now? To what shore?  
Naked, chilly, deathly white,—  
All thy youthful jests are o'er.'<sup>1</sup>

The Church had reason to be grateful to Hadrian, for his moderation and his philosophic attitude, which discouraged persecution. Though its authenticity has been doubted, it seems now sufficiently established that Hadrian was the author of a second rescript regarding the Christians. Probably about 124 he wrote this letter to Fundanus, Proconsul of Asia, to protect them against popular clamours, which had resulted in grave outrages. The rescript is on the same lines as that of Trajan, discouraging active persecution, but quite vague as to whether the profession of Christianity is

<sup>1</sup> Animula vagula, blandula,  
Hospes comesque corporis;  
Quae nunc abibis in loca  
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,  
Nec ut soles dabis jocos.

in itself a crime, thus leaving a loophole for mercy or policy. Definite evidence, the Emperor says, must be brought forward that the accused have broken the laws. Mere outcries are not evidence. Moreover, any prosecutor who fails to make out his case is himself to be put on trial for 'calumnia'—slander.

The somewhat cynical tone of the rescript is characteristic of Hadrian, and its vagueness does not appear like the work of a forger. It points undoubtedly to the increasing difficulty which good emperors felt in continuing the old policy, while at the same time they did not dare to reverse it in the face of precedent and popular feeling. They evidently wanted the Christians to be left alone, if they would keep themselves quiet and did not commit any other crimes.

From this time to the reign of the Emperor Gallienus (p. 159) the Church occupied an anomalous legal position. In theory, Christianity was absolutely *illicita*, and liable to extreme penalties. And yet for considerable periods the Church was left undisturbed, and even to some extent had legal recognition. Christians occupied important positions in the State; the clergy held property in trust; Christian appeals were taken to the Emperor. Yet at any moment a popular outburst or a fanatical Emperor might bring about an attack on a prominent Christian, or even on the Christians of a whole district.

For the most part, under Hadrian and his successor, the Church as a whole enjoyed peace. Not only the attitude of the Emperors themselves, but possibly two other causes contributed to this: the final scattering of the Jews, and the rise of the Christian 'Apologists.'

The Jews, during the latter years of Trajan, had revolted in Egypt, Cyrene, Cyprus, and Mesopotamia. These revolts had been mercilessly suppressed, but in 131 another took place in Judaea, under a false Messiah, who called himself Bar-cochab ('son of a star,' in allusion to Balaam's prophecy of the star rising out of Jacob). The rebels seized Jerusalem, which Hadrian was apparently rebuild-

**The last  
Jewish  
rebellion.**

ing, and they were not finally crushed, nor without terrific bloodshed, till 135. The old city was completely razed to the ground, and Hadrian gave one of his own names to the new city, calling it Aelia Capitolina. A temple of Jupiter was erected on the site of the Jewish Temple, and no Jew was allowed to enter the city under pain of death. A Christian Church arose in Aelia, which was entirely composed of Gentile Christians, the first bishop being one Marcus.

The Jews everywhere fell under the cloud of imperial displeasure, and their malice and accusations against the Christians must henceforth have had little influence. Indeed, in showing some favour or toleration to the Christians, the Roman officials would know that they were adding one more drop of bitterness to the cup of Jewish calamity.

The rise of the Apologists about this time was a significant phenomenon. Hitherto Christians had suffered without protest, and had striven only to keep the veil drawn **The** closely over their own institutions and beliefs. But **Apologists.** now, not only was the Emperor known to be a man of moderation and justice, but the Church was beginning to include among her members many men of learning and literary power, especially those drawn from the ranks of the 'philosophers.' So in the reign of Hadrian begin to appear written defences of Christianity addressed—not officially, but by individual Christians—to the Emperors or to leading state officials.

The first known apologies are those of Quadratus and Aristides, who are said to have presented them to Hadrian while at Athens, about A.D. 126, when he was being initiated into the **Quadratus.** Eleusinian mysteries. The apology of Aristides is perhaps later, and addressed not to Hadrian but to his successor, M. Antoninus Pius. Quadratus was apparently a man of considerable importance and influence, though probably not to be identified with the Quadratus whom Eusebius mentions as a 'prophet,' nor with a third who was afterwards Bishop of Athens. The apology, now lost, was known to Eusebius, who quotes from it one striking sentence respecting the miracles of Christ. Quadratus says that these were 'always present' (*i.e.*

they could be examined and tested, unlike the works of sorcery), for those whom He healed or raised from the dead, lived on after the Ascension, and some of them 'even to our own day.'

Aristides was a converted philosopher. His apology, long thought to be lost, was discovered in 1890, in a Syriac translation. It was then identified with an **Aristides.** already well-known passage in the early Christian romance called *Barlaam and Josaphat*. The author of the latter—perhaps in the sixth century—had worked Aristides' apology into a speech in the mouth of one of his characters.

Aristides attacks vigorously the religions of Barbarians, Greeks, and Egyptians for their folly and immoral tendencies. He is particularly severe on the beast and vegetable divinities of Egypt. Of the Jews he writes with more forbearance. They are nearer the truth, believing in one God, and doing works of charity to the poor, ransoming captives and burying the dead. He finds fault with them because he says they worship angels rather than God, and are devoted to outward observances. But the Christians are, he says, a new people, with which something divine is mingled. 'They have found the truth, and the world itself stands by their intercession. They live pure and holy lives, full of humility and charity. They do not count death as an evil, but sin only. They are the followers of Jesus Christ, the Son of God most high, who came down from heaven and from a Hebrew virgin took and clad Himself with flesh.' He is to be the judge of all mankind. The greatest interest of Aristides lies in the fact that it is easy to reconstruct from his statements an outline of a Creed, which corresponds very closely with our Apostles' Creed. The virgin-birth of our Lord is as clearly believed by him as by S. Ignatius.

On somewhat the same lines as the Apology of Aristides, though of much greater literary power and beauty, is the *Epistle to Diognetus*—probably written about 150. The **Epistle to Diognetus.** author is unknown; so, too, is the Diognetus to whom it is addressed, though he has been conjectured to have been the tutor of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. The epistle seems to have been little known in antiquity, it is unmentioned by



Eusebius or other writers, and only one manuscript of it survived.<sup>1</sup> It is thoroughly Pauline in language and thought, and in the glow of its refined enthusiasm.

Diognetus is addressed as one who is searching to know the truth about Christianity. He is warned at the outset to put away preconceptions, and to approach the subject as an entirely 'new man.' He is shown (much in the manner of Aristides) the folly of idolatry. Next is unfolded the folly of Judaism—a passage something in the spirit of the Epistle of Barnabas, very hostile and by no means doing justice to the facts of Old Testament revelation. Then follows a most beautiful description of the Christian society, in the world, but not of it, to which every country is alike its own, and yet a strange land; a society which is like the soul of the world, everywhere recognised, though unseen, immortal amidst mortal surroundings, hated, and yet loving, oppressed like the soul in the body, and yet like the soul sustaining the whole.

Christianity is no human invention, but revealed by God, unknown before, through His Son, who is Himself the designer and maker of the universe. God sent His Son, not to tyrannise and terrify, but 'in gentleness and meekness, as a king sending his royal son. He sent Him as God. He sent Him as a man to men, intending to save, to persuade, not to compel. . . . He sent Him as one calling, not pursuing, as one loving and not judging.' The writer's devotion rises to a climax of eloquence when in a passage worthy of S. Paul, he describes the love of the Atonement: 'O the sweet exchange, O the unsearchable work, O the unlooked for benefits; that the wickedness of many should be hidden in one righteous man, and the righteousness of one should justify many wicked.' Finally he discusses what it means to be a Christian. It means to love God, to imitate God, to behold and know Him, and to be able to take the true measure of human life and its destiny. In a passage to be commended to the admirers of Nietzsche, he says, 'Happiness consists not in lording it over one's neighbours, nor in desiring to

<sup>1</sup> Even this has now perished, having been burnt at Strasburg in the Franco-German war of 1870.

get the advantage over the weaker, to become rich and to do violence to those who lack ; not in these things can one be an imitator of God ; these things lie outside His greatness. But whoever bears the burden of his neighbour, and wills to benefit the inferior out of his own advantages, whoever supplies to the needy the things which he has received from God, he becomes as God to those who receive, and is an imitator of God.'

This epistle is throughout a splendid example of the effect of the Christianity of the New Testament when it fell on the congenial soil of a noble disposition, that of a lover of truth trained and cultivated by Greek learning and philosophy.

The epistle is apparently imperfect at the end, the two concluding sections being by another but not unworthy hand, one who describes himself as 'a disciple of the Apostles and a teacher of the Gentiles.' He had studied deeply S. John as well as S. Paul, as we see from this striking phrase, 'This Word, which was from the beginning, who appeared new and was found old, and evermore is begotten young in the hearts of the saints.'

In 138 Hadrian was succeeded by *Antoninus Pius* (138-161), whom he chose for the throne on grounds of merit alone. There

**Antoninus.** is little to record about Antoninus except his virtues : not a warrior like Trajan, nor a versatile scholar like Hadrian, he studied peace, and practised charity, living a quiet and unostentatious home-life at his country-seat in Etruria ; he was pre-eminently a ruler to whom the defenders of the Church felt they could with some confidence make their appeal.

The most important and interesting of the Apologies was addressed to him, about the year 150, by the philosopher *Justin*, **S. Justin** surnamed afterwards 'the Martyr.' Justin was the **Martyr.** author of several books. In addition to this Apology, called the first, he wrote a shorter second Apology addressed to the Roman Senate, and a Dialogue with a Jew called Trypho. These are extant and authentic. Eusebius mentions several

other works of his (iv. 18). The Dialogue with Trypho opens with an interesting statement by Justin about his own conversion. He was of Greek race, though born in Palestine (about 103 A.D.), and embraced the study of philosophy, being earnest in his search after truth and the knowledge of God. He tried in succession all the most popular systems of philosophy of the day, but without satisfaction. First he attached himself to a Stoic teacher, but soon left him, for he found that he neither knew anything about God nor valued such knowledge. Then he began to study with one of the Peripatetics, the school of Aristotle, but left him in disgust at the man's eagerness for payment in advance. Next, he went to a celebrated Pythagorean; but this man required a preliminary study of music, astronomy, and geometry, before anything could be taught of what Justin wished to know. The Platonists, finally, he found more promising, and in studying with them he felt himself lifted up by the contemplation of the 'ideas,' and thought he would soon arrive at the knowledge of God. But at this point he met one day by the sea-shore a mysterious old man, of venerable appearance, who first questioned him in Socratic manner about his studies, and then directed him to the study of the prophets and to Christ. Christianity, he found by experience, to be the true philosophy; and, still retaining his philosopher's gown, he travelled about as a Christian teacher, settling finally in Rome. Here to the Emperor and his family (addressed as 'philosophers'), to the Senate and the Roman people, he directed his Apology on behalf of those 'who are unjustly hated.'

The Apology is not a great literary production, being badly arranged, but it is bold and large-minded. He appeals to the justice of the Emperor, and demands that **The Apology.** Christianity should no longer be considered as a crime. He vindicates the Christian against the charges of atheism, immorality, and disloyalty, and dwells strongly upon the moral fruits of Christianity in contrast with the effects of heathen religion. These topics are the commonplaces of the Apologists. But Justin strikes out a new line by proceeding

to explain to the Emperor both the belief and the worship of Christians, matters hitherto kept secret from the heathen. He testifies to the Godhead and pre-existence of Jesus Christ, and the preparation for His advent through the Jewish prophets. His statements, like those of Hermas, are not always expressed with the exactness of later theology, but there can be no doubt of their real orthodoxy. And he originates a thought (implicit in S. John i.), which the great teachers of Alexandria afterwards developed, that the Word who became incarnate in Christ had been in the world through all history, and that all of good and true in heathen thought and character had been due to His indwelling; so that Socrates and others might be described as Christians before Christ. But the most interesting part of his Apology to us is his account of the Christian observances of Baptism and the Eucharist.

As to Baptism, he says, 'As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to **The Sacra-** be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray **ments.** and to entreat God, with fasting, for the remission of sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us to where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated. For in the name of God the Father and Lord of the Universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."' Justin also states that this washing is called 'illumination,' and that by it the baptized who has repented receives the remission of his past sins.

The baptized are then received in the Christian assembly, and permitted to receive of the 'food called Eucharist,' which none may receive except they believe Christian teaching to be true, have been baptized, and are so living as Christ commanded. This consecrated food, consisting of bread and a cup of mixed wine and water, is described by him in remarkable words: 'For not as common bread or common drink do we receive these

things, but even as Jesus Christ our Saviour was by the word of God made flesh, and took both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also have we been taught that the food for which thanks have been given through the prayer of the word that comes from him (by which food our blood and flesh are nourished by transmutation), is both the flesh and the blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.' This somewhat complicated statement is partly explained by the context. 'The prayer of the word that comes from him' refers apparently to the words of institution which formed the basis of a prayer: for Justin proceeds, 'For the Apostles in the memoirs made by them, which are called Gospels, have thus handed down that Jesus enjoined them when He had taken bread and given thanks, "Do this for the remembrance of me, this is my body"; and similarly having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is my blood," and that he shared it with them alone.'

In a somewhat disconnected way, Justin also describes the form of service in which this consecration of the Eucharist took place. Putting together the two accounts he gives, we may arrive at the following outline of the service, the first statement on the subject we possess from a Christian writer.

On the 'so-called day of the Sun' (so chosen because it was the first day of creation, the day of light, and because on it the Saviour rose from the dead), Christians assemble.

**The Liturgy.** The memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read aloud as time permits. The 'president' then delivers a sermon exhorting obedience to what has been read. Then follow prayers to the same end, on behalf of all Christians everywhere, which all present take part in, standing. At the conclusion of these prayers they salute one another with a kiss. Then bread and a cup of wine and water are brought to the president; 'he takes them and offers up praise and glory to the Father of the universe through the Name of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to the best of his power makes a long thanksgiving because God has deigned to bestow these things upon us.' All the people present express assent to this thanksgiving by the Hebrew word 'Amen.' Then those who

are called 'deacons' distribute the bread and the cup for which thanksgiving has thus been offered, to all present, and carry a portion also to those who are absent. Further, a collection of alms is made, of which the president takes charge, to relieve orphans, widows, strangers, and those in want through sickness or any other cause.

The Liturgy thus consisted of the following parts at least :

- Reading of Scriptures.
- Sermon.
- Intercessory Prayer.
- Kiss of Peace.
- Presentation of the Elements.
- Long Prayer of Thanksgiving.
- The Amen.
- The Communion.
- (Collection of Alms.)

The First Apology, which was accompanied by a copy of the rescript of Hadrian to Fundanus (p. 73), had apparently no effect. Shortly afterwards the prefect of the city, Urbicus, condemned summarily to death three Christians, who were not convicted of any other crime. Justin then addressed his second and much shorter Apology to the Roman Senate. In the course of this he speaks of the plots made against himself by a certain Cynic philosopher, one Crescens, a bitter and ignorant enemy of the Christians, with whom Justin had held a public disputation. The latter seems after this to have left Rome for a time, but returned a few years later, and some time between 163 and 167 was put to death by beheading, by the prefect Rusticus, along with six other Christians.

The Dialogue with the Jew Trypho was probably based on an actual controversy, but developed and written out at a later time between the Apologies and the martyrdom of **Trypho**. It is especially interesting, as showing the exhaustive use of the Old Testament made by the Christians, and their methods of interpretation. It also, no doubt, illustrates the usual style of Jewish attack on Christianity at that period.

Trypho's arguments and Justin's replies may be thus summarised.

1. The doctrine of the Trinity is contrary to that Unity of God which is taught in the Old Testament.

To this, Justin makes the suggestive reply that the theophanies or appearances of God in Old Testament were really appearances of the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity, before the Incarnation. He also points out various suggestions of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead which are to be seen in the Old Testament, *e.g.* in Gen. i. 26 ; Prov. viii.

2. The Crucifixion is contrary to the glory of the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

To this, Justin is able to adduce the remarkable predictions of a *suffering* Messiah, *e.g.* Ps. xxii.

3. The Christians disobey the Law of God by not observing circumcision, Sabbath, and other Old Testament rules.

To this, Justin answers that the Law was temporary and has been fulfilled in Christ ; and that the Eucharist, which is the 'pure offering' foretold by Malachi (i. 10-12), has taken the place of the sacrifices of the Law.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Who were the Antonines? Describe the period of their rule.
2. What was Pliny's question to the Emperor, and how was it answered?
3. What facts did Pliny discover about Christian observances?
4. Who was S. Ignatius?
5. Enumerate the letters of S. Ignatius, and describe the controversy respecting them.
6. What was the teaching of S. Ignatius as to (1) the Christian Ministry, (2) the Incarnation, (3) the Sacraments?
7. Describe the character of the Emperor Hadrian and his attitude to the Church.
8. Who were the Apologists?
9. What do you know of Quadratus and Aristides?
10. What is the epistle to Diognetus and its value?
11. Summarise the contents of S. Justin Martyr's first Apology.
12. What account does he give of the Eucharistic service?
13. What is the interest of the Dialogue with Trypho?

SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The attitude of the Roman government at this period towards the Church.

Ramsay. *The Church in the Roman Empire.*

2. The Epistles of Ignatius :

Text and translation in Lightfoot and Harmer's *Apostolic Fathers.*

Lightfoot. *The Apostolic Fathers*, part ii.

3. The writings of S. Justin Martyr :

'Justinus' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography.*



## CHAPTER VI. PERSECUTION AND PROTEST UNDER THE ANTONINES

IT is impossible to say whether the policy of Antoninus Pius towards the Christian Church was affected at all by the 'Apologies' addressed to him; but he seems to have made some effort to restrain mob violence against Christians, by writing to various cities in Greece, and also perhaps to Ephesus (Eus. iv. 13 and 26), forbidding any change of procedure, *i.e.* anything different from what Trajan and Hadrian had ordered. ✓

Nevertheless, it was during his reign, about 155 A.D., that one of the most eminent bishops of the Church suffered martyrdom as the result of a popular outbreak.

**S. Polycarp.**

This was S. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, a stately and venerable figure, who appears as a link with the apostolic age, having been himself probably the disciple of S. John. He had entertained, nearly half a century before, the martyr S. Ignatius, when he stopped at Smyrna on his way to Rome and death. One of S. Ignatius' seven epistles is addressed to Polycarp exhorting him to perseverance and courage, and asking him to send an envoy to Antioch, and see that other churches did the same, in order to comfort and establish the church which was thus losing its bishop by martyrdom.

There is also extant a letter from Polycarp himself written shortly afterwards to the Philippians, with whom Ignatius had stayed; forwarding them at the same time by their request copies of Ignatius' own letters, and asking

**His letter.**

them for further news of the martyr. From Polycarp's letter we see him as one whose mind was stored with the Scriptures. He quotes repeatedly from the New Testament, especially from 1 S. Peter and from the Pastoral Epistles, which he follows closely in his exhortations to deacons, presbyters, and widows.

He alludes to S. Paul's own ministry among the Philippians, and his special love for them. Polycarp seems to combine the sweetness and the fire of S. John, his master. The man who perverts the Scriptures and denies the resurrection and the judgment, he pronounces to be 'the first-born of Satan,' a vigorous phrase which tradition tells that Polycarp used personally to the heretic Marcion, when afterwards he met him in Rome. Polycarp shows a special horror of covetousness, and in his letter he laments the fall of a Philippian presbyter, Valens and his wife, through this sin.

In his old age he visited Rome, another significant witness to the close inter-communion of far distant parts of the Church. He came to confer with the Roman bishop, Anicetus, as to the proper time for keeping Easter, in which the Eastern Christians differed from those of the West (p. 142). The two bishops could not come to an agreement, but parted in perfect friendship, as was shown by Anicetus inviting Polycarp to celebrate the Eucharist in his presence.

We are fortunate to possess a contemporary account of Polycarp's martyrdom, the earliest of such documents, in the **Martyrdom.** form of a letter written by one Evarestus, on behalf of the Smyrnaean Church to the Church of Philomelium in Phrygia, and 'to all the colonies of the holy Catholic Church in every place.'

Eleven Christians had been tortured and thrown to the wild beasts at the annual games provided by the Asiarch Philip. One only, Quintus, a Phrygian, who had shown over-zeal for martyrdom, failed, and was persuaded by the Proconsul to offer incense. The mob were not satisfied, and clamoured for another victim, Polycarp. He had escaped to a farm in the vicinity, but his hiding-place was betrayed. When the officers found him, he received them with courtesy, offered them hospitality, and asked only for time for prayer. He stood up and prayed continuously for two hours, 'remembering all whom at any time he had met, small and great, high and low, and all the Catholic Church throughout the world,' to the wonder of all that heard him. He was then brought to the city, and arraigned

before the Proconsul, or rather before the mob of heathen and Jews, who seem almost to have overridden the magistrate. The latter made various efforts to persuade Polycarp to recant. He asked, for example, that he should say 'Away with the atheists,' meaning the Christians. But Polycarp with solemn irony waved his hand towards the howling mob of heathen, and then, looking up to heaven, he said, in a different sense, 'Away with the atheists!' 'Swear the oath,' said the magistrate, 'and I will release thee—revile Christ.' The noble and memorable answer followed, 'Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has never wronged me; and how can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?' Threats of the wild beasts and of death by fire could not shake his calm and constancy.

The Proconsul, evidently a weak man, still hesitated to pronounce sentence, and seems practically to have thrown the onus of killing Polycarp on the mob, by sending his herald to proclaim three times in the theatre, where the assembly was held, 'Polycarp hath confessed that he is a Christian.' The crowd clamoured for a lion to be let loose upon him, but this the Asiarch refused, on the ground that the games were over. They then hurried to collect materials to burn the martyr alive, the Jews (as usual, so the writer says) being especially eager. He was tied to a stake, and raised his voice in thanksgiving, praying that his sacrifice might be accepted—in words which seem to be modelled on the Eucharistic prayer, which he himself no doubt was in the habit of using at the altar. But when the flame was kindled, it refused to touch him, but spread round him, like 'a sail filled by the wind.' Finally he was stabbed to death with a dagger, and his body was burned, as a further insult to the Christians, lest, said the heathen, 'they abandon the Crucified and begin to worship Polycarp.' But when all was over, the faithful gathered his charred bones, as being 'more valuable than precious stones or refined gold,' and buried them, intending, as the writer says, to assemble with gladness and joy, and celebrate this day of martyrdom as being his true birthday.

The whole narrative indeed is in the tone of one who records not a miserable tragedy, but a royal triumph. The very dating

of the letter lifts the event from time to the eternal world. 'He was apprehended by Herodes, when Philip of Tralles was high-priest, in the proconsulship of Statius Quadratus, but in the reign of the everlasting King, Jesus Christ.'

On the death of Antoninus Pius, his two adopted sons, Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius, for a time reigned in partnership.

**Marcus Aurelius.** But the death of the former when returning from a campaign in the north in 169, left his more famous colleague to rule alone. Heathen wisdom and heathen virtue seemed to have reached their height and to have combined in one, and him the master of the world. Plato's famous saying was for once on its trial, that the world would not go right till philosophers were kings and kings philosophers. Marcus was devoted to the Stoic philosophy; his character showed both benevolence and firmness; his life was full of works of charity; personally he was pure, ascetic, and conscientious. The noble bronze equestrian statue which still stands intact, though its gilding is gone, on the Capitol at Rome, is a worthy memorial of the great Emperor, who is represented with raised hand, as if blessing his city and people. Yet 'the world by wisdom knew not God,' and Marcus not only failed to understand the Christians, but his treatment of them on one terrible occasion has branded his memory for ever in Christian records as a persecutor of the Church.

In literature, Marcus stands out as the author of one of the world's greatest books. His *Meditations* or *Self-Communings* are

**The** a record of his inner life, written in scappy and *Meditations.* difficult Greek, mere notes, often jotted down in his tent, when on campaign. They possess a mysterious and haunting beauty of their own; they are the thoughts of a noble and sincere, if somewhat 'academic' spirit as he contemplates the mysteries of the world, of human life, and the hereafter. Yet they have the weakness of philosophy as well as its calm and strength. There is upon them a settled sadness as of the utterances of one who

'takes dejectedly

His seat upon the intellectual throne.'

And they have certainly no Gospel for the world at large. Stoicism, with its religion of duty for duty's sake, could only appeal to a few finer spirits; and, despite the Emperor's benevolent attitude towards mankind, there is an aloofness, almost a 'priggishness,' which prevents one being really surprised to find that the only allusion to the Christians in the *Meditations* is in a tone of lofty contempt. The soul, he says, ought to be ready at any moment to part from the body, whether its fate is to be quenched or scattered, or to continue, but such readiness must proceed from one's own decision, and not out of mere opposition, like the Christians; it must be reasoned and dignified, and if it is to have any influence over others, it must have about it nothing theatrical. (*Med.* xi. 3.)

The character of the Emperor and his devotion to philosophy tempted more than one philosophic apologist for Christianity to address him. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, a man of great learning, who had travelled in Palestine, and investigated the Old Testament Scriptures, wrote an Apology in 175, some sentences of which are quoted by Eusebius (iv. 26). The special occasion which moved him to address the Emperor was a new outburst of persecution in Asia, resulting from what he describes as 'new decrees.' What these were is uncertain, but clearly they were supplying an opportunity to informers and unprincipled persons to harry and rob the Christians. Melito inquires whether this is being done by the Emperor's will or not; if it is, Christians will submit, even to death, only they crave an unbiassed judgment as to their guilt from the Emperor himself. But if not, then Christians appeal to his protection against this lawless and barbaric plundering. Melito proceeds in even bolder strain to claim that Christianity, which he calls 'our philosophy,' has been a blessing to the Empire, and has assisted its glory and progress, ever since the days of Augustus; and that only Nero and Domitian had persecuted it. Melito seems to ignore the fact that Christianity was in itself a crime by imperial law, and tries to claim both Hadrian and Antoninus as its protectors.

About the same time Apollinarius, Bishop of Hierapolis, also

appealed to the Emperor. Nothing survives of his Apology, but it is probable (*see* Euseb. v. 5) that he quoted to the Emperor **Apollinarius.** the well-known story of how, in 164, the prayers of the Christian soldiers of the 'Thundering Legion' won the gift of abundance of rain, when the Emperor himself and that legion were in danger of dying of thirst in a campaign against the Quadi.

Another philosophic Apologist about this time was Athenagoras, an Athenian. His work was confused in antiquity **Athena-** apparently with that of Justin Martyr, and he **goras.** is little mentioned by other writers. His Apology, written in very scholarly style, is addressed to Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus. It follows the usual lines of exposure of the folly of polytheism, of protest against the gross criminal charges made against the Christians, and of assertion of the superiority of Christian belief and the purity of Christian life. The Christians are not atheists—they worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They live far better lives than their accusers. And he concludes: 'And now do you, who are entirely in everything, by nature and by education, upright and moderate and benevolent and worthy of your rule, now that I have refuted the several accusations and proved that we are pious and gentle and temperate in spirit, bend your royal head in approval.'

But the royal head was far from bending. The Emperor was utterly unsympathetic to the Christians. His very virtues seemed to turn him more against them. His respect for his predecessors, his conservative regard for all the ancient traditions and ritual of the Roman religion, his dislike of what seemed to him ignorant and theatrical in the Christian attitude, all tended to make him ready to be a persecutor.

A grim comment on the 'Apologies' was supplied in 177. The worst persecution probably which the Church as yet had **Persecution** had to suffer broke out in the prosperous towns **in South Gaul.** of Lyons and Vienne in Southern Gaul. It was a perfect carnival of hideous cruelty, and the philosophic Emperor actually expressed both consent and approval. The story is told in a letter, most of which Eusebius has preserved, written

by the two churches to their fellow-Christians in Asia and Phrygia, between which districts and Southern Gaul there appears to have been some special connection. The letter, terrible though its record, is one of the most precious monuments of Christian antiquity. It breathes the very spirit of the New Testament, in its devotion to Christ, its patience and forgiveness, its atmosphere of supernatural grace.

The persecution seems to have arisen without any special cause, but through some mysterious wave of heathen suspicion and hatred, in which the Christians not unreasonably recognised the direct instigation of Satan. First, a number of Christians were ill-used by the mob; and then they were brought before the chief magistrate, who seems himself to have been a monster of cruelty. Most of them persisted in the confession of Christ, in spite of all sorts of tortures, but some few failed, though of these some again repented and finally bore their witness. The household slaves of the Christians were also tortured, and some of them in terror made false accusations against their masters of horrible crimes, which of course roused the mob to greater fury. (This was really an illegal act; Roman law did not allow the evidence of slaves against their masters.) Many of the accused died in prison, through the ill-treatment and the foul air, among them being the Bishop of Lyons, Pothinus, a man of more than ninety years of age, already worn out, but as the letter says, 'his life was preserved that Christ might triumph through it.' Those who did not so perish were subjected day after day to torments too horrible to describe, and were finally burned or devoured by wild beasts in the amphitheatre.

Foremost among these noble witnesses stands the slave-girl Blandina, who suffered such a round of tortures that even her tormentors confessed themselves baffled. Her only utterance was 'I am a Christian, and there is nothing vile done by us.' After torments of fire and scourging and crucifixion, she was finally enclosed in a net and gored to death by a wild bull in the amphitheatre. Others, whom the diabolical fury of the heathen failed to move from their joyful confession of Christ, were Sanctus a deacon, Attalus a man of

eminence and a Roman citizen, Alexander a physician, Ponticus a boy of fifteen. In all, some forty-five suffered death, praying, like Stephen, for their persecutors, and humbly deprecating for themselves the title of 'Martyr'; Christ Himself, they said, was the 'faithful and true witness' ('Martyr'), and those who in previous times had suffered for Christ might also so be called, but as for themselves 'we are lowly and humble confessors.'

The rage and malice of the persecutors were not satisfied even with torture and death. The greatest care was taken to prevent the bodies of the martyrs being buried; they were burnt, and their ashes thrown into the Rhone, in order, as the heathen said, to prevent their having the resurrection which they hoped for.

More widely spread and more deliberately planned persecutions were in store for the Church in the coming years, but probably none more furious and brutal than this, none that more marvellously illustrated Christian patience and self-sacrifice for the love of Christ, and certainly none that showed up more terribly the failure of heathen religion and philosophy to redeem men from the lowest that human nature can sink to.

The age of the Antonines was full of many books, though few of them were great. The Christian Church, too, began to have her **Christian Literature.** share in literary activity. Some of the Apologists by no means confined themselves to the conventional defence of Christian beliefs and morals. Athenagoras was the author of a remarkable treatise on the Resurrection of the body, which is still extant. He defends the belief not so much as a teacher of Christian doctrine, but as a philosopher, showing its inherent probability, from the nature and the true end of man. Man is intended for the contemplation of his Creator; and man is essentially a twofold being, body as well as soul. God is able to restore him to attain his true end, but this will involve the restoration of the body. This is a great advance on earlier Greek philosophy in its speculations on immortality.

Melito, the Apologist, was a voluminous writer. Eusebius mentions some seventeen distinct treatises of his on religious and philosophical subjects (iv. 26). Apollinarius of Hierapolis wrote many books besides his Apology. Dionysius, Bishop



of Corinth, wrote a number of Epistles to different churches of Greece and the East, and also one to Soter, Bishop of Rome. Hegesippus (p. 13) set himself to record the history of the Church.

Besides the formal apologies addressed to the Emperor, this period produced other interesting defences of Christianity addressed to the general public, or to individuals. Among such is the work by Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, written for the benefit of one Autolycus, his friend, but an opponent of Christianity. It is a somewhat narrow production, dealing chiefly with the Old Testament and its superiority to all the cosmogony and mythology of the ancients. All that was true in Greek philosophy he attributes to plagiarism from the Scriptures; and he is singularly unfair in the way in which he belittles the greatness of Greek thought and literature. He is the first writer to employ the word Trinity (*Trias*). An attack on paganism in much the same spirit is the Address to the Greeks, written by Tatian, the disciple of Justin Martyr, who afterwards fell into heresy (p. 107).

But the most interesting of these defensive writings is the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, the first Latin writer of the Church. Greek was not only the general language **The** of the East, but it was the fashionable literary *Octavius*. tongue of most of the Empire. But the age of the Antonines saw the beginning of a reaction in favour of Latin, and Minucius Felix writes in a Ciceronian style which, as Milman says, reminds us of 'the golden days of Latin prose.' The *Octavius* is a dialogue, its scene is the sea-shore of Ostia, described with that delicate and joyful appreciation of natural beauty which marks the later Latin writers. The characters are Minucius, his Christian friend Octavius, and a heathen Caecilius.

The Christians reprove Caecilius for an act of worship to the image of a heathen God. He is vexed at this, and proceeds to deliver an attack on Christianity. The reader cannot but admire the boldness with which a Christian writer has put in the mouth of Caecilius the worst that could be said, and was being said, about the Christians. Caecilius attacks them first as a philosopher, for their conceit of knowledge concerning the

unknowable mysteries of the universe ; then as a defender of the ancient established religions ; again as a man of the world who despises the ignorance and the poverty of Christians, and considers their whole conduct of life as miserable and unworthy. He recounts the usual fables about the crimes of Christians at their secret meetings, infanticide, cannibalism, impurity, and asserts that they worship the head of an ass, or at best a crucified evil-doer. Especially he pours scorn on their belief in a resurrection : they will never rise again, and they make this life as wretched for themselves as possible.

Octavius, in reply, has not much difficulty in exposing the inconsistency of Caecilius, who on one side is an Epicurean agnostic, and on the other an upholder of the conventional heathen worship, which is more ridiculous and immoral than anything of which he accuses the Christians. The moral charges against Christians he dismisses with scorn : they are the insinuations of demons, and they are refuted by the plain facts of the purity and goodness of Christian lives. They worship Him who died on the cross as God. The sufferings and poverty endured by Christians are their glory. With regard to what might most appeal to a modern in Caecilius' tirade, his accusation of conceit of knowledge against Christians, Octavius asserts that God may be known from His works and His providence, their beauty and their order ; moreover, even the ignorant have the faculty for knowing God ; and one must not judge of the truth by the poverty and lowliness of those who maintain it, otherwise some of the philosophers themselves would be despised. And though he attacks heathen philosophy and religion, yet he is careful to point out that the greatest of the philosophers have come to much the same conclusion as the Christians as to the nature of God, the future destruction of this world, and the probability of a resurrection. And what philosophy sought after, Christians have found. The philosophers, he says in conclusion, with a touch of satire, are even eloquent against their own vices : ' We bear wisdom not in our dress but in our mind ; we do not speak great things, but we live them.'

No doubt, then as now, Christians laid themselves open to attack as meddlesome and conceited innovators. They irritated the philosopher and the superior person by their certainty as to revealed truth. Nevertheless, they were able to point with real effect, first, to the fact that philosophy at its best was on their own side, and also to the moral revolution that Christianity was working in human life.

The dialogue ends with Caecilius confessing his defeat, and his readiness to become a Christian.

By this time Christianity was evidently attracting considerable notice among the intellectuals. They felt that it could no longer be dismissed with an epigram. **Literary** attacks on it begin. Lucian of Samosata, **attacks on** the greatest satirist of the age, who mocked both **Christianity.** at philosophy and at the ancient religions, is sometimes thought to have intended a direct attack on Christianity in his *Peregrinus Proteus*, in whom some have seen a satire on S. Ignatius. But Peregrinus was a historical personage, a well-known charlatan, who for a time embraced Christianity, and then, being excommunicated, became a Cynic philosopher. Lucian attacks him merely as a typical impostor and humbug, and the Christians appear in the story only as people of foolish credulity who were taken in by Peregrinus, and treat him as a prophet and a confessor. Lucian describes how when this clever rogue was imprisoned for the Christian faith which he professed, his prison was thronged with admirers, and his every want provided for. 'Nothing,' he says, 'can exceed their eagerness in such cases, or their readiness to give away all they have' . . . 'adoring their crucified Sophist whose laws they follow, they are careless of the goods of life and have them all in common.' Lucian, indeed, seems to have had some tinge of respect for the Christians. He laughed at them, but he thought them sincere.

The first definite and reasoned literary attack on Christianity was the *True Word* of Celsus, written about the time of the persecution at Lyons and Vienne. Nothing what- **Celsus.** ever is known of Celsus, and probably we should have known nothing about his book, had not the great Origen,

some sixty years later, set himself to answer it. He did this with such care and detail, stating and replying to every argument and scoff of Celsus, that it is possible from his work practically to reconstruct the *True Word*. The motive of Celsus was chiefly political. He wanted to demolish the Christian claim to an exclusive and universal religion, in order to prevent them being, as he thought, a party dangerous to the unity and common life of the Empire. The method and tone of Celsus' attack are deplorable. No argument or sneer is too bad to use, and he utterly fails to appreciate the greatness and moral force of the Christian faith. Nevertheless, it is a powerful book, and a perfect storehouse of weapons such as the scoffers, deists, and atheists of all ages since have used to belabour Christians and Christianity.

Celsus was fairly well acquainted with the Scriptures, and he uses every sophism and quibble in order to prove their falsehood and inconsistency. He attacks the Mother of our Lord, and the Lord Himself. Christ was a criminal who had learned sorcery in Egypt. His claims were refuted by His crucifixion. His whole career was a failure, and His resurrection an invention of excitable women. But Celsus also endeavours to discredit the whole conception of the Incarnation. He pours scorn on the idea that the human race should think itself superior to the animals, and more worthy of being taken into union with God. He draws satirical pictures of ants, or frogs, imagining that the world was made for them, and that they were the favourites of God, and would be redeemed. That the Gospel should specially appeal to the poor and to the sinful seems to Celsus to disprove its value. The Cross was to him but foolishness.

Throughout the criticisms of Celsus show a lack of the attempt or the power to understand or enter into what he is attacking, and this is just the reason why it both fails as an attack and is so difficult to answer. The Christian feels he has no common ground with the writer. Origen, in answering the *True Word* laboriously line by line, was perhaps exerting his talents unnecessarily. The best line of defence may be found in his own words in the Preface. 'Jesus is at all times assailed by false

witnesses, and, while wickedness remains in the world, is ever exposed to accusation. And yet even now He continues silent before these things, and makes no audible answer, but places His defence in the lives of His genuine disciples, which are a pre-eminent testimony, and one that rises superior to all false witness.' Or again, 'The name of Jesus can still remove distractions from the minds of men and expel demons and take away diseases, and produce a marvellous meekness of spirit and complete change of character.'

The *True Word* does not appear to have been much read, but its production shows that the enemies of Christianity by this time, at least, found it necessary to examine its credentials, and to attempt a systematic refutation. Philosophy, priestcraft, and magic alike felt their empire threatened. The Church was already much more powerful than might at first be imagined from its openness to persecution. And this persecution owed much of its desperate bitterness to *fear*.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What do you know of S. Polycarp prior to his martyrdom?
2. How does the martyrdom of S. Polycarp illustrate the heathen attitude towards Christianity?
3. Describe the character of Marcus Aurelius.
4. What Apologies were addressed to him?
5. Describe the persecution at Lyons and Vienne.
6. Describe the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix.
7. Who was Celsus? What sort of arguments did he employ against Christianity?

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

The Christian writings alluded to in this chapter :

The letter of Polycarp, and the description of his martyrdom, are contained, with translations, in Lightfoot and Harmer's *Apostolic Fathers*.

The letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne is in Gwatkin's *Early Christian Writings*.

The *Octavius* is translated in Clark's *Ante-Nicene Library*, Cyprian, vol. ii. : a translation is published also by S.P.C.K.

## CHAPTER VII. THE EARLY HERESIES

PERSECUTION was not the greatest danger to which Christians were exposed. Indeed, the attitude of such martyrs as Ignatius and Polycarp, or those of Lyons and Vienne, was **Heresy.** powerful for consolidating and strengthening the Church. A more subtle peril lay in the various attempts and tendencies to alter the Christian faith. For it must never be forgotten that the Church from the first regarded herself as put in trust with a definite body of truth which she had received from the Apostles. From the earliest days 'heresy' had to be met, *i.e.* the attempt deliberately to change or reject some part of this deposit. The word 'heresy' literally means a 'self-willed choice'; properly it is only used of those who have actually become members of the Church, and wish to tamper with what they have received, but it is sometimes applied in a wider sense to attempts at reconstruction of Christianity made by those outside.

The beginnings of heresy are manifest even in the New Testament. S. Paul carried on a life-long conflict with the Judaizers **Heresy in** who, if not actually heretics, by their narrowness **N. Testament.** of view and bitter temper certainly displayed the heretical spirit. In 1 Cor. xv. he alludes plainly to some at Corinth who denied the resurrection of the body. In Colossians his exposition of the full meaning of the Incarnation is evidently aimed at those who were not only Judaizers, but were introducing the worship of angels as in some way mediators between God and creation, and were by the stress they laid on asceticism practically making matter to be evil and outside the sphere of Christ's redemptive work. The Pastoral Epistles point to more less developed systems of erroneous teaching. (Cp. 1 Tim. iv. 1-7; 2 Tim. ii. 16-18; Titus, i. 10, 11; iii. 10.) The

Apocalypse mentions twice the Nicolaitanes, the first appearance of a sect called after the name of its founder. The First Epistle of S. John also alludes to those who were denying the verity of our Lord's manhood.

These New Testament allusions show pretty plainly a two-fold tendency to error, about the Incarnation : first, a Judaistic view which failed to grasp that Christianity was more than a new stage of Judaism, and Christ more than a prophet or a Jewish Messiah ; and secondly, a dualism which denied the true humanity and the universally redemptive power of the Saviour. The first tendency would naturally be connected with the Pharisaic teaching ; the second (in its origin at least) was more akin to the asceticism and superstitions of the Essenes, or to the more speculative developments of Judaism as seen at Alexandria and elsewhere out of Palestine.

This division corresponds to the two erroneous systems conflicting with Christianity, which are first encountered after the close of the New Testament writings—those of the *Ebionites* and the *Gnostics*.

The Ebionites (Eus. iii. 27), a name probably derived from a Hebrew word meaning ' poor,' really represent the logical development of the Judaizers of S. Paul's day. They **Judaizing** not only strictly maintained the obligation of **heresies.** circumcision, the Sabbath, and the whole Mosaic Law ; they regarded the Saviour Himself as but the last and greatest of the prophets, the natural son of Joseph and Mary, not the Word or the Eternal Son. The Ebionites are an obscure sect, and produced no great names, and probably did not attract any considerable number of followers. But they lingered on for a long period, the remnants being absorbed in Mohammedanism, a system which no doubt harmonised with their theology. But their imperfect conception of Christ has reappeared in many different sects and tendencies throughout Christian history.

The Gnostics were a very different sort of foe. Widely spread, almost infinitely varied, and possessing many attractions for their own age, their opposition was one of the greatest perils which the Church has ever encountered, and their failure one

of the greatest evidences to the strength of her faith and fellowship. 'Gnostic' is a general name applied to a type of teachers and schools of religion or religious philosophy, which became prominent early in the second century. The name was probably self-chosen and is significant of their temper and their attitude towards Christianity. It implies an affectation of intellectual superiority (*γνωστικός* = able to know). Superior knowledge, rather than penitence, faith, and love, was the keynote of the Gnostic movement. The spirit of Gnosticism is already seen in the New Testament. 'Knowledge puffeth up, charity buildeth up,' says S. Paul to the Corinthians; and at a later date he warns Timothy to turn away from 'the knowledge falsely so called' (1 Tim. vi. 20).

The Gnostic teachers were attracted by Christianity. It was a new and startling phenomenon. The age loved novelty, and they themselves felt that the appearance and claim of Christ demanded some explanation. Some of the Gnostics were not far from being Christians; they treated Christ with respect, they imitated Christian practice, and expounded Christian Scripture. But one and all, they refused to submit themselves to the yoke of the faith, or enter the Church as penitents and believers. Rather they tried, on certain common lines, to reconstruct the Christian system to their liking, or to combine parts of it with inconsistent elements drawn from other religions and philosophies.

Thus in the strict sense the Gnostics can hardly be called 'heretics.' But they were clearly attempting to set up as rivals of the Church, or even claiming themselves to be the true exponents of Christianity. To this end, many of them professed to have secret traditions derived from the Apostles, of a higher value than those current in the Church.

It was an age of intellectual unrest. On all sides there was a restless search after new knowledge and new experience, and continual speculation on moral, religious, and philosophical problems. There were few original thinkers, but many subtle and restless intellects, with a great talent for combining and systematising. This spirit of eclecticism



was favoured by the circumstances of the period. The easiness of communication between different parts of the world, and the cheapness of books, the cosmopolitanism of the Empire, and the opening of the East to the West, brought into the common fund of the scholars and the talkers, elements drawn from Persia, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Palestine. And, as in most ages of scepticism and reconstruction, superstition was rife. It was an age that loved magic and mystery. All sorts of occult arts and fantastical speculations were followed up eagerly. In this strange intellectual atmosphere, the Gnostic teachers and systems flourished with hothouse profusion.

It is very difficult to describe the Gnostic systems except in general terms. Not only is their variety great, but scarcely any Gnostic writings have survived, and we depend for most of our knowledge upon their orthodox opponents who answered them. Much that is recorded in this way is not only difficult but often appears nonsensical and extravagant. Nevertheless, we must conclude, from the popularity of some of the Gnostics and the similarity of their main principles, that the problems with which they tried to deal were of real interest to their contemporaries, and that their methods also had some attractiveness.

Two problems seem more or less common to all the Gnostic systems. First, what connection or relation can there be between an infinite and spiritual God and a finite and material **Gnostic world?** Secondly, what is the origin and nature **problems.** of evil? Christianity, of course, has its own definite answer to the first question, in its teaching of creation by the Word, and the Incarnation. The second lies outside its province. The Christian answer to that is practical rather than theological. The Gospel teaches only how evil may be overcome, and promises its final destruction.

In their endless circling round these two problems, the Gnostics seem to have been influenced by two different conceptions, inconsistent with each other, and both irreconcilable with the Christian faith.

I. God, the spiritual principle of the universe, was conceived as an absolute unity. The logical tendency of this, as of all

Unitarianism, is to make God impersonal and unapproachable ; for personality is really inconceivable unless it carry with it

**Monism.** relations with other persons. Consequently the communications of such a God with the world as man knew it could only be indirect. The Gnostics usually imagined that they were effected by means either of angels or of what they called *aeons*, or emanations from the God-head. By these they tried to explain creation, revelation, and redemption.

The earliest type of Gnostic theory seems to have been dominated by this kind of conception. It originated probably in the speculations of Jewish Platonists, or of the Essenes. Its beginnings appear in such errors as S. Paul warns the Colossians against (Col. ii. 8, 9, 18, 19). Jewish imagination, throwing off the strict orthodoxy of Pharisaism, was trying to combine its own faith with Greek philosophy. The Old Testament revelation is indeed theologically incomplete, and without the Incarnation naturally leads to some such conclusions.

2. The second theory assumed the existence of *two* absolute and eternal and opposing deities or principles in the universe.

**Dualism.** This dualism was not Jewish, nor properly Greek, but Oriental. It is seen clearly in the good and evil deities of the ancient Persian religion, Zoroastrianism—*i.e.* Ahriman, the god of evil and darkness, and Ormuz, the god of light and goodness. The attempt to explain in this way the mystery of the universe has had a singular fascination for many minds ; it is plausible at first sight, but only explains immediate difficulties, like the existence of pain and evil and imperfection, by the introduction of a greater difficulty. Dualism makes what the Christian believes to be only a temporal puzzle into an eternal contradiction, and Christianity throughout its history has repudiated such an explanation. It is the introduction of this dualistic theory which seems to mark the dividing line between Jewish and anti-Jewish Gnosticism, and probably explains why speculations which originated in Judaism passed for the most part into systems violently opposed to Judaism.

From one or other of these two theories, or from the attempts to combine them, the Gnostic teachers raised up their fantastic explanations of the universe and of human life, **Gnosticism** including the appearance of Christ—explanations **anti-Christian** often full of romance, and rendered still more mysterious by the teaching of magic, but fundamentally non-Christian. This is seen clearly by the fact that all Gnostics, whether Judaic or not, were at one in certain conclusions which the Church rejected.

(a) All the Gnostics were inclined to believe that matter is in itself evil. On the monistic theory it was evil, in the intellectual rather than the moral sense, because it was so far removed from God that it was regarded as contrary to His nature. Being material and limited, it was opposed to what is purely spiritual and infinite; and therefore incapable of harmony with spirit. On the dualistic view, matter belongs to the domain of the evil principle, and is ethically bad, and incapable of redemption. Therefore, on either theory God could not have directly *created* the world, as both orthodox Jew and Christian believed. The Gnostics imagined the creation to have taken place through the work of angels or aeons, or through some other divinity, usually called the Demiurge, or 'workman,' whom they often identified with the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

(b) Consequently, the Church's doctrine of the Incarnation was rejected. No single Gnostic believed that the Word was made flesh. Not only was there no plurality of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, but the Godhead could not have united itself in any real sense with what is limited and material and evil.

Hence the ingenious explanations which the Gnostics proposed for the appearance of Christ upon earth. Some supposed that an 'aeon' descended upon the man Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary. Others denied the reality of His human nature. His bodily life they considered an illusion, a mere phantom. Hence they were called Docetists (*δοκεῖν*, to appear).

(c) Necessarily, all the Gnostics denied also any real redemp-

tion or resurrection of the human body. Besides these anti-Christian conclusions, the whole tone and attitude of Gnostic speculation was profoundly opposed to the Gospel. They made 'salvation' to depend on intellectual rather than moral standards. For goodness or faith they substituted 'knowledge.' Especially they lacked the real sense of sin, and of the need of cleansing and pardon, though they often talked about it. They substituted for these the ideas of ignorance and illumination.

It remains to say something of the effects of Gnosticism on practical life. These went in two opposite directions. Some of the Gnostics, keeping the tradition of the Essenes, endeavoured to escape from the supposed evil of matter by strict asceticism, living very sparsely, abstaining from marriage, and refusing to take flesh or wine (cp. Col. ii. 20-23, and 1 Tim. iv. 1-5).

But others, probably a large number, followed the course that logic as well as human desires suggested. Matter being hopelessly evil, one was as much enslaved to it by a diet of bread and water as by a rich banquet. Therefore one might as well enjoy oneself. A life of licence and immorality was no more unrighteous than one of strictness. This 'antinomianism' was fostered too by the Gnostic conceit of 'knowledge,' which did away with the necessity of morality (just as in S. Paul's day, his teaching as to 'faith' was wrested in the interests of immorality). And in the case of those Gnostics who took a violently anti-Jewish line, immorality almost appeared as a virtue, because the Commandments were Jewish and the work of the Demiurge!

The traditional founder of Gnosticism was Simon Magus, the sorcerer of Samaria, of Acts viii. He was believed to have gone to Rome, and there actively opposed the teaching of S. Peter, by his heretical doctrine and magical acts. His career was said to have been cut short by the prayers of S. Peter, in answer to which the magician, while attempting to fly in the air, was brought to the ground and killed. Justin Martyr states that Simon was worshipped throughout Samaria as a god, and that an altar had even been

erected to him in Rome on the island in the Tiber. He was probably mistaken on this latter point: the altar he had seen was apparently one erected to Semo Sancus, a Samnite deity, which Justin mistook for 'Simon Sanctus.' It is impossible to state, with any certainty, what the teaching of Simon was, beyond his undoubted practice of magic. He is said to have taught a theory of 'aeons,' the greatest of which emanations from the Divine he asserted to be himself! He was accompanied by a woman of Tyre, called Helen, who also had a place in his theological system, being the Divine 'Intelligence' which proceeded from Simon himself. Eusebius (ii. 13) asserts that the followers of Simon pretended to be Christians, that they had existed down to his own day, lived immoral lives, and worshipped images and pictures of Simon and Helen, honouring them with incense and sacrifices.

Side by side with the figure of Simon Magus, the opponent of S. Peter, there looms through the mist of tradition that of Cerinthus, the opponent of S. John at Ephesus.

**Cerinthus.**

He is apparently a type of the Judaic Gnostic; whereas Simon was probably only a sorcerer of unusual powers and effrontery, who had added the name of Christ to his repertory of spells. Cerinthus taught that the world was not made by the supreme God, but by some lower power who was far separated from and ignorant of Him: that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, on whom 'Christ' descended at His baptism. Thus Cerinthus combined Ebionite theology with Gnostic speculation. He is also said to have taught a very carnal and material conception of the Millennium, as a reign of Christ on earth, when the faithful would be able to indulge unchecked in all the pleasures of the flesh!

The disciple and successor of Simon Magus was Menander, also a Samaritan magician, who taught at Antioch, professing himself to be the Saviour sent down by the aeons,

**Menander.**

and pretending to be able to confer the gifts of power over the angels of creation, and of immortal life. From this man, according to Eusebius, Gnostic heresy spread out into two branches, 'a serpent-like power, double-tongued and double-

headed,' at Antioch and Alexandria, under Saturninus and Basilides.

Saturninus followed his masters in the practice of magical arts. He was apparently a dualist, holding matter to be evil, asserting that marriage was the creation of Satan  
**Saturninus.** and teaching a 'Docetic' conception of Christ.

Basilides, though he had few followers, seems to have been one of the most important and interesting Gnostic teachers.

**Basilides.** He explained creation by a theory of downward emanations from the Divine. 'This world was formed by the angels of the lowest or 365th heaven. God is impersonal: He can only be defined in negative terms; He is 'the God who is not'; obviously a Divinity who can neither be known, loved, or worshipped. The world was redeemed by Christ, who was really 'Nous,' or 'Understanding,' the first and highest of the emanations from the Godhead. He appeared as Jesus, but was not crucified, for Simon of Cyrene suffered in his stead, and Christ, as either Basilides or his followers profanely said, stood by and laughed. There was no dualism in Basilides' scheme; all was part of one system, though the redemption by Christ was ultimately to rearrange into order all that was out of place in the world. The final state of blessedness would be, he thought, 'a great ignorance,' a conception that suggests the Nirvana of the Buddhist. His teaching was practically non-moral, knowledge was the key to salvation; he knew nothing of sin and repentance. Austere in life himself, his followers were very lax, and they were able to escape persecution as Christians by their theory that it was right to deny the 'Crucified,' inasmuch as Christ had not really suffered.

Christian writers who attacked the Gnostics, record the names and doctrines of various strange sects. The Carpocratians,  
**Gnostic sects.** called from Carpocrates, a follower of Cerinthus, are said to have been grossly immoral, and to have held the monstrous doctrine that perfection is to be attained by breaking in every particular the moral law!

The Ophites were so called from their devotion to the serpent

of Gen. iii., whom they regarded as the first liberator of mankind. A sect of the Ophites were styled Cainites. They regarded the God of the Old Testament as evil; hence with pleasing logic they reversed all the moral judgments of the Bible. Cain became the great exemplar of righteousness, in which he was ably followed by the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. Judas Iscariot similarly became the one true and enlightened apostle.

If such doctrines were really carried out into practice, it is probable that the Gnostics were to some extent responsible, as the Christian fathers assert, for the evil stories respecting the crimes of Christians.

An example of the opposite attitude is seen in the sect of the Encratites (the 'self-restrained'), who in their fear of the evil of matter went to the extremes of asceticism. They appear to have been an anti-Jewish sect. One distinguished name is connected with them, Tatian, once a disciple of Justin Martyr. He was a considerable writer, but he is best known as the compiler of the *Diatessaron*, the first attempt to combine extracts from the four Gospels into one narrative. It was intended for Church reading, and was probably composed before 172, when Tatian left Rome for the East. There it became extremely popular in a Syriac version, and afterwards in Latin in the West. The original work is lost, but from a commentary on it and from Latin and Arabic versions, attempts have been made to reconstruct it.

Another ascetic sect was that of the Elkasaites, which first appears early in the third century. They possessed a pretended revelation to a certain Elkasai, and were strongly Jewish in their attitude, from which they are sometimes classed with the Ebionites. They practised magical rites and held circumcision and the observances of the law to be necessary. A distinctive and interesting feature of their system was the remission of sins after baptism by a sort of repeated baptism performed by the penitent himself. The extravagances of the book of Elkasai remind one of the Koran. Christ was supposed to have appeared to Elkasai as an angel ninety-six miles high!

The interest of the Elkasaites lies not so much in themselves as in the connection between their book and certain well-known works still extant, which were circulated in the name of S. Clement of Rome, the *Homilies* and *Recognitions*. These are really productions of the Judaic-Gnostic School. They tell the stories of the supposed wanderings and adventures of S. Clement, and of the conflict between S. Peter and Simon Magus. Under colour of the latter name S. Paul is attacked, and S. James is represented as the real head of the Church. These romances have gained more importance in recent years than they are entitled to, because they were used by the Tübingen school of theologians to support a theory, now discredited, that S. Paul was entirely out of harmony with S. Peter and the other leaders of apostolic Christianity.

We pass from the consideration of these half-legendary and elusive sects in which there is a strange tangle of Judaism and Orientalism, asceticism and antinomianism, to consider in conclusion the two most important and influential Gnostic teachers, about whom much fuller information is to hand: *Valentinus*, the best representative of true eclectic and intellectual Gnosticism; and *Marcion*, the most religious and also most anti-Jewish Gnostic.

Valentinus was a student of Alexandria, but about A.D. 140 he was teaching in Rome. He developed the aeon-theory of **Valentinus.** the universe with considerable power of imagination, constructing an elaborate and romantic story of the relation and intermarriage of the aeons, which are half-personified abstractions. From the marriage of 'Abyss' and 'Silence' were born 'Intellect' and 'Truth,' and from their union, 'Word' and 'Life,' and from them again 'Man' and 'Church.' These eight he called the Ogdoad. From 'Word' and 'Life' again came ten aeons, called the Decad, and from 'Man' and 'Church,' twelve more called the Dodecad. These thirty formed the 'Fulness' or 'Pleroma.' Valentinus then proceeds to elaborate the adventures of 'Sophia' (Wisdom), the lowest of the Pleroma. She desired to know 'Abyss,' but was prevented by 'Horos' (Limit), and gave birth to a



mysterious being called Hachamoth, or 'Desire of Wisdom,' who was cast out from the Pleroma and wandered weeping and disconsolate. To keep the other aeons in order, 'Intellect' and 'Truth' now produce 'Christ' and the 'Holy Spirit.' The whole of the aeons, now thirty-two in number, unite to produce the thirty-third, 'Jesus,' in whom all perfections combine. He consoles Hachamoth, and she gives birth to the Demiurge, the creator of the visible world and of mankind. Men are divided into three classes, according to Valentinus: the 'spiritual,' represented by Seth, who are destined for the highest blessedness; the 'psychic,' of whom Abel is the type, who are only capable of a lower perfection; and the 'material,' represented by Cain, who are lost.

The teaching of Valentinus as to the position of the Saviour and His redemptive work was couched in a high strain, but as usual his conception of redemption was intellectual rather than moral. It is difficult to understand the Valentinian teaching about His birth and His relations with the Demiurge and the Old Testament. Some Valentinians taught that the Demiurge had prepared a Messiah to save the Jews, but at His baptism the aeon Jesus descended on Him for a season, unknown to the Demiurge, so that He became a real Saviour for those of mankind who were capable of salvation. The Messiah, produced by the Demiurge, was born of Mary, but it was only a Docetic birth. He was of ethereal substance, which He did not derive from His mother at all.

This system of Valentinus, difficult and complicated as it was, and fundamentally non-Christian, though full of Christian words, seems for a time to have exercised a great fascination; to which perhaps its secrecy, the long course of initiation required and even the large payments exacted, may have contributed. It appealed to the sentimental and the curious, it flattered self-conceit, and made no inconvenient demands for self-discipline. It was a thoroughly eclectic system, containing elements that might appeal to the heathen, the Jew, the Platonist, and the Christian inquirers. And like all such systems, it fell to pieces through its own liberality and lack of backbone.

Marcion was a Gnostic of very different type, and more properly styled a 'heretic,' for he had been brought up a Christian, the son of a bishop, it is said, or even once a bishop himself, but was excommunicated and became the founder of an heretical sect. He was a wealthy man, a ship-owner in Pontus; but he came to Rome about the middle of the second century, became the disciple of Cerdon, a dualistic Gnostic, and developed the teaching of his master. There were neither 'aeons' nor magic in the system of Marcion. He started from the basis of the Scriptures and Christianity, and tried to reconstruct these in order to get rid of what seemed to him a fundamental crux. This was the problem of evil. How could God, whom Marcion believed to be personal and a God of love, have directly created a world in which there is so much sin and suffering? Such seemed to him a contradiction of the Lord's word that 'a good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit,' a text which he is said to have propounded to the Roman presbyters. He took refuge in dualism. It is uncertain whether he himself or only his followers assumed the existence of a positively evil God, as well as the God of goodness. But he certainly invented a Demiurge, or God of 'justice' rather than goodness, who was the God of the Old Testament. Matter and the created world were essentially evil, though Marcion apparently did not say that these were actually created by his 'judicial God.' The latter, however, was the author of the Old Testament revelation, the Jehovah who gave the law and the prophecies and punished sinners.

Consequently Marcion thought that Christians must entirely reject the Old Testament. Christ was not the Messiah whom the Demiurge had foretold in prophecy, but one sent by the God of goodness to deliver men from the Demiurge. He was not born of Mary, nor took flesh, but appeared in a phantom humanity suddenly among men in the synagogue at Capernaum.

One of the most interesting features of Marcion's teaching was his bold attempt to alter and mutilate the Scriptures so as to fit in with these theories. He was the first of a long line of so-

**Marcion.**

**Marcion's  
Biblical  
criticism.**

called critics who apply purely subjective canons of criticism to the Scripture. Of course the Old Testament found no place in Marcion's Bible. And S. Luke was the only Gospel he admitted, but he rejected the opening chapters describing our Lord's birth, and he made omissions and alterations, to avoid giving any sanction to the Old Testament. The rest of his canon was exclusively Pauline, but even here he rejected the Pastoral Epistles, and the last two chapters of Romans. But so inextricably is the New Testament bound with the Old, that it seems to us that Marcion ought logically not even to have retained what he did. Indeed, like all dualistic theorists, he landed himself in hopeless inconsistencies and contradictions.

Nevertheless, Marcion was the founder of the only serious schism which Gnosticism caused in the Christian Church. Excommunicated by the Roman Church, he established **The** himself as bishop of a ' Marcionite ' sect, which was **Marcionites.** organised on the Christian model. A severe asceticism was the rule, marriage and the eating of flesh were forbidden ; a Eucharist was celebrated with water instead of wine. Saturday, being the Jewish Sabbath, was observed as a fast. The Marcionites were very stedfast in their opinion, and were ready to suffer martyrdom as Christians. Their succession of bishops lasted a long time ; they spread widely over the Empire. They fell under Constantine's persecuting zeal, who confiscated their churches and tried to suppress them. Nevertheless they lasted on certainly till the sixth century, and traces are said to have remained of them as late as the tenth.

One fact stands out clearly in the study of Gnosticism. The Gnostic teachers failed to break down or seriously to impair the solidity of the Church and the definiteness of the **Failure of** Christian Faith. This is one of the most significant **Gnosticism.** features of early Church history. The Gnostics were clever, and attractive to their age. The vast majority of Christians were quite unable to cope with them in learning and ingenuity, and the Church had no long traditions behind her. It would not seem surprising if many Christians had been bewildered and shaken in their faith. But such was not the case. The common

conscience of the Christian body held tenaciously to the Scriptures and the Incarnation. Christian life was too fresh and vigorous to be infected by the microbe of Gnosticism. The Christian victory was seen not only in the brief life and rapid decay of the Gnostic systems, but also in the positive strengthening of the Christian witness by the assaults made upon it. In answer to these, the Church produced both great literary champions and a Christian philosophy which answered the Gnostics on their own ground.

Though Gnosticism as a series of formal systems passed away (with the exception of the Marcionites) by the fourth century, **Survivals of Gnosticism.** it is an interesting study to trace how both its characteristic attitude and some at least of its doctrines tend to reappear through later history. Dualism reappeared in the Manichaean heresy, and though it has lost its attraction for philosophers, it still remains a favourite refuge for many who are impatient of the standing mysteries of strife and evil in the world, who, with Tennyson's dying king, are constrained to cry out :

‘ O me ! for why is all around us here  
As if some lesser God had made the world  
But had not force to shape it as he would,  
Till the high God behold it from beyond,  
And enter it, and make it beautiful ?’

Pantheism, in all its forms, not least that which underlies a merely evolutionary conception of the world, offers a God who is as unapproachable and unknowable as that of Basilides, a mere  $\alpha^{\text{th}}$  to whom prayer is meaningless.

And in the ‘modernist’ tendency to separate the Christ of history from the Christ of theology—*i.e.* the Christ of Christian belief and experience—we again catch an echo of the Gnostic idea of the combination of an ‘aeon’ with Jesus of Nazareth, rather than the union in one Person of God and man. Nor is ‘Docetism’ quite dead. It is no longer possible indeed to regard the body of Jesus as a phantom, but the miracles, and especially the Resurrection and Ascension, are often regarded in a way which is fundamentally ‘Docetic.’ The ancient Gnostic could not

endure to think of this material body of our mortal limitations as united with God. The modern Gnostic shrinks from the idea of a physical resurrection. He may regard the Resurrection appearances as divinely purposed to convey truth to men, but they are not to him objective realities in the sense in which the Church has always witnessed to them.

Thus the study of ancient Gnosticism is no mere groping amid the follies and fantasies of past ages. It illustrates tendencies which beset the path of the Church to-day as much as in the second century.

The absence of Gnostic literature has already been noticed. Two writings, however, have been preserved which merit some comment, and it must be admitted that, while they *Pistis Sophia* show some of the characteristic failings of Gnostic theory, they are not without religious value. The first is the book known by the barbarous title of *Pistis Sophia* ('Faith-wisdom'). It is a long and rather bewildering allegory of the redemption of the soul, but throughout it Jesus Christ is the prominent figure as the great world Redeemer. He is represented as after His resurrection giving instructions for eleven years to His disciples, then returning to heaven to complete His redemptive work, and again, on the following day, coming to His disciples and teaching them all mysteries. These relate to 'the kingdom of light,' the origin, probation, redemption, and punishment of human souls, and the final destruction of all evil. The book stands much above the ordinary level of Gnostic teaching, as far as we know it, in its strong moral tendency, its elaborate teaching of penitence, and its sense of the evil of sin. And it lays great stress upon the value of sacraments. The Eucharist is regarded as a sacrifice potent for the forgiveness of sins. But in its extravagant and complicated mythology, its profession of secret knowledge imparted by Christ, over and above the accepted belief of the Church, and its Docetic description of the Incarnation, the book is essentially Gnostic rather than Christian. (For full description of its contents see *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.)

The letter of Ptolemaeus, a disciple of Valentinus, to a lady

named Flora is a very interesting and able production. Flora had inquired as to the interpretation of the Law of Moses, which Ptolemaeus the Gnostics ascribed to some other author than and Flora. the God of goodness. Ptolemaeus tells her that it cannot be wholly His work, as it contains much that is imperfect, neither can it be the work of the evil one, for its purpose is to establish righteousness. It must be ascribed to a third and intermediate being, the Demiurge. The analysis of the Law as given by Ptolemaeus is exceedingly acute. He finds in it three sorts of contents. (1) That which is good, and consists of commandments really given to Moses by the Demiurge. (2) That which Moses himself added, *e.g.* the precept about divorce for 'the hardness of men's hearts.' (3) Traditions which the Jewish elders invented. The first part, which is the really important one, again consists of three parts—(a) the moral precepts fulfilled in Christ; (b) imperfect precepts adapted to human weakness, such as the law of retaliation, which the Saviour abolished; (c) typical ordinances, such as sacrifices and the Sabbath, which have also been abolished, while their spiritual meaning remains.

In these divisions there is shown a close study of the Gospels, and a sincere attempt to grapple with difficulties. The error, of course, which pervades the whole, is the inability of the writer to comprehend that a revelation, though imperfect and adapted only to early stages of religious education, may still proceed from the one God who is supreme over all history, and who deals with man as he is, in order that He may make him what he ought to be. Hence, Ptolemaeus, like so many of the Gnostics, takes refuge in dualism. But his letter certainly shows how profoundly Christianity and the teaching of Christ had attracted and influenced some at least who could not bring themselves to accept the faith as it was taught by the Church. The whole production stands on a much higher level than either the anti-Judaism or the irreverent fables of many of the Gnostics. It suggests that Gnosticism may have had a better side to it than we should perhaps imagine from the attacks of its opponents.

## QUESTIONS.

1. What is the meaning of 'heresy'?
2. Who were the Ebionites?
3. What was the relation of the Gnostics to the Church?
4. What were the problems which the Gnostics endeavoured to solve?
5. Show that their answers were fundamentally opposed to Christianity.
6. What were the practical results of Gnosticism upon life?
7. Who is the traditional founder of Gnosticism?
8. Describe the chief Gnostic sects.
9. Summarise and criticise the system of Valentinus.
10. What unique and interesting features are to be seen in the teaching and career of Marcion?
11. Why did Gnosticism fail?
12. What writings of the Gnostic teachers survive?

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

Gnosticism and the Gnostic systems :

Hort. *Judaistic Christianity.*

'Gnosticism' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography.*

Harnack. *History of Dogma.*

Mansel. *Gnostic Heresies.*

Simcox. *History of the Church.*

## CHAPTER VIII. THE CHURCH'S REPLY TO HERESY

'CATHOLIC Christianity has never passed, humanly speaking, through any other crisis of such utter peril,' says Dr. Turner of the conflict with Gnosticism. Nevertheless, the Church's consciousness of her faith was too strong and definite for the Gnostics to shake it. She did not by any means endure them in silence.

**Christian  
defence—**  
(1) **In the  
West.**

A considerable part of the Christian literature of the end of the second and beginning of the third centuries is directed against the would-be innovators. This Christian defence proceeded on two distinct lines. The writers of the West, generally speaking, including those of N. Africa, took their stand on the unity and solidarity of the Christian tradition. Against the secret traditions professed by the Gnostics, they laid stress on their own well-known and easily verifiable continuity of teaching. They appealed to the succession of Catholic bishops in every part of the Church, who held the same faith. In contrast with this, they exposed, without much mercy, the endless variations and inconsistencies of the Gnostics. They held up to ridicule the loves of the aeons, and the sorrows of Hachamoth; the contradictions in which belief in the evil of matter involved the ascetic; the childish spells and incantations in which the Gnostic delighted. They insisted on the dignity and unchangeableness of the Catholic Faith. Such was the line adopted by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus.

On the other hand, the great teachers of Alexandria, particularly Clement and Origen, while equally firm in their insistence on the apostolic tradition, preferred to view the faith of the Church, not so much in isolation, as the one rock of truth amid the sea of human error, as in its relation to



all true human knowledge, to which they held it supplied the key.

Thus the Alexandrines began to build up a Christian philosophy, which taught the unity of God's work and purpose in nature and in all history as well as in revelation. The theories of the Gnostics were overthrown by showing that the Church really possessed a rational answer to all their problems. It was the appeal not merely to faith, but to reason as enlightened and guided by faith.

In the West, the first and chief opponent of the Gnostics was Irenaeus. His monumental work 'Against Heresies' still survives in a very old Latin translation, some part also of the original Greek having been preserved. **S. Irenaeus.**

It is one of our chief authorities, both for the system of Valentinus and the teaching of the other Gnostic sects. S. Irenaeus himself is an interesting figure. He succeeded to the bishopric of Lyons, after the death of Pothinus in the great persecution of 177, but by birth and training he was an Eastern, and carried on the direct line of tradition from S. Ignatius and S. Polycarp, having been the pupil of the latter. He was born between 120 and 130, and lived on till the opening years of the next century.

He had studied in detail the teaching of the Gnostics, and, indeed, is somewhat wearisome in his descriptions of their absurdities. The value of his work as a defence **The Faith of the Church.** lies in the stress he lays on the unity of God, and of His revelation in Old and New Testaments; the unity of Christ's person, His eternal pre-existence and deity; the reality of the Incarnation, by which He gave a new beginning to the human race, and the reality of the Atonement. He insists on the definiteness and certainty of the Catholic tradition, and he gives a statement of Christian belief as follows, the similarity of which to the Apostles' Creed is evident:—

'The Church, although now scattered over the face of the world, still guards the faith which it received from the Apostles and their immediate disciples, the faith in one God, the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth and the sea and all things in them, and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who

was incarnate for our salvation ; and in the Holy Spirit, who by the prophets had proclaimed the dispensations and the advents and the birth from the Virgin, and the suffering and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father . . . to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race . . . and that he should execute just judgment towards all.'

This faith, Irenaeus says, is one and the same all over the world, illuminating all men who will to come to a knowledge of the truth, even as one and the same sun shines everywhere. It can neither be added to nor diminished by any supposed 'knowledge' (i. 10). But the faith is no mere lifeless tradition of orthodoxy ; 'by the Spirit of God, it renews its youth, and, like some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causes the vessel which contains it to renew its youth also' (iii. 24).

This faith is attested by the four Gospels and by the apostolic tradition preserved in the Church, along with the succession of **The Church of Rome** bishops from those who were consecrated by the Apostles. Consequently in the Church alone is to be found the truth and the true interpretation of Scripture. This tradition is open and well known. There is no secret teaching of the Apostles, revealed to superior intellects, such as the Gnostics invented. In this connection Irenaeus uses some remarkable language respecting the Church of Rome.

It would be tedious, he says, to examine all the lists of episcopal succession in the different churches ; error is sufficiently refuted by taking the example of the 'very great, ancient, and universally known Church founded and organised at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul.' He gives the succession of Roman bishops from Linus, the first, down to Eleutherus, the twelfth. And he says, 'with this Church, on account of its more powerful leadership, every church, that is, those who are in every region faithful (*i.e.* Christians), must of necessity agree ; for here the tradition of the Apostles has been always preserved by those who came from every

region.'<sup>1</sup> In the absence of the original Greek it is difficult to estimate the exact force of these words, but it seems that in the mind of Irenaeus this evident authority of the Roman Church is due, in the first place, to its continuity of tradition from the *two* great Apostles, and secondly, to the fact that it was the meeting point of Christians from all parts of the world. Roman tradition was not only directly apostolic, but represented the common consent of Christendom.

Irenaeus uses remarkable language about the Eucharist. It is that 'pure sacrifice' which was foretold by Malachi (i. 10-11). When the bread receives the invocation of God, it is no longer common bread, but 'Eucharist,' consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity (iv. 18).

The Church in North Africa is one of the most remarkable phenomena of early Christianity. The splendour of its brief bloom, the swiftness of its decay, and the vast influence of its writers and saints on the Western Church generally make its career a unique episode of Christian history.

**The North  
African  
Church.**

The Roman provinces of Africa and Mauretania extended over the district of the modern Tunis, Tripoli, Algeria, and part of Morocco. Carthage, the greatest city of Africa, originally a Phoenician colony, was for long the serious rival of Rome. But the Punic Wars had brought her downfall in 146 B.C. Julius Caesar restored Carthage a century later, and added to the original small province of proconsular Africa the kingdom of Numidia. And Mauretania became, too, a Roman province in A.D. 40. The province of Africa was rich and populous, crowded with cities, and its fields supplied Italy and Rome with corn. Roman civilisation and institutions had taken deep root. Latin became the chief language, and there was a vigorous intellectual life. But the religion of Rome, though

<sup>1</sup> Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potentiorem principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditio (iii. 3). 'Convenire ad' may also be translated 'resort to.'

it had overthrown the original African and Phœnician worships, never took much hold. Consequently the Church planted in Africa, in some unknown ways in the first century, found here a congenial and comparatively unoccupied soil.

A type of Christianity grew up very different from that of the East or of Alexandria. It was less philosophical, more narrowly logical, full of hot African emotion and zeal. Its faults lay in the excess of its good qualities, in intolerance, and the spirit of controversy. The Africans had neither the practical wisdom and liberality of the Roman Church, nor the broad view of the Alexandrians. The decay and fall of African Christianity were due largely to internal dissensions and schisms, and probably also to moral failure. More attention was given to controversy than to the pursuit of practical holiness. Hence, African Christianity proved like the seed sown on stony ground. It fell irrevocably before the succession of barbarian invasions that swept North Africa from the fifth to the eighth centuries.

Nevertheless, Africa had her great contribution to make to the development of Christian thought and institutions. No-  
**African** where perhaps so clearly as in Africa was grasped  
**theology.** the definiteness and unchangeableness of the faith. Where Alexandria saw the similarities between Christianity and heathen religions and philosophies, Africa saw the differences; she felt the finality and unity of the Christian revelation, and was ready to carry these to their logical conclusions. And this has left a permanent mark on Western theology. Indeed, it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that Latin Christianity grew up not in Italy or Gaul but in North Africa. Here arose the great Latin writers of the Church. Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine were all Africans, and these three ever since have exercised a paramount influence in the West.

Even the characteristic language of the Western Church came from Africa rather than Italy. Greek was apparently the original official language of the Roman Church, and of her services, and Greek forms still survive like fossils embedded in the Latin rites, in such popular devotions as the *Trisagion*. But the Latin of Africa and her ecclesiastical writers gradually

drove out Greek, and established itself as the tongue of the Western Church. It is probable, though not certain, that the earlier Latin Bible of the Church, the *vetus Latina*, which preceded S. Jerome's Vulgate, sprang from Africa.

Africa, as might be expected from the warmth and zeal of its Christianity, contributed early to the roll of martyrs. In 181, at the beginning of the reign of Commodus, there **African** suffered for Christ, Namphamo and his three com- **martyrs**. panions, and in the same year the better known martyrs of Scilla; these were a little band of twelve, three of whom were women, who were beheaded at Carthage by the Proconsul Saturninus. Their testimony is recorded: 'We render honour to Caesar as Caesar, but worship and prayer to God alone.'

Some twenty years later came the persecuting edict of the Emperor Severus. Though for long he had been regarded as favourable to the Christians, he finally turned against them, and forbade all further conversions either to Christianity or Judaism. In the persecution that followed, and lasted spasmodically till 211, S. Irenaeus suffered martyrdom at Lyons with others, but the heaviest blows fell on Egypt and Africa. At Alexandria, Leonides, the father of Origen, suffered. In Africa, probably at Carthage, S. Perpetua, a young matron of good family, with S. Felicitas and several others, was put to death on March 7, 202 or 203. This martyrdom is described in a contemporary narrative, part of which purports to have been written by Perpetua herself and her fellow-martyr Saturus. It is a singularly beautiful story. The martyrs, while confined in their dark and suffocating dungeons, saw heavenly visions. Perpetua found herself in the gardens of Paradise, fed by the Good Shepherd, amidst a white-robed throng. She also saw her dead brother (who had died at the age of seven), Dinocrates, suffering in <sup>1</sup> a place of gloom, tormented by thirst, and then relieved by the earnest prayers of the Church. Saturus, too, had a vision of the after-death, when he was borne by angels

<sup>1</sup> It is very doubtful whether this condition can be described as 'purgatory' in the later sense. Probably Dinocrates was unbaptized; Perpetua herself was only a catechumen.

to Paradise, and saw the throne with its four-and-twenty elders and heard the Thrice Holy Song.

These martyrs were thrown to wild beasts. Perpetua, after being tossed by a wild cow, was despatched with the sword.

The persecution broke out again with increased cruelty under the Proconsul Scapula in 210 or 211.

These African martyrdoms are brought vividly before us in the writings of the great Tertullian. This extraordinary man, the first great Latin writer of the Western Church, illustrates in his own character and career both the strength and the weakness of African Christianity. He was born about 160, of heathen parents, and showed brilliant abilities. A man of wide reading, he became also a trained lawyer. In 192 he was converted to Christianity, and, first as a layman and afterwards as a priest, he wrote a series of powerful treatises. He showed himself a master of satire, epigram, and special pleading; never so happy as when fighting, whether his attacks were directed against the heathen persecutor, the heretic, or the Christian whose life did not come up to his own severe ideal. He has well been called 'the fierce Tertullian.' There is in him a touch of Dean Swift's *sæva indignatio*. He knew his failing. 'Most wretched am I,' he writes, 'ever sick with the heats of impatience.' But self-knowledge failed to keep him from the results of his own temper. In middle life, out of heart with the laxness, as he thought it, of the Church, he fell into the schism of 'the Montanists' (p. 125), the earliest of the puritanical sects who disregarded the parable of the wheat and the tares. Of the thirty-six treatises attributed to Tertullian, some were written while he was still a Catholic, beginning with the 'Address to the Martyrs' in 197: others after he became a Montanist. All are vigorous, full of interest, and none of them really conflict with Catholic theology on fundamental questions. Among the most important are the Apology, the De Praescriptione, and the Treatise on Baptism.

The *Apology* is addressed to the Proconsul of Africa, probably at the time of Severus' persecution. It is an impassioned appeal for *justice*, brilliantly written, on fire with passionate zeal.

Tertullian dwells on the rapid spread of the Church. 'We are not of yesterday, and we have filled all that you possess—only the temples have we left you!' He insists not only, **Tertullian's** with the other apologists, on the moral fruits of **Apology**. Christianity, and on Christian loyalty to the Emperor, and their constant prayers for him and the Empire, but on the inherent truth of Christianity itself. It is the faith that is in harmony with man's true nature and deepest needs. In a remarkable passage he speaks of 'the witness of the soul.' 'Though it be confined in the prison of the body, trammelled by evil institutions, weakened by lusts and desires, enslaved to false gods, yet when at length it comes to itself, as it were after drunkenness or slumber, or some disease, and feels its own true health, then it names God.' And it is conscious, he goes on, that God is great and good, and the judge of right—'O witness of the soul which by nature is Christian!'

He pours scorn on the futile cruelties of those who are trying to stamp out Christianity. 'The more you mow us down, the fuller is the harvest; the blood of Christians is the seed.' And he holds up to ridicule the childish superstitions which attributed horrid crimes to Christians. 'How great would be the glory of that governor who could find out a Christian who has eaten already a hundred infants!'

The tone of this 'Apology' is not always agreeable, but it is the outburst of one who felt he was on the winning side.

The *De Praescriptione*<sup>1</sup> is a treatise of great and lasting importance. It clears the ground in the great controversy between the Church and the 'heretics,' by laying down with **Tertullian** clear-cut logic the primary principle of the relation **against** of the Scriptures to the faith. Men had already **Heresy**. discovered that it was possible to adduce texts from the Bible in support of any heresy. Many of the Gnostics, moreover, had pretended to the possession of secret writings and traditions handed down from the Apostles; as if the Apostles, like the

<sup>1</sup> A legal phrase meaning the 'limitation' of an inquiry (= 'a demurrer'). The controversy with heretics is limited to one point—the legitimacy of their appeal to the Scriptures.

heathen philosophers, had taught one thing to the multitude and another to the 'intellectuals.' Others, like Marcion, had refused to accept any Scriptures which they thought contrary to their own teaching.

Tertullian sweeps the board clean by laying down that there must be no argument at all with heretics respecting the Scriptures. The Scriptures belong to the Church, to those who possess the rule of faith handed down from the Apostles and Christ Himself. By this rule alone can the Scriptures be rightly interpreted. He summarises its contents (xiii.) in words which suggest the Apostles' Creed, with some additional clauses on the pre-existence and creative work of the Logos, the Son of God, who was born at last into the world as Jesus Christ. This rule of faith is final and complete, the standard of truth, and it is to this, rather than to the Scriptures, that the primary appeal in all controversies must be made.

He then deals with various objections which might be raised as to the trustworthiness of this rule of faith; such as the ignorance or dissensions of the Apostles, or their failure to communicate the whole faith to the Church. By far the most effective answer Tertullian makes is to the suggestion that the Church herself may have failed to transmit the faith correctly. He appeals triumphantly to the unanimity of all the Churches founded by the Apostles. 'Is it likely,' he asks, 'they would all have gone astray into one and the same faith?' This argument has not lost its weight with the process of time. The tendency of error is to produce diversity. The practical agreement of Catholic Christendom on the fundamentals of the faith is still an impressive fact.

A further objection might be raised as to the right of certain churches to be considered 'apostolic.' Had not the heretics their churches? There are two tests, he replies, of apostolicity. Unbroken succession from the apostolic founder, and identity of teaching with the Apostles. Let the heretics produce the origin of their churches, and the list of their bishops. They cannot do this, for they are all of later origin than the Apostles, and their teaching is certainly different. For the rule of faith



and the true interpretation of the Scriptures, let them refer to such churches as those of Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, pre-eminently Rome; where Peter and Paul and John fought and suffered, where the faith, the Scriptures, and the sacraments are preserved.

Thus, to Tertullian, the Creeds of the Church would be no mere summaries of Scriptures, which later ages might modify or reconstruct, but an independent and primary line of witness, and the Christian's guide and key to the interpretation of the Bible.

Tertullian's treatise on Baptism is noteworthy as the first Christian monograph on this subject. He points out the universal use of *water* in God's methods of revelation, **Baptism.** 'Nunquam sine aqua Christus.' That Baptism

the instrument of regeneration is stated quite definitely. 'Blessed is the sacrament of water, by which we are washed from the sins of our former blindness, and are set free and attain to eternal.' Faith without baptism, he holds, is not sufficient for salvation.

It was a strange irony of human perversity that led Tertullian to forsake the Church, whose claims he had so strongly and early vindicated in the *De Praescriptione*, and to become a leader at Carthage of the sect of the **Montanism.**

Montanists. The development of this schism, for it can scarcely be called a heresy, is among the most remarkable phenomena of the second century. It began in Phrygia, always the home of strange and fanatical religions, with the preaching of Montanus, who, after he had converted to Christianity, once, it is said, a priest of Cybele.<sup>1</sup> He, with his two women disciples, Prisca and Maximilla, claimed prophetic inspiration. They professed to be the mouthpieces of the Paraclete, and announced the immediate Advent of Christ, and the establishment of His reign of a thousand years on earth. They even pointed out the spot in Phrygia where the new and heavenly Jerusalem would descend from heaven to earth. Soon they had a numerous and excited following, who relinquished their earthly business in view of the coming

<sup>1</sup> The date is disputed, and placed variously from 130 to 170.

millennium, broke off their family ties, and distributed their possessions. With frenzied zeal they endeavoured to purify the Church. They adopted strict asceticism, condemned second marriages, and denied that deadly sin after baptism could receive forgiveness on earth.

But the outstanding feature of Montanism was its revival of 'prophecy.' It was an attempt to return to what were imagined to be the conditions of the first days of the Church. But this involved a reaction against the fixed ecclesiastical order which had developed so rapidly since the days of the Apostles. The 'prophet' was regarded by the Montanists as *ipso facto* superior in authority to any bishop or priest. He was the immediate mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit.

Such 'revivals' with their strange ecstatic or hysterical accompaniments have been seen often since; usually beginning within the Church, aiming with fanatical impatience at an impossible spiritual standard, and then ending in a schism. The Montanist prophesying created a great impression in the West as well as the East. The bishops at first were doubtful how to deal with it, as its adherents were not guilty of any formal denial of the Faith. But both its excesses of zeal and its whole attitude were soon felt to be contrary to the spirit and the order of the Catholic Church. Montanist leaders began to be excommunicated, and from the third century onward the movement became definitely a schism, and sank into discredit. But its influence and its religious vagaries lasted a considerable time. In Africa there were still Montanists in S. Augustine's time. In Phrygia the village of Pepuza was for long the headquarters of Montanism, the reputed New Jerusalem to which pilgrimages were made. A new ministry of five orders, with 'patriarchs' at its head, took the place of the 'prophets.' \* Women were admitted to be bishops and priests, and sacred virgins clothed in white and bearing torches figured prominently in the Montanist festivals.

Montanism was not unconnected with the Church protest against Gnosticism. Its moral fervour was directly opposed to the laxity of the Gnostics. And the whole movement was a

attempt to narrow and stiffen the legitimate Christian claim to an absolute and exclusive possession of revealed truth. By the severity of its discipline it endeavoured to drive out all elements of error and laxity. Its claim to a direct spiritual authority for its ' prophets ' was after all only an exaggeration of that supernatural authority of which the Church has always been conscious, and which justified her refusal to admit the Gnostic innovations.

It was doubtless in this way that Montanism succeeded in winning Tertullian. To his impatient temper, and his zeal for strictness both of discipline and definition, Montanism would seem to supply that which he thought was lacking in the Church at large. In his very eagerness to maintain the faith, he fell himself into the trap which his own arguments had done so much to warn men against. The champion of ecclesiastical tradition and order became himself a leader of schism.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What methods of defence were adopted by the Church against Gnosticism?
2. What is the teaching of S. Irenaeus as to the Christian faith?
3. Describe the characteristics of the North African Church.
4. What contributions did the North African Church make to the development of the Western Church?
5. Describe the early martyrs of Africa.
6. How is the character of Tertullian reflected in his writings and his career?
7. What is the *De Praescriptione* and its value?
8. Who were the Montanists? Describe their tenets, and the connection of them with their times.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The teaching of S. Irenaeus as to the Roman-Church :  
Puller. *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome.*
2. Montanism :  
Duchesne. *Early History of the Church.*  
Ramsay. *Church in the Roman Empire.*

## CHAPTER IX. ALEXANDRIA: CONSTRUCTIVE REPLY TO HERESY AND HEATHENISM

A VERY different style of Christian defence against Gnosticism from that of Irenaeus and Tertullian was developed at Alexandria. It has already been noted how the cosmopolitanism and the intellectual activity of the great Graeco-Egyptian city and its university had favoured the growth of Jewish and heathen Gnosticism. But the same influence which had helped to produce a Philo, a Basilides, or a Valentinus led, under the guidance of those who had definitely accepted the Christian Faith, to a new and most important development of Christian thought. At Alexandria, Gnosticism was met on its own ground and refuted by its own weapons.

From early Christian times there had existed here a notable catechetical school, traditionally founded by S. Mark. Intended originally for the instruction of candidates for baptism, it rapidly became much more—a place of training of Christian teachers, a centre of apologetic and missionary work. During its most brilliant and original period, the later years of the second and the first half of the third century, the heads of the school were men in advance of their age, whose influence has been far wider in later times than it was even on their own contemporaries.

Briefly speaking, the Alexandrine school, instead of merely condemning all other philosophic and religious systems or teachers, by simply contrasting them with the clear-cut and unchanging faith, or by exposing their inconsistencies and absurdities, was ready to recognise parts and aspects of truth in non-Christian thought, and to bring them into connection with the Gospel. Nevertheless, the Alexandrines were neither Gnostics nor mere 'liberals.' They started on the basis of the

revealed faith. They had themselves made the great surrender. They had submitted to the rule of the faith as the guide to their speculation. This fact marks them off by an impassable barrier from Valentinus or any other Gnostic teacher, as well as from much that in other times has described itself as liberal theology. It is true that their speculations were much freer than the Church was inclined to tolerate in later times of more exact definition. Some of their statements were certainly incorrect, and some of their characteristic methods fell into discredit ; but the guiding principle of their work was just as essentially Christian as that of the Gnostics was fundamentally non-Christian.

The Alexandrines agreed with the Gnostics in laying stress on ' Knowledge.' But knowledge to them was not the opposite of faith, nor was it the possession of the intellectuals in contrast with the simple belief of the ordinary Christian. It was the rightful development of faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the ' wisdom of the perfect ' in S. Paul's sense. So instead of merely regarding all the gods of the heathen as devils, who had usurped the place of the Creator, the Alexandrines adopted a sympathetic attitude towards the heathen systems. They believed that, though imperfect and full of error, these really led up to and prepared for the fuller light of Christianity, and were to some degree the utterances of the indwelling Logos. The Church, they felt, could find some place in her own system for all that was good and true in Pythagoras or Plato. This new attitude towards heathenism had been hinted at by Justin Martyr and Melito, and though at present it was confined to a few Christian scholars and thinkers, it was doubtless a sign of a growing width of outlook. The Church was rising to the greatness of her heritage. She was beginning to feel that all history belonged to her, and all sides of man's development. She was not merely the Divine witness to revealed truth in the midst of a world given over to Satan, but the heiress of the ages, and the key-bearer of the future. So the Alexandrines were the pioneers of Christian philosophy ; the effort to see all things in one, as a rational and connected whole.

Heathenism herself was now becoming conscious of the seriousness of the struggle with the Church, and was making strenuous efforts. The philosophers could no longer dismiss their rival with contempt or silence. There was the line of direct attack. The *True Word* of Celsus has already been described (pp. 95-6). Narrow, abusive, and unsympathetic as it was, its production shows that philosophy was feeling some apprehension as to the growing influence of Christianity. Men like Celsus were particularly irritated at the idea that the Church should put forward a revelation as absolute and exclusive. By philosophy, just as by state-craft, it was the universal claim of the Gospel that was felt to be its most disquieting feature. Yet it is a claim which follows inevitably from Christian premises; and though later opponents may have stated their case more gently and with more refinement than Celsus, this claim still remains the world's greatest stumbling-block.

The attack on Christianity took also the milder form of imitation. The Pythagorean philosopher, Apollonius of Tyana, **Apollonius of Tyana.** an historical personage of the first century, was put forth as a rival to Christ. A mythical life of him was written by Philostratus at the instigation of the wife of the Emperor Severus. It is not a work of any great power, being full of imaginary miracles and historical impossibilities—a sort of philosophical romance. Nevertheless, it presents interesting features, some of which show the influence of the Gospels. Apollonius is represented as miraculously born, as an incarnation of Proteus, the god of nature. When he grew to manhood he distributed most of his property to others, and devoted himself to the strict asceticism and silence of the disciples of Pythagoras. In middle life he journeyed to Babylonia and India, where he met the Brahmins, and learned from them their doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Then returning westwards he performed many fantastic miracles at Ephesus, Athens, Sparta, and Rome. He is represented as being honourably received by Vespasian and Titus, but suspected and imprisoned by Domitian. He escaped miraculously, and

retired to Ephesus. His death was unseen and mysterious, and after death he appeared again to a young inquirer, to convince him of the immortality of the soul.

Such an effusion as this cannot have been taken very seriously, nor have had much influence, whether it was intended as a counterblast to Christianity or as a sort of compromise with it. Its chief importance perhaps is that it shows the feeling that the life of Christ was one of the strong forces of Christianity, and that some ideal of personal purity and benevolence, combined with miraculous powers, was necessary for its opponents, if they were to compete on equal terms with it.

More serious than the legends of Pythagorean powers and holiness were the new efforts made by philosophy herself in the second and third centuries. The older schools even at their best had failed to influence any wide circle. **Neo-Stoicism**, with its stern, cold ideals of duty, could **platonism** only appeal to a few, and it had not succeeded in inspiring even its imperial devotee with either sympathy or humanity. And philosophy at her worst had degenerated into mere quibbling and disputations, into that craving for novelty which S. Luke has stigmatised in one memorable sentence (Acts xvii. 21). But at the beginning of the third century arose a new philosophy with more serious and noble aims. **Neoplatonism** was a direct attempt to compete with Christianity, and there was much in it which calls forth both interest and respect. Neoplatonism has been described as 'the last effort of Greek philosophy to explain the mystery of the world.' Based on the teaching of Plato, it mingled with his philosophy a strong element of mysticism. It was essentially, however, a religious movement. It resembled Gnosticism in its eclectic character, in its attempts to combine different systems, and in its tendency towards mystery and magic. But it was not, like Gnosticism, an attempt to remodel or reconstruct Christianity. Its reputed founder was Ammonius Saccas, a porter in the market of Alexandria. He was followed by several men of great ability and influence, notably Plotinus and Porphyry. Men of religious fervour, they taught that the human soul and the world had

gone wrong, and needed restoration by the practice of virtue and by asceticism. It was possible for an elect few to attain even in this life to immediate communion with the Absolute. Plotinus was a profound thinker and a man of the strictest life, 'a saint in heathendom.'

Porphyry, his disciple, was a formidable opponent of Christianity. His treatise *Against the Christians* was more damaging than that of Celsus. He applied severe criticism to the Scriptures; it is notable that he was the first to argue that the Book of Daniel was not the work of the prophet, but belonged to the period of Antiochus. Like the Tübingen school in later days, he made much of the supposed opposition between S. Peter and S. Paul. He professed a great admiration for Christ Himself, but hated S. Paul, and the Christian Church generally, and approved of the persecution of Christians.

Against this manifold attack of Gnosticism and neo-paganism, the great teachers of the Christian school of Alexandria shaped their broad-minded and constructive defence; setting forth Christianity as the one final truth which could combine in itself all lesser truths.

The first recorded head of the school was *Pantaenus* the Sicilian, a converted Stoic philosopher. Nothing certain is known of him; but he is said to have been so distinguished in his zeal for the Gospel that he was sent forth on missionary labours, and even preached in India, in the time of Marcus Aurelius, where he found that S. Bartholomew had preceded him and left a Hebrew copy of the Gospel (supposed by the ancients to have been S. Matthew's).

His most distinguished pupil at Alexandria was *S. Clement*, who succeeded him about 180. Clement was a man of vast and varied learning; a master of ancient literature, which he quotes profusely in his writings. His most important works are the *Exhortation to the Greeks*, the *Paedagogus* or Instructor, and the *Stromateis* or 'Patchwork.' The last sets forth at the outset the leading principles of the author's thought. 'The barbarian and Greek philosophy has,



he says, 'torn off a fragment of eternal truth from the theology of the ever-living Word. He who brings together again the separate fragments and makes them one, will without peril contemplate the perfect Word, the Truth.' Thus, he thinks, by an eclectic process the true 'knowledge' can be built up. Clement's theology, like that of Justin Martyr, is not always accurately worded, and he has been accused of such heretical teaching as the eternity of matter, and that the Son is a created being. But without doubt he intended all his teaching to be based on the Christian revelation, which he regarded as of a higher order than any of the partial truths taught by the philosophers. Indeed, he imagined that much of the heathen philosophy was really derived from the Old Testament. He calls Plato, 'Moses talking Greek.' The weak point of Clement's writing is the absence of system. His teaching is disconnected and full of digression. The most constructive and original feature is the development of his portrait of 'the true Gnostic,' in whom knowledge, life, and love have become one, and who is gradually admitted to the perfect knowledge of God.

Clement was driven from Alexandria by the persecution of 202, and his last years were spent perhaps in Cappadocia, but there is no authentic record of them. He was succeeded at Alexandria by his greater pupil, *Origen*, Origen. the most gifted and remarkable man that the Church had produced since S. Paul.

Origen was by birth an Egyptian, and had been brought up a Christian. His father, Leonides, suffered as a martyr in the Egyptian persecution which had scattered the school and sent Clement to Syria. Origen, only about seventeen years of age, was most eager to follow his father to martyrdom, and was only restrained by his mother, who is said to have hidden his clothes. A little later he was entrusted, in spite of his youth, with the headship of the school, by the bishop, Demetrius. Here he taught and studied till 215, winning a great reputation for learning, and sanctity, and spiritual power. He was a keen ascetic, and with characteristic zeal he endeavoured to follow too literally the Saviour's words (S. Matt. v. 29-30 and xix. 12),

and actually mutilated himself, an unfortunate act which later gave his enemies a handle against him. During this period he also travelled considerably, even making a visit to Rome, in his desire of seeing 'that most ancient Church.' From 215 to 219 he taught at Caesarea, and, though only a catechist in ecclesiastical rank, he was invited by the bishop to preach in the churches. This was displeasing to his old patron, Demetrius of Alexandria, who recalled him.

The second period of his headship of the school lasted till 230, where, assisted by a staff of secretaries, he produced much of his great literary work. But a stormy time was at hand. He was invited to Achaia to use his influence against heresy, and on the way was ordained priest by the bishops of Aelia (Jerusalem) and Caesarea. Demetrius strongly objected to this as an irregular act, and on Origen's return to Alexandria was actually instrumental in getting him deposed from the priesthood, and from the headship of the school. He took refuge at Caesarea, where his deposition was ignored, and he continued to write and teach, and exerted an immense influence. His last years were passed amid the storm of the Decian persecution (pp. 153-4). He was imprisoned and tortured, and finally died at Tyre in 253, where his tomb was long visited by Christian pilgrims. His writings and his very name became a centre of bitter controversy. No man ever made more devoted friends and followers, or excited more opposition. The controversy as to whether his teaching was heretical lasted for centuries. The Fifth General Council (553) is said to have actually condemned him (p. 321). But his reputation suffered from the misunderstanding and misguided zeal of his own followers in later time.

Origen was a deep and daring thinker, a widely-read and versatile scholar. Had he not been a Christian, he would have been far the greatest of the Gnostics. As a teacher **Origen's teaching.** he has never been surpassed either in the grandeur of his ideals or the skill of his methods. Gregory Thaumaturgus, his pupil and convert, afterwards Bishop of Neo-Caesarea in Pontus, in his 'Farewell Address,' has left us an enthusiastic

appreciation of his work. Origen believed that the Church should claim all literature and all learning as her rightful heritage. The results of heathen wisdom were, he said, like the gold and jewels of which the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians, and used for the building of the Tabernacle. He led his pupils through courses of mathematics, science, and philosophy up to theology, as the crown of the edifice. He made of each pupil an individual study and adapted his teaching to each.

Origen was a pioneer in the critical study of the Bible text. His *Hexapla* is a monumental work in this direction. It was an exhibition of the text of the Old Testament in six parallel columns, Hebrew in the original writing, the same in Greek character, the Septuagint, and three other early Greek versions. He also produced commentaries on all the books of the Bible—extant now only in fragments. His knowledge and love of the Scriptures were marvellous, though, as will be seen, his explanations of them were often vitiated by an erroneous method. His most remarkable work, however, which was largely the cause of his being regarded as a heretic, was his *De Principiis*, one of his earliest books, which has been described as the first attempt to form a philosophy of the Christian faith. It is short, and consists of four books, which deal with what he considered the preliminary problems of theology—God, nature, man, and revelation.

With regard to his supposed errors, it must be remembered that he certainly never intended to teach anything contrary to the Bible and the accepted faith of Christians: **Supposed errors of Origen.** his speculations are always put forth with humility and reverence. Moreover, there was as yet little theological definition in the Church. The facts of the Creed were accepted by all, but as to the interpretation of them and their relation with philosophy, the third century naturally felt itself much freer to speculate than would have been possible or right for an orthodox teacher in the Nicene and later ages.

For example, he has been accused of an imperfect grasp of the Divinity of Christ and of the Incarnation, of subordinating

the Son to the Father even in His Godhead, and of denying that prayer may be made directly to the Son. It is true that **The Divinity of Christ.** isolated statements of this sort may be produced; but they can be balanced by others, and there is little doubt that he held firmly the Godhead and manhood as united in the person of the Saviour. He certainly believed in the eternity of the Son, and he was even the author of a phrase which has never been improved on, and which became of great value in the Arian controversy, to express the sense in which the titles Son and Father are applied. 'The Son,' he says, 'is eternally being begotten.' (See p. 185.) In later controversies both Arians and Catholics claimed Origen on their side; but his real orthodoxy has been sufficiently vindicated by the great Bishop Bull in his 'Defence of the Nicene Creed' (1685).

Again, Origen certainly held views on the nature of the soul which the Church generally has been unable to accept, and in **Pre-existence of souls.** which he shows an affinity with some of the Gnostic teachers. He thought a certain number of souls had been created once for all, with the power of progressing or deteriorating. Hence came on the one side the evolution of angels, and on the other that of devils. And in this way also he explained the puzzles of the differences in character and circumstances among men in this life. They were due, he thought, to sin or to virtue in previous stages of the soul's existence. But this theory of transmigration differed from that of Oriental teachers, in that he denied that the soul of a man could become that of an animal or *vice versa*. Speculations of this sort have always had a peculiar fascination for romantic and imaginative minds. But Origen's theories do not seem reconcilable with what the Church has usually taught about human individuality and responsibility. The study of heredity and evolution suggests other reasons for the manifold differences in human beings as we know them. In particular, Origen's belief in the creation of all souls in the beginning would seem to necessitate the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ, which would introduce a new difficulty into the theology of the Incarnation.

Connected with Origen's theories of creation and progress is (1) his teaching of a plurality of worlds, before and after this present world, in which transmigration is worked out from stage to stage; and also (2) his belief that punishment is *remedial* only, and not final, and consequently his hope that all in the end, even Satan himself, might be saved. But he also taught as a practical lesson that Scripture concentrates our attention upon the next stage only, that of resurrection and judgment; even though after these may follow (and who can say whether he may not be right?) other unknown and unrevealed cycles of probation and development.

Probably all to-day would agree that the weakest point in Origen's teaching was his excessive *allegorising* of Holy Scripture. This was a common fault of the Alexandrine School. **Allegorising of Scripture.** He was no doubt right in teaching that the literal sense does not exhaust the meaning of the Bible, may even sometimes mislead; but he and his school went further than this. The literal, historical sense was denied altogether when it seemed to involve moral difficulties, *e.g.* the polygamy of the patriarchs, or the giving of such commandments as the extirpation of the Canaanites or the sacrifice of Isaac. Such things, it was argued, never took place at all; the Holy Spirit only intended by them to convey spiritual lessons which a true 'knowledge' would understand.

It is interesting to compare with this the treatment of the same difficulties by the Gnostics. They met them by denying that the Old Testament was the direct work of God. They ascribed it usually to a Demiurge or some inferior deity. In other words, they took refuge in dualism or polytheism. (Cp. the teaching of the Gnostic Ptolemaeus, p. 114.)

Both methods show a lack of historical sense. The true explanation of the moral difficulties of the Bible is doubtless to be found in the *progressive* character of revelation. The Old Testament is the history of the Divine education of man, in which God adapts His teaching to the moral ideas of the childhood of the human race—only gradually leading men to higher conceptions.

Both the beauty and the peril of Origen's method are set forth in Isaac Williams' suggestive lines in the *Lyra Apostolica*.

' Into God's word, as in a palace fair,  
 Thou ledest on and on, while still beyond  
 Each chamber, touched by holy wisdom's wand,  
 Another opes, more beautiful and rare :  
 And thou in each art kneeling down in prayer,  
 From link to link of that mysterious bond  
 Seeking for Christ : but oh, I fear thy fond  
 And beautiful torch, that with so bright a flare  
 Lighteth up all things, lest the heaven-lit brand  
 Of thy serene Philosophy divine  
 Should take the colourings of earthly thought,  
 And I, by their sweet images o'erwrought,  
 Led by weak Fancy, should let go Truth's hand,  
 And miss the way into the inner shrine.'

Whatever may be thought of Origen's errors, there can be no real question as to the splendid and permanent value of his characteristic ideas. He taught the unity of nature and man, as the work of the love of God. He grasped the truth of moral progress, as worked out from one stage to another, not in this world alone, but in the past and the future. He clearly stated the great truth of human free will. The purpose of man's creation is that he may gradually attain to the Divine likeness, through voluntary appropriation of God's gifts. He believed in the unity and goodness of all knowledge, and he showed the liberality of his outlook by attending even the lectures of Ammonius Saccas, while he himself was head of the Christian school. And his great ideal was the unification of all knowledge under the rule of theology. His reverence for Holy Scripture and for revealed truth are again remarkable features in such a free and unresting intellect as his. And his whole life was dominated by devotion, the love of God, and the desire of Divine knowledge. Life, he said, ought to be 'one continuous act of prayer.'

Origen's immediate successors in the school of Alexandria were also men of eminence and power, Heraclas, Dionysius the Great, Pierius. But after the third century the school ceased to be the commanding feature of the Alexandrian Church. Its

independent work was done, but its mark and the influence of its greatest teacher remained on Christian thought. Eusebius, the historian, was an enthusiastic defender of Origen ; S. Gregory of Nazianzus and S. Basil collected, under the title of *Philocalia*, a book of extracts from his writings. In later days, one illuminating sentence of the great master suggested to Bishop Butler the whole idea of the *Analogy* : ' He who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of Nature may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of Nature.'

And to-day the human needs which have heard the voice of a prophet in Robert Browning find a strangely similar note in the profound hopefulness of Origen, and his insistence on the continuity of life and progress, and that ' perfect round ' of heaven which makes perfect the ' broken arcs ' of earth. Students of Browning will hardly fail to recognise the likeness to his characteristic teaching in such a passage as the following : ' Even in this life those who devote themselves with great labour to the pursuits of piety and religion, although they obtain only some small fragment from the numerous and immense treasures of divine knowledge . . . yet are they made fitter for receiving the instruction that is to come ; as if, when one would paint an image, he were first with a light pencil to trace the outlines of the coming picture, and this preliminary sketch is found to prepare the way for the laying on of the true colours of the painting ; so in a measure an outline and sketch may be traced on the tablets of our heart by the pencil of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . hence to those who possess in this life an outline of truth and knowledge shall be added the beauty of a perfect image in the future ' (*De Princ.* II. xi.).

## QUESTIONS.

1. What was the School of Alexandria?
2. Describe the Neoplatonists? How did they differ from the Gnostics?
3. On what lines did the teachers of Alexandria meet the attacks of heathenism?
4. Sketch the life and work of Origen.
5. What features of Origen's teaching are of great and permanent value?
6. Of what errors has he been accused?

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. Neoplatonism.  
Inge. *Plotinus*.  
'Porphyry' and other articles in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.  
Kingsley. *Hypatia*.
2. The School of Alexandria.  
Bigg. *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*.
3. The teaching and influence of Origen.  
'Origenes' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.  
Westcott. *Religious Thought in the West*.



## CHAPTER X. THE EARLY CHURCH OF ROME

THE student must as far as possible dismiss from his mind the idea of 'the Roman Church' as later ages have known it, a world-wide institution, political as well as religious, claiming to be alone and exclusively the Catholic Church of Christ, exercising a charm or awakening an antagonism both without parallel in history. The early Roman Church means simply the Christian community established in the imperial city, and in her suburban towns and districts. Even the College of Cardinals, 'the princes of the Church,' retains the mark of this early limitation. The cardinal bishops, priests, and deacons are the successors of the local clergy of Rome, and their 'titles' are still those either of churches in the city, or (in the case of the cardinal bishops) of neighbouring towns like Ostia, or Praeneste.

All the roads of the Empire led to Rome, and it was inevitable that the Church should soon find her way there. But a deep obscurity still hangs over the first preaching of Christ in the capital. Christian merchants or traders like Aquila and Priscilla may have been the pioneers.

**S. Peter and  
the Roman  
Church.**

But it is impossible to ignore the early tradition that makes S. Peter the founder and first organiser of the Roman Church. A continuous episcopate of twenty-five years is indeed impossible. S. Peter disappears from view after his release from prison (Acts xii.), when he went to 'another place,' but he is at Jerusalem again in Acts xv. In later years he writes his first epistle from 'Babylon,' which is almost certainly Rome. Tradition, ancient and universal, makes him suffer martyrdom at Rome. He may possibly have been at Rome when S. Paul wrote in 54 to the Roman Church, and stated his own practice 'not to build on another man's foundation.' But he cannot have been there during S. Paul's first imprisonment, nor even when he

wrote 2 Timothy. None of the epistles written from Rome allude to his presence. Moreover, in the early lists of Roman bishops Linus occupies the first place. But none of these considerations would prevent the possibility of S. Peter paying more than one visit to Rome during the last twenty years of his life, and finally suffering there.

The early history of the Roman Church is almost as obscure as its foundation. For long it was an alien Greek-speaking **Obscurity of early period.** community, guarding its belief and its worship from an unsympathetic heathen environment. For some years even it seems to have been regarded only as a Jewish sect, and this fact may have preserved the Roman Christians from direct persecution, for the Jews in Rome occupied a powerful and privileged position; having made themselves by their wealth and industry indispensable to society. The early Roman bishops were, for the most part, men of no great note in the world: nearly all of them have Greek names. The Church produced no literature except the Epistle of Clement and the 'Shepherd' of Hermas. Not till nearly the middle of the third century did it take a prominent part in the affairs of Christendom. Yet from the beginning it was certainly distinguished for the devotion of its members, and its firm hold of the apostolic faith. (Cp. S. Paul's commendation in Rom. i., and the glowing praise of S. Ignatius, p. 72.)

The only exceptions to this early obscurity are seen in S. Clement, and the tone of authority which he certainly adopts towards the disturbers of the peace of the Church of Corinth (p. 54); in Anicetus, who was visited by S. Polycarp with a view to a common practice in the keeping of Easter, and in Victor (190-202), who made himself undesirably prominent in the same Paschal controversy.

All Christians everywhere from the beginning had observed the feast of the Lord's resurrection preceded by a solemn **Quarto-** fast, but there had been considerable divergence **decimanism.** as to the actual time and manner. The Christians of Asia, professing to follow the tradition of S. John, followed closely the Jewish Passover observance. They ended the fast

on the eve of Nisan 14, the first Jewish month, and then proceeded to keep the festival, irrespective of the day of the week. This practice was called quartodeciman ('fourteenth'). The other churches always kept Good Friday and Easter on the Friday and the Sunday next after Nisan 14, and maintained the fast until the Sunday. The quartodeciman practice emphasised, though perhaps unintentionally, the last supper and death of the Lord. The rival practice (attributed to S. Peter and S. Paul) was less tied to Judaism; it made the Christian Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection, more prominent.

The two schools held tenaciously to their respective practices, and in a place like Rome, where there were often Asiatic Christians residing, the unedifying spectacle ensued of Christians keeping their greatest commemoration on different days. Neither Anicetus nor Polycarp was able to persuade the other, though they parted in peace. A few years later the controversy became prominent in Laodicea, and produced treatises from Melito and Apollinarius of Hierapolis.

At the end of the second century Victor of Rome, the first Roman bishop to adopt an attitude which foreshadows the later papacy, called upon the Asiatics to reconsider their practice. They were obdurate, and Polycrates of Ephesus addressed a remarkable letter to Victor in favour of adhering to the quartodeciman use, as sanctified by the use of so many saints and martyrs in the past. Yet without doubt the general opinion of the Church went the other way, and Victor took the unprecedented step of breaking off communion with the Asiatics. But here he did not win support. Eminent Christians, notably S. Irenaeus, protested, and he had to withdraw his excommunication.

Time gradually healed men's differences; the Western use, which was really more in accordance with Catholic Christianity, prevailed, and quartodecimanism became extinct.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Celtic Church differed from Rome in the time of the observance of Easter, but was not properly 'quartodeciman.' It always kept Easter on a Sunday. The present difference between the Eastern and Western Churches is not the result of any difference in principle, but only in the calendar; the Eastern adhering to the unreformed Julian calendar.

By the third century the Roman Church must have been a large and well-organised community, and even long before that have exercised a great and growing influence. This was due to more than one cause. The Church was honoured before all others as the scene of the labours and martyrdom of the two greatest Apostles, SS. Peter and Paul. Its soundness in the faith had been specially commented on by Irenaeus and Tertullian. Its Baptismal Creed was noted and valued, and the use of it spread in the West. But beyond these ecclesiastical influences, the Church of Rome was the Church of the imperial city. No other city in history, not even Athens, exercised such a fascination over the thoughts of men. It was the centre of an organised rule such as the world had never known before ; and had impressed on all its subjects the sense of the majesty of unity and law. Rome—not merely her monuments and temples, but Rome as an idea—seemed eternal. Western men could not shake themselves free from her spell, nor indeed have they ever done so. And the glamour of the eternal city naturally invested also the Church of Rome in the eyes of Christians. It was an easy transition for the Bishop of Rome in later days to assume the place and style of the Emperor, and for the Roman Church to exert, even without any set purpose of state-craft, the old influence and prestige of the Empire. But this was not to be till secular Rome had fallen. At the period we are dealing with, the Bishop of Rome, despite isolated efforts to play the ecclesiastical Emperor, was not more than *primus inter pares*. He was certainly revered for the eminence of his see ; the decision of Rome was already regarded as a great asset in any controversy, but other bishops addressed the Pope as ‘brother,’ and did not fail to admonish him with brotherly candour when they thought he was in the wrong.

Though Rome was renowned for its orthodoxy, it was always the place that attracted heretics and religious ‘cranks.’ Just as the earlier part of the second century had seen Gnostic teachers congregating there, the later years of the same century and the beginning of the next were at Rome the period of the first great theological con-

**Growing  
influence of  
Roman  
Church.**

**The  
Monarchian  
controversy.**

troversy within the Church. *Monarchianism* was imported to Rome from the East. Its problem was one that sooner or later was bound to arise. The foundation truth of the unity of God had been inherited from Judaism. But the Church had always worshipped Jesus Christ as God. How was this Divinity of Christ, the Son, to be reconciled with the unity, or, as it was expressed, the 'Monarchy' of God? The question of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit was not prominent at first; but here again a similar problem was latent. It was in fact the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, which was beginning to vex the subtle reasoners or quibblers of Alexandria and the East, that lay in the background of the Monarchian disputes. The simple believer at Rome, as elsewhere, had been content to acquiesce in the teaching of the faith that the Father was God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, without straining after a philosophic explanation. At the same time, in contrast with all the polytheism he saw around him, he firmly held to the unity of God. But the question of the reconciliation of these beliefs, once raised, demanded some answer, though that answer was only gradually to be defined by the great Councils of the fourth and fifth centuries.

These new teachers in Rome suggested two different lines of heretical explanation. The first was *Adoptionism*, an error as old as the Ebionites (p. 99), and which to this day is the underlying principle of all forms of Unitarianism. **Adoptionism.**

The Father alone, it was asserted, is truly God. He has adopted as His Son the perfect man, Jesus Christ, and has raised Him to the position of Godhead. It is obvious, of course, that such an adopted Son can only be called God in some limited or metaphorical sense, such as often appears in Gnosticism. Adoptionism made its entrance into Rome in the days of Pope Victor, and was taught by one Theodotus, a leather merchant of Byzantium with an inclination to philosophy, who was excommunicated by Victor, and by Artemon, an Aristotelian philosopher, of mathematical learning but little reverence. They asserted that their teaching was really the primitive faith. The only excuse for this statement lay in the vagueness of some

early teachers, like Hermas, who had used language about the Son and the Holy Spirit which later and more accurate theology would have repudiated.

The other answer to the problem has been called *Modalism*. In its eagerness to vindicate the Divinity of the Three Persons, it practically ignored the distinction of Persons in **Modalism.** the essence of the Godhead, and made the Three only 'modes' or differences of operation of the One God. Its earliest form was Patripassianism, which taught that God the Father Himself became incarnate and suffered on the cross. It was first promulgated at Rome by the Asiatic Praxeas, in the time of Eleutherus, the predecessor of Victor; and at Smyrna by one Noetus, who declared, 'I know but one God; it is no other than He who was born, who suffered, and died.' A little later the same error was taught in a more developed form by the Egyptian presbyter, Sabellius, who asserted that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but successive phases of the manifestation of one God. While calling them three 'Persons' (*prosōpa*), he took advantage of the ambiguity of the Greek word to mean by this only three aspects, not eternally distinct personalities.

One of the remarkable features of the controversy was the apparent inability of the bishops of Rome to deal with it. **Weakness of Zephyrinus (201-219)** was an unlearned person, **the Popes.** and soon got out of his depth. He excommunicated Artemon, but seemed himself inclined to the opposite error of Sabellius. His protégé and successor, Callistus, was a much abler man in practical matters, but lax and vacillating in doctrine, and, it was said, in morals also. He had certainly had a chequered and somewhat disreputable career in early life, having been involved as a slave in various money scandals, and sent to penal servitude in the mines. He was, however, released and became eminent in the household of Zephyrinus. Elected Pope, he excommunicated Sabellius, but his own explanation of the problems at issue seems to have been an attempt to combine both errors.

The real defence of the Catholic Faith was conducted not by the official leaders of the Church but by those who were rather

of the nature of free-lances. Tertullian demolished Praxeas in a treatise which was inspired by a double grievance. Praxeas was a strong anti-Montanist as well as a Patripassian, and Tertullian, in a characteristic epigram, says that at Rome he accomplished two works of the devil, he 'put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father.' A generation later, when the language of the Roman Church had changed from Greek to Latin, the presbyter Novatian, better known as the originator of a schism, dealt with the whole problem in an able and scholarly work on the Trinity.

But the greatest contemporary champion of orthodoxy at Rome, against the Monarchian errors, was S. *Hippolytus*. His is a strangely indistinct and elusive figure. **S. Hip-**  
**polytus.** A man of great learning, of fervid personality, a voluminous writer, he seems to have become almost forgotten at Rome, and even his chief work, the *Philosophumena* or 'Refutation of all heresies,' was for long attributed to Origen. Moreover, he occupies the probably unique position of being both a leader of schism and a canonised saint of the Roman Church. By birth probably a Western, the pupil of S. Irenaeus, in character and tone he resembled Tertullian. His work is spoiled and robbed of much of its historical value by his controversial bitterness and narrowness. He attacked unsparingly the rulers of the Roman Church, notably Callistus, whom he accuses of favouring heresy and of general laxity of morals and discipline. Callistus offended both him and Tertullian by his readiness to give absolution even for the greatest offences, and by his toleration of second marriages and of the marriage of the clergy. At the accession of Callistus, Hippolytus seems to have broken away from the Church in protest, and become for some time the head of a schismatical congregation. This raises one of the most difficult questions in the history of the early Roman Church. Döllinger goes so far as to call Hippolytus the 'first anti-pope': others have suggested that he was the bishop of a Greek-speaking congregation in Rome, just at the time of transition when Latin was becoming the official language of the Roman Church. Another but untrustworthy tradition makes him the bishop of

Portus Romanus; He was probably confused with a martyr of the same name, who suffered at that place. Other and later legends make him a Roman official, converted at the time of the Decian persecution and dying a martyr.

The works of Hippolytus include many commentaries, especially one on Daniel, and a treatise on Antichrist. He also constructed a Paschal cycle, for the purpose of determining the date of Easter independently of the Jewish calendar. This, though of no permanent value, was for a time in great regard, and so much was Hippolytus admired by his contemporaries that after his death a statue was erected to him, which bore his cycle engraved on the chair in which he was represented as sitting. This statue was rediscovered in 1551, and is now in the Lateran Museum. A nearly full text of the so-called *Philosophumena* was discovered in 1842 at Mount Athos. It is a refutation of heathen philosophies, Gnostic systems, Judaism, and the various Christian heresies down to those of his own day. The writer lays great stress on the importance of interpreting Holy Scripture as a whole, and not by the use of isolated texts, the favourite method of heretics. He demonstrates the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity from both Old and New Testaments, and he supports the true divinity of the Saviour both from Scripture, from early writers, and from the hymns of the Church.

Hippolytus and indeed all the orthodox controversialists of the period find the key to the Monarchian difficulties in the Johannine teaching of the Word or Logos. Their opponents twitted them in consequence with being ditheists, and it is interesting to note also the existence of a sect in Asia, called the Alogi, opponents of Montanism, who denied the authenticity of the Gospel of S. John and of the Apocalypse.

The persecution of Maximinus (p. 152) seems to have put an end to these doctrinal controversies at Rome. The orthodoxy of the bishops of Rome was sufficiently restored by Dionysius Pope from 259 to 269, who appears as writing on the orthodox side and remonstrating with another Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria a pupil of Origen, who in his zeal against the Sabellians had



run into the opposite extreme of subordinating the Son to the Father. His Roman namesake wrote to him, warning against any representation of the Son of God as a created being, or against any statement about the Trinity which might imply that they were three Gods.

But the controversy, though lulled for the time, was by no means dead. Adoptionist tendencies were strong at Antioch, and found a champion of very extreme views in **Paul of** its bishop, Paul of Samosata (260-274). This is **Samosata**, one of the most curious episodes in the early history of the Church. Paul was a man of great ability and a popular preacher, though neither a profound theologian nor apparently of any great spirituality. He was worldly and conceited, amassed a great deal of wealth, and was a court favourite with Zenobia, the ambitious queen of Palmyra. It was probably to please her and the Judaism which she favoured that Paul began to teach Adoptionism. He represented the Son of God as only a man, who progressed towards divinity through the Logos which dwelt in Him.

Three Councils in succession were held at Antioch to consider this teaching, and finally, in 270, Paul was declared to be deposed. But he would not go. The Church took the extreme step of appealing to the Emperor Aurelian, who had just defeated Zenobia's armies and driven her to take refuge in Palmyra. The Emperor handed over the question to the bishops of Italy, and when they condemned Paul he ejected the heretic from the bishop's residence at Antioch.

It was a strange and ominous precedent for Christians to appeal to a heathen Emperor against their own bishop. Paul no doubt deserved the sentence, his teaching was clearly contrary to the recognised faith of the Church, but the results of such secular interference appeared in later generations.

Adoptionism still lingered on at Antioch and in the East. Both to the worldly and to the shallow thinker it presented an easy explanation of the central mystery of the faith, and its sequel remained to be seen in the Arian controversies of the next century. The faith, though held correctly and loyally

enough by the mass of believers, needed some further definition if it was to escape the one-sided errors of either Adoptionism or Sabellianism.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What was the connection of S. Peter and S. Paul with the Church of Rome?
2. What was the Quartodeciman controversy?
3. What part did Rome play in it?
4. What circumstances favoured the pre-eminent influence of the Roman Church?
5. Describe the controversies of the third century concerning the nature of the Godhead.
6. What share did the Roman Church take in these controversies?
7. Who was Paul of Samosata?

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

The character and growth of the early Church of Rome.

Edmundson. Bampton Lectures on the *Early Roman Church*.

Duchesne. *Early History of the Church*, vol. i.

Puller. *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*.

## CHAPTER XI. THIRD CENTURY PERSECUTIONS AND THEIR RESULTS

THE attitude of the imperial authorities towards the Church in the second century had been ruled chiefly by the letter and the spirit of the 'rescripts' of Trajan and Hadrian. **Varying** Christianity was a capital offence, but it was more **imperial** or less tolerated, except when local passions or the **policy.** intolerance of some individual official brought Christians to the dreadful alternative of sacrificing or martyrdom.

But beginning with Septimius Severus (193-211), whose persecution has already been mentioned (p. 121), the attitude of individual Emperors became the dominating factor. There were considerable periods in the third century of peace and compromise, sometimes even of imperial favour, but these were always liable to be broken by a definite edict against the Christians, issued by some Emperor, who considered them a peril to the State. This lack of continuous policy is partly explained by the fact that most of the Emperors of the third century were military adventurers, often of foreign birth, raised to the purple by the soldiers, and as lightly deposed or assassinated.

The most extraordinary example of this sort of government was the accession of Heliogabalus (218-222), a Syrian priest of the Sun. His religious policy consisted chiefly in **Toleration.** furthering the worship at Rome of the Syrian and Phoenician deities. His reign was an orgy of fantastic extravagance; his madness showed itself, among other ways, in devising and collecting elaborate and magnificent methods of committing suicide, jewelled ropes with which to hang himself, and golden staircases to fling himself down from! But in the end he had not the courage to employ any of these refinements,

but perished miserably at the hands of the praetorian guard. As far as the Christians were concerned this madman's reign seems to have been harmless enough.

His successor, Alexander Severus (222-235), also an Eastern by birth, was more definitely tolerant of the Church. He was mild and gentle in character, and patronised religions of all sorts. His 'undenominational' sympathies led him to adorn his oratory with images of various gods, including in them Abraham, Apollonius of Tyana, and Christ. The Emperor's mother, Mammaea, is said to have received Christian instruction from Origen himself.

Alexander was murdered by his soldiers, and Maximinus the Thracian succeeded him (235-237). In his eagerness to **Maximinus'** reverse the policy of his predecessor, he issued an **persecution.** edict of persecution against the Christians. It is uncertain how far this was carried out. Persecution was severe in Cappadocia. Origen had to hide himself, and at Rome both the bishops, Pontianus and S. Hippolytus, were sent into exile, where apparently they both died.

The reign of Philip the Arabian (244-249) was specially favourable to the Church, and it was widely believed that the Emperor himself had accepted the faith in secret.

It may be said that upon the whole the first half of the century was a period of peace and expansion for the Church. The **Progress of** numbers of the clergy increased. In the year **the Church.** 251, the Roman Church had 46 priests and 7 deacons, besides nearly 150 in the minor orders. And its wealth and charity is seen in the fact that 1500 widows and orphans were officially supported. Christian churches were built, and the Church, although theoretically an illegal body, was allowed to hold property in trust. The catacombs, as places of Christian burials, were no longer merely the private property of Christian families, but were administered by the Church and extended their myriad ramifications for miles around the capital. But the results of this time of prosperity were not altogether good. Christians began to lose their early fortitude, and their clear vision of the unseen. The great persecutions which mark

the middle of the century burst like a thunderbolt upon men who were no longer of the stuff of which martyrs are made.

The Emperor Decius (249-251) was a thorough Roman, and intended to reform society on what he thought the ancient Roman lines of severity. He determined to suppress Christianity altogether, and set about the task with thoroughness. It was the first attempt of the kind, at least since the days of Domitian. He issued an edict, commanding all to offer sacrifice ; commissioners were appointed in the chief towns to superintend this, and to punish those who refused with confiscation of goods, exile, torture, and even death. Those who complied with the edict were granted certificates (*libelli*). The persecution lasted for a year, and was brought to an end by the death of Decius in battle on the Danube. Its immediate results were significant enough. A great number of professing Christians, the majority even, it is said, including clergy as well as laity, gave way, and either denied that they were Christians, or endeavoured to obtain the certificate, many by actually sacrificing or offering incense to the Roman gods, and others by bribing the officials. Nevertheless, the prisons were crowded with 'confessors,' who accepted torture and the loss of all things rather than abjure Christ, while others, including some of the leading bishops, suffered even to the death. Fabian, Bishop of Rome, was put to death ; Babylas, Bishop of Antioch, and Alexander of Jerusalem died in prison ; Origen suffered the extremes of torture short of actual martyrdom. So great was the terror of Christians in Rome, that for more than a year no successor to Fabian was elected.

But the after results of the great attack were far-reaching. Those who in their weakness had apostatised in one form or another (*sacrificati*, the offerers of sacrifice ; *thurificati*, those whose sprinkling of incense on a heathen altar had been accepted by the officials ; *libellatici*, those who had managed in some way to obtain certificates), for the most part repented as soon as the storm had lulled, and were eager to return to Church communion. According to the usual practice of the early Church, such apostasy as theirs was counted as one

The 'Lapsi.'

of the gravest offences of which a Christian could be guilty, and there were many who urged that such sinners could never be formally restored. A serious controversy ensued as to the treatment of the 'lapsed.' Must the ancient severity of discipline be upheld, or was indulgent concession to be shown to the penitent? The question was complicated by the attitude of some of the 'confessors' themselves. A custom already existed in the Church of martyrs who were under sentence of death for Christ's name interceding with bishops for Christians who were under penance and cut off from communion, and, indeed, writing on their behalf a formal letter asking that they might be restored. This privilege, due to the great veneration paid by the Church to those who suffered for Christ's sake, was exploited by the crowd of penitents after the Decian persecution. The confessors seem to have been but too ready to intercede, and the letter of appeal to the bishop in some quarters became a sort of 'indulgence,' an actual order for the penitent's restoration rather than a mere request. The situation was difficult. The bishops were in many cases separated from their flocks. There was a large and clamorous multitude of 'lapsed' Christians, who were suspended from Church communion and anxious to be restored. There was a party in favour of severe measures, and on the other side there was the influence of those who had actually suffered for Christ, an influence which might easily be fatal to all Church discipline, while to oppose it would be represented as a shameful slur upon the 'confessors' themselves. Here were all the elements of serious disunion and possible schism. The two storm-centres were Carthage and Rome.

At Carthage, the bishop was the great *S. Cyprian*, one of the most remarkable figures in the history of the Church. He had  
**s. Cyprian.** been a heathen till middle life, of high position, wealthy, and in much repute for his learning, eloquence, and legal attainments. He was converted and baptized in 246, and speedily became the most influential Christian not merely in Africa but in the whole Church. Rapidly promoted to the priesthood, he was elected Bishop of Carthage

in 249. He was a great admirer of Tertullian, whom he always spoke of as 'the Master,' and whom he resembled in his clearness of thought and vigour; but he was a man of wider outlook, and of much more practical ability. He brought the qualities of wise statesmanship to the guidance of the Church in this critical time. But he had many enemies, and he was attacked on all sides both for personal and ecclesiastical reasons. During the persecution, believing that he was following the advice of our Lord, 'When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another,' he retired from danger, and guided his flock from his place of hiding. He was severely attacked for this by those who were in favour of severity, and a series of intrigues against him followed. Letters complaining of his conduct were sent to the Roman Church, and for a time apparently the Roman presbyters (the see was vacant owing to the martyrdom of Fabian) were persuaded that Cyprian had really deserted his post through cowardice. A further grievance against him was found in his attempt to discourage the 'confessors' from granting their indulgences broadcast to the lapsed. Matters even went so far that an attempt was made at Carthage to set up a rival bishop, in the person of one Fortunatus. These intrigues against Cyprian came, however, to nothing. His own letters to Rome turned the feeling of that Church in his favour. When he returned to Carthage, he summoned a council of bishops, in 251, and the whole question of the lapsed was apparently settled in a wise and generous manner. Those who had offered sacrifice were allowed, if penitent, to be received back into the Church at least on their death-beds, but clergy who had apostatised must be permanently deposed from their office.

But meanwhile other intrigues had been in progress at Rome. Novatus, a priest of Carthage, had gone there and succeeded but too well in stirring up a fresh attack on Cyprian, particularly on the ground of his supposed opposition to the privileges of confessors. Futile attempts were made to obtain the election of a Pope hostile to Cyprian. These failed, and the new Pope, Cornelius, showed himself on the side of Cyprian and the African bishops.

A new line of attack was now manifested, this time from the side of those who advocated severity to the lapsed. Cyprian, first opposed as being too severe, inasmuch as he **Novatian.** had not allowed the confessors to give general indulgences and absolutions, was now accused, along with Cornelius, of culpable leniency. The leader of this rigorist movement was found in *Novatian*, a Roman presbyter, who during the vacancy of the see had been the most influential cleric in Rome. He was a man of strict orthodoxy and high abilities, but with a tinge of religious madness. Through the machinations of Novatus the Carthaginian, he was consecrated as opposition Bishop of Rome, and became the head of the first great schism of the Church, called, as such schisms generally are, after its founder's name. Novatianism soon had a considerable following. Like Montanism, it aimed by severity of discipline at the impossible task of making a perfectly pure and spiritual Church on earth. Its followers called themselves 'Cathari' (puritans). They remained orthodox in faith; their schism was entirely based on disciplinary grounds. It was partly healed at Rome by the letters of Dionysius of Alexandria, on the efficacy of repentance even for grave sins after baptism. The leading presbyters of Rome returned to their allegiance to Cornelius; though a succession of Novatian bishops of Rome lasted till the fifth century. But the schism found a more lasting home in the East, especially in Phrygia. It lasted for several centuries, having its bishops all over the Christian world, 'its saints, its hermits, its monks.' It was sufficiently important at the end of the fourth century for S. Ambrose to write against it.

The opposition to Cyprian had broken down; he not only had the support of Rome in his favour, but his own strong and wise personality. His splendid devotion, and his works of charity during a great plague that visited Carthage in 252, did much to shut the mouths of his enemies. Persecution was briefly renewed by the Emperor Gallus. This time Cyprian did not leave the city; and the African Church took still further steps in clemency by restoring all penitents to communion.



Shortly after these troubles, Cyprian figured prominently in another controversy, important not only in itself, but because of the light it throws on the attitude of bishops **Baptismal** in general towards the Bishop of Rome. The **controversy.** difficulties arising out of the apostasy and schism which were by-products of the persecutions forced to the front the problem of the validity of baptism as administered by those outside the Church. If those who had been baptized by some deposed cleric, or by those who were in schism, wished to be reconciled to the Church, was it necessary to rebaptize them? To do so had been for long the practice of the African Church, and indeed of most other parts of the Church, except at Rome. Cyprian maintained the logical position (in which it is easy to see the influence of his study of Tertullian), that the sacraments are indissolubly bound up with the Church. Hence those baptized by outsiders have not been admitted into the Catholic Church, but only into some particular schism. He appealed to the question addressed in Africa to candidates for baptism, 'Dost thou believe in the life everlasting and the remission of sins through the holy Church?' A great council of bishops at Carthage in 255 followed his lead and decided in favour of re-baptism. At Rome, however, it had been the custom not to re-baptize such persons, but to restore them only by the imposition of hands. When Cyprian communicated to Pope Stephen the African decision, without however wishing to impose it upon the Roman Church, Stephen took a very high line. He not only denounced Cyprian, but insisted that all must conform to the Roman practice, on pain of being excluded from communion with Rome. The Africans were obstinate. Another council of eighty-seven bishops was held, in which Cyprian protested against any one setting up himself as 'a bishop of bishops.' The previous decision was reaffirmed, and for nearly a year Rome and Carthage were at variance, and practically separated in communion.

It was clear that neither Cyprian, nor those who agreed with him either in Africa or in the East, were ready to recognise a papal autocracy. The utmost that can be said by the supporters

of papal claims is that the question was only one of different practice rather than of disagreement in doctrine. The difficulty was got over for the moment, through the death of Stephen, and the mediation of Dionysius of Alexandria. Pope Xystus removed Stephen's excommunication, and for a time, just as in the case of the Paschal controversy, each side continued its own practice, with mutual toleration. The matter was finally settled, as far at least as the West was concerned, by the Council of Arles in 314, in favour of the Roman practice. To this the Western Church has since generally adhered. Baptism is regarded as always valid if administered with the proper matter, water, and the proper form, 'In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' The irregularity of an unorthodox or schismatical minister is not held to destroy the validity of the sacrament.

Another severe attack was made on the Church by the Emperor Valerian in 257-8. Though he had been associated with Decius in the task of purifying society by the abolition of Christianity, the first years of his reign (253-7) were a time of peace. But the pressure of many enemies on the frontiers of the Empire, and the influence of a fanatical minister, Macrianus, led the Emperor again to attempt to restore the ancient religion of Rome. Two edicts aimed at the total extirpation of the Church. The first ordered all the clergy to worship the gods of the Empire on pain of exile, and forbade all Christian meetings in public. The second, a year later, condemned all the clergy to death, all Christians of the rank of senators or knights to confiscation and loss of rank; all women of the same position to confiscation and exile; and all Christians who were serving in the imperial household or estates to penal servitude. Under this edict, the Bishop of Rome, S. Xystus (or Sixtus), with five deacons, including the famous S. Laurence, were put to death; so, too, was the Bishop of Tarragona and two deacons and probably many others. Cyprian was arrested, and a year later was brought before the Proconsul of Africa. Calmly and courteously he faced the tribunal and refused to obey the imperial edict to sacrifice. The proconsul, with evident

reluctance, sentenced him to death by beheading, September 14, 258.

The persecution ended with the death of Valerian, who was captured by the Persians, against whom he was making war, and executed by order of the Persian king, Sapor. His was the last attempt for many years to crush the Church by persecution.

His son, Gallienus (260-268), restored to the Christians their churches and property, including the catacombs. This change of policy has been represented as in effect constituting Christianity a *religio licita*. At any rate it was a confession of the failure of persecution, and a recognition that the Christians had the right to exist. The rest of the century was practically undisturbed by persecution, though there were threatenings of its renewal in the last years of Aurelian.

The age of Cyprian, with its struggles and complicated controversies, is of great importance. It drew together the cords of ecclesiastical unity; especially as regards the authority of bishops and of councils of bishops. Reaction against the attacks of persecutors, and against the disintegrating influence of lapses and schisms, inevitably strengthened the permanent organisation of the Church. A significant proof of this is seen in Cyprian's short treatise on *The Unity of the Church*. It is an appeal to those Roman 'confessors' who were being led away by the schism of Novatian. The writer insists on the essential oneness of the Church of Christ, and the wickedness of schism. Neither martyrdom nor good works will profit those who depart from this unity. But he lays the most special stress on the need of unity in the episcopate. This unity he finds to have been prefigured in the fact that our Lord bestowed the fulness of the apostolic powers upon *one* apostle, S. Peter. Nevertheless, he does not draw from this the conclusion which has seemed so obvious to later Roman Catholics. He does not identify the 'primacy of Peter' with that of the successors of S. Peter at Rome. It seems to him only a symbol of the indissoluble unity of the apostolic office, in which all the apostles equally shared. And he proceeds, in remarkable words, to teach the unity of the episcopate.

*Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.* ('The bishop's office is one, each individual bishop holding a part of it in which the whole is included.') All bishops are essentially equal, as successors of the apostles, and therefore all ought to agree in maintaining apostolic unity.

There can be no question of the primacy assigned by general consent in S. Cyprian's time to the Bishop of Rome. Conciliar **Roman** decisions are communicated to him; each side in **primacy.** controversy desires to have the support of his authority. S. Cyprian's own language towards the Pope, in times of ecclesiastical peace, might easily be interpreted as a full admission of 'papal claims.' Nevertheless, we see from the actual conduct of controversy, that much of this must be discounted as mere politeness; and that bishops generally resented any attempt of the Pope to exert universal supremacy over the Church, or to alter received practice. Cyprian addresses the Pope as brother and colleague, he protests against appeals being carried from Africa to Rome, he clearly regards the authority of an African Council as equal to that of the Roman Church. And Stephen's action in the baptismal controversy evidently did not bind his successors. It seems to have been treated as a personal matter and left for time to heal. Cyprian not only died in peace with Rome, but he is a canonised saint of that Church, and his name even appears in the Canon of the Mass. Doubtless his efforts for unity tended in the long-run to strengthen the papacy as the ecclesiastical centre and bulwark of Christianity in the West, but he can scarcely be regarded as a supporter of papal claims. Indeed, Roman controversialists of a later day unhappily thought it necessary to insert interpolations into the text of the 'De Unitate,' and to make explicit what they thought S. Cyprian must have meant to say, rather than content themselves with recording what he did say.

## QUESTIONS.

1. Trace the variations in imperial policy towards the Church in the third century.
2. What was the effect of the persecution of Decius upon the Church?
3. What is meant by 'confessors'? What privilege did they claim?
4. What different measures were adopted in the Church towards those who had lapsed in the persecution?
5. What was the Baptismal controversy, and how was it settled?
6. What was the attitude of S. Cyprian towards the bishops of Rome? Describe the treatise *De Unitate Ecclesiae*.

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The life and influence of S. Cyprian.  
Benson. *S. Cyprian*.  
Article by same author in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.
2. The position of the Roman See in the third century.  
Puller. *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*.  
Duchesne. *Early History of the Church*.
3. Novatianism.  
Bright. *Waymarks in Church History*.

## CHAPTER XII.

### DIOCLETIAN : THE GREAT PERSECUTION

THE accession of the Emperor Diocletian in 284 marks a turning point in the history of the Roman Empire. Diocletian, the Imperial commander of the imperial guards, was, like so many of his predecessors, elected by the army. A man of low origin, but of great practical ability, he set himself to a reconstruction of the whole imperial system. He aimed at more effective government and greater stability for the throne. 'Ostentation and division' is Gibbon's description of the new policy. The words are not very happily chosen. 'Division' was intended to make the empire more united, because better organised. 'Ostentation' aimed at the greater security of the Emperor's person. But the two words express the external aspect of the changes. The old fiction dating from Augustus, of the Emperor being merely the first citizen of the commonwealth, which was still supposed to be governed by the Senate and the ancient officials of the republic, was finally given up. The Emperor assumed the splendour and the unapproachableness of an Eastern despot. He forsook the old capital with its traditions of freedom, and made Nicomedia the new imperial residence. And he divided the government of the vast empire: 'to avoid rivals, he gave himself colleagues' (Duchesne). He associated another Emperor with himself, bearing also the title of 'Augustus,' and he appointed two subordinates, entitled 'Caesars' with right of ultimate succession. The new Augustus was Maximianus, a rude and haughty soldier. The two Caesars were Galerius, a man of the same type, and Constantius Chlorus. All the three were men of provincial origin. The Caesars were made to divorce their wives and ally themselves with the Augusti. The wife whom Constantius thus put away was

Helena, afterwards famous as mother of the Emperor Constantine, and as a Christian saint. (Legend makes her a British princess and the daughter of Coel of Colchester, the 'Old King Cole' of nursery fame !)

The new division of the Empire was well thought out. The two Caesars were made responsible for the perilous northern frontier, the line of the Rhine and the Danube. Constantius had also Britain, Gaul, and Spain. Maximian Augustus ruled Italy and Africa, and Diocletian himself retained Thrace and the wealthy East. One momentous consequence of the new arrangement was the removal of the seat of government from Rome. The Empire's new capitals were fixed at Milan, much more suitable than Rome for watching the barbarians of the north, and at Nicomedia.

The provinces were also rearranged, increased in number, but grouped under *dioceses*, an interesting change, for this arrangement was followed in the organisation of the Christian Church. The bishop of the city of the imperial 'diocese' in which the governor resided became the head of all the bishops of the district.

The period from the edict of Gallienus to the nineteenth year of Diocletian was one of peace and expansion for the Church. Diocletian, though himself a devoted worshipper of the gods of Rome, was too much of a statesman to attack the Christians. Important places in the State and even in the imperial household were occupied by Christians. Diocletian's wife and daughter favoured Christianity. Galerius, though a narrow-minded and bitter enemy of the Church, was kept in restraint by his master. Constantius was a friend to the Church.

Eusebius, now a contemporary authority, describes (viii. 1) the high regard in which Christians were held, the building of large churches in every city, the crowds of worshippers. In some parts of the Empire, notably in Asia Minor, Christians were probably in the majority. Egypt, Africa, central and southern Italy, and southern Gaul were also largely Christianised. But not all was well with the Church. Peace and progress,

says Eusebius, had produced laxity and sloth; especially he deplures the strife and party quarrels among Christians themselves.

There were signs too, on the other hand, that the old hatred and suspicion were by no means dead. Isolated martyrdoms **Martyrs in** took place, especially in the army. **the Army.** Military discipline was bound up with the worship of the gods of Rome; and to a sensitive conscience even the Roman eagles seemed to savour of idolatry. In 295, Maximilian suffered at Theveste for refusing to serve. A little later Maximilian put to death a centurion, Marcellus, at Tangier.

Legend also ascribes to Maximian the massacre of the Theban Legion and their commander S. Maurice, whose name is preserved in S. Maurice in the Valais. And in 302 an imperial sacrifice was supposed to have been rendered unpropitious by Christians making the sign of the cross. This irritated even Diocletian to such an extent that orders were given to remove from the army all soldiers who would not sacrifice.

The fateful year of 303 saw the beginning of a general persecution, the longest and most severe attempt of paganism **The Great** to stamp out the Church. For six years previously, **Persecution.** Diocletian had been at war with Persia. Victory brought a large increase of territory to the Empire, including Mesopotamia. He spent with Galerius the winter of 302-303 at Nicomedia, and it was here that the plot was hatched. The real author was Galerius, who succeeded in overcoming the opposition of his aged colleague. But feminine influence was also at work; the mother of Galerius was an ignorant and superstitious pagan, who was enraged at the refusal of Christians to attend her sacrificial functions, and probably jealous of the Empress and other court ladies who looked with approval on Christianity. Other ostensible motives for the persecution were the pretended fear of treachery in the army, and the dislike of the growing wealth and influence of Christians. And without doubt the bitter hostility of the pagan priesthood, the soothsayers, and those who managed the 'oracles' had been only waiting for an opportunity during the years of toleration



To these must be added the intrigues and jealousies of the officials and eunuchs who surrounded the imperial court.

The persecution began with a dramatic stroke on February 23, 303, the festival of Terminalia. At dawn the prefect of the praetorian guard went to the principal church of Nicomedia, broke it open, ransacked the interior, and burnt all copies of the Scriptures. The Church was then razed to the ground by the soldiers.

Next day appeared on the palace gate the first of the imperial edicts for the suppression of Christianity. It was at once torn down by a too enthusiastic Christian, who has **The Edicts.** been by some identified with S. George, and who at once paid the penalty of death. Eusebius only states that he was well known and of high temporal dignity (viii. 5). The edict commanded (1) churches to be destroyed, and Church property confiscated; (2) the sacred books to be surrendered and burnt; (3) Christians who held any official position to be degraded. The new feature in this edict was the destruction of sacred books. It is significant of the fact that Christianity was already regarded as 'the religion of the book.' A new word came into Church usage; one who obeyed the edict and surrendered a sacred book was called a 'traditor' (cp. 'traitor'). Irreparable damage was certainly inflicted upon the earlier manuscripts of the New Testament.

More severe edicts soon followed, the pretext being the outbreak of some disorder and of two fires at the palace, all ascribed, probably without ground, to the Christians. The second edict evidently aimed at preventing any Christian gatherings for worship, for it ordered the arrest of all clergy and teachers. The third, intended apparently as a relaxation, though it led in practice to the most fearful atrocities, directed that all should be compelled to sacrifice, by torture if necessary. The penalty of death was not added, but many died under torture. The object of this edict was to weaken the Christian resistance by making as many apostates as possible. It was a clever stroke, but it largely failed. The fourth edict, the work of Maximian, was intended to finish the matter; it forbade the profession of

Christianity on pain of death. A Spanish monument of this period has been discovered which compliments Diocletian Augustus for having 'abolished the superstition of Christ.' This general persecution lasted in the West less than three years, and its severity was abated through the influence of Constantius; but in the East it raged almost continuously for ten years, owing to the malice of Galerius and his successor Maximin. Its course was bound up largely with the political changes and revolutions of the period. The history of the years 306-324 is the history of the rise of Constantine to sole power, and the turning point in this brought the end of the persecution.

In 305 Diocletian took the unprecedented step of resigning the throne, influenced by long illness and the fear of assassination.

**Rival Emperors.** His colleague Maximian was persuaded to do the same at Milan. Constantius and Galerius now became Augusti; the latter unfortunately appointed both the Caesars, men of his own type, Severus, and Maximinus Daza, a savage and superstitious soldier, a special foe of the Christians. But a new aspirant to the purple was soon manifest in the person of Constantine the son of Constantius and Helena. He was summoned by his father from Nicomedia to Britain. Crossing Europe with amazing rapidity, he reached York before his father's death in 306, and was acclaimed Emperor by the legions. Galerius was compelled to acknowledge him, but only with the title of 'Caesar,' Severus being raised to the vacant office of 'Augustus.' In the same year the claim of a son to succeed his father was again made. Maxentius, the son of the retired Maximian, was declared Emperor by the Senate and the praetorian guard at Rome. Romans and Italians were annoyed at the new regime which had taken away the position of capital from the imperial city, and reduced Italy to the level of the provinces. Maximian reappeared from his retirement as the colleague of his son. The two took Severus prisoner at Ravenna in 307 and put him to death, and proclaimed themselves and Constantine as 'Augusti.' Galerius similarly promoted Maximin and associated with him an old friend Licinius.

Thus East and West had each three Emperors all claiming

the highest title. One by one they fell. Maximian quarrelled with his son, took refuge with Constantine, and then plotted against him in his absence. Constantine captured him at Marseilles and put him to death (310). In 311 Galerius died at Nicomedia. In 312 Constantine invaded Italy, with a dash and brilliance that recalled the exploits of Julius Caesar, and defeated Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, near Rome. In his retreat Maxentius was drowned in the Tiber, leaving Constantine sole Emperor of the West. In 313 Maximin and Licinius quarrelled; the former was defeated and died miserably at Tarsus. In 314 there was war between the two surviving Augusti, Constantine and Licinius; in which the latter was defeated and ceded all Europe except Thrace to his rival. Peace lasted till 323, when Licinius, again defeated at Adrianople and Chrysopolis by Constantine, surrendered, and died shortly afterwards, leaving Constantine sole Emperor.

This brief summary of political events has interrupted the description of the persecution. It had, as we have seen, soon abated in the West through the influence of Constantius and Constantine, and, though it was revived by Maximian and Severus, Maxentius showed himself very favourable to the Christians. That the Church was soon able to proceed on her normal course in the West was shown by the holding of a great Council in Illiberis (Elvira) in 305. But in the East, Galerius and Maximin went on with unrelenting severity for several years, and even when the death penalty was relaxed Christians were blinded and maimed, and sent to penal servitude in the mines.

A significant change came through the fatal and terrible disease which overtook Galerius. When neither soothsayers nor physicians could help him, he turned to the **The end of** Christians. In 311 he published, in the name of **Galerius.** himself, Licinius, and Constantine, an edict of toleration, which was practically a confession of defeat. After blaming the Christians for their obstinacy in leaving the ancient worship, and refusing to obey the well-intentioned efforts of the Emperors to restore order, and also for their own failure to obey the Christian God (whatever that may have meant!), the edict graciously

allows the Christians again to exist, and to rebuild their churches. And it ends strangely enough with this request: 'Wherefore on account of this indulgence of ours, they ought to pray to their God for our safety, and that of the people, and their own.'

Galerius died shortly after—a death like that of Herod Agrippa I. (Acts xii. 23), and the persecution was revived with **Maximin's** bitter animosity by Maximin. This must have been **persecution.** in some ways the sharpest trial which beset the Christians of the East; coming as it did on the top of the joy of a relaxation, and being organised with peculiar malice. A heathen hierarchy, in imitation of that of the Church, was set up, with its 'bishops' in all the chief cities. By intrigue and corruption the authorities of various districts were induced to petition the Emperor that Christians might be expelled from among them. This was done at Tyre, at Nicomedia, and generally in Asia Minor. But worst of all, a systematic attack was made on Christ Himself. 'Acts of Pilate' were forged, full of blasphemies against the Saviour, and were not only widely circulated but were actually forced into the schools as a text-book for children. A boastful edict of Maximin's has been preserved (Eus. ix. 7) in which he points to the absence of war and calamities as a proof of the favour of the gods, in answer to the attack on the Christians. But it was noted that soon after, both war, famine and pestilence broke out, in which Christians returned good for evil by their works of charity towards their oppressors. This war is remarkable because it was against the Armenians, a nation which appears in Christian history for the first time, and as already converted. (This was no doubt due to the labours of 'Gregory the Illuminator,' who a few years before had converted the Armenian king, Tiridates, and many of his people.) In the Armenian war Maximin was defeated; and in 313 the death of Maximin, after his further defeat at the hands of Licinius, ended the persecution. But Maximin's reign of terror had added many to the army of martyrs, among them Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, and the learned and famous Lucian, a presbyter of Antioch. Maximin's end was terrible. His evil life, his drunkenness, and his disasters made his last hours

full of madness. He turned against all his pagan priests and advisers, and had them massacred. In his delirium he declared that he saw God, and the martyrs in white robes, coming to execute judgment upon him. One last act of tardy reparation he performed before his death. He issued an edict proclaiming full liberty to the Christians to rebuild their churches and to worship unmolested, and ordering the restitution of their property.

The way was now clear for the course which the state-craft of Licinius and the personal sympathies of Constantine suggested. The grand attack on the Church had failed ; instead **The Edict of Milan.** of strengthening the commonwealth, it had proved a source of disunion and weakness. The time had come to make an end, and to begin a new era. The two Emperors published in 313 the famous edict of Milan, proclaiming liberty to all to worship according to their own choice. The language was studiously guarded. There is nothing in it which favours Christianity above other religions ; indeed, any such favour for any religion is expressly repudiated. The vaguest periphrasis is used to describe God, ' whatever divinity is on the throne of heaven,' so that neither pagans nor philosophers might feel themselves offended. Each is to follow ' the religion which he feels to be most adapted to himself.' The churches belonging to individual Christians, or to ' the society of Christians as a whole,' are to be restored at the cost of the State.

The battle was won, and the storm stayed. Though the Church would have to endure further attacks both from heathen and from Emperors themselves, so momentous a step as the publication of the edict of Milan was bound to have a lasting effect. It has well been called ' one of the turning points in the history of the world.'

It is impossible to estimate the number of those who perished in the persecution by the actual death penalty, or as a result of their tortures and sufferings. It may be that **Review of the persecution.** Christian accounts were sometimes exaggerated : yet Eusebius was an eye-witness of the persecutions, and a sober historian, and he writes of the ' thousands ' who

suffered in Egypt, especially in the Thebaid, where, he says, as many as thirty, sixty, or a hundred suffered in a single day; and of multitudes of martyrs in Arabia, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia. Gibbon, with an obvious desire to minimise, suggests that somewhat less than two thousand altogether suffered death. This is most certainly an under-statement, but even if correct, it would be no guide to the real severity of the persecution. For the persecutors' policy as a rule was one of 'frightfulness,' rather than the mere infliction of legal penalties. Its object was to make apostates rather than martyrs. Multitudes (of whom Gibbon takes no account), as we learn from Eusebius' descriptions of the 'Martyrs of Palestine,' were cruelly tortured, with every refinement of malice and contempt, and spent the rest of their lives crippled and blinded. Many were condemned to labour in the mines. And what are we to say of the universal reign of terror, the hourly fear of the informer and the torture, of the loss of goods, the breaking up of family life, the suspension of Christian worship? The 'unknown agonies' must have been far greater than those recorded in the martyrologies, and if comparatively few names of martyrs have been preserved, Christ had many witnesses among the poor, the obscure, the women, and the children. At Caesarea, Eusebius describes from personal knowledge the almost inconceivable atrocities perpetrated by one Maxys, who refused burial to his victims, and allowed the whole city to be scattered with the fragments of their bodies. The portent of rain which fell from a clear sky made it, he says, a common saying that even the very heavens were weeping over such an abominable spectacle.

Among the names of other distinguished martyrs were Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia, and Phileas, Bishop of Thmuis, distinguished for his learning and piety, beheaded; **Martyrs.** Tyrannion of Tyre, and Zenobion, a presbyter of Sidon, thrown into the sea; Silvanus, Bishop of Emesa, devoured by wild beasts; another Silvanus, of Gaza, beheaded with thirty-nine others; two Egyptian bishops, Peleus and Nilus, burnt to death; Romanus, a deacon of Antioch, burnt to death for his attempt to restrain

apostate Christians from offering sacrifice ; Pamphilus, an eminent presbyter of Caesarea, the teacher and friend of Eusebius himself (from whom he took his own surname, 'Pamphili'), who after two years in prison was put to death by tortures. With him also suffered in hideous ways, Valens, an aged deacon, who knew the Scriptures by heart ; Paul of Jamnia, who in the midst of his sufferings spoke of the heavenly Jerusalem as his true city, and Porphyry, a servant of Pamphilus, who suffered his death of fire in silence, save for calling once upon the name of Jesus.

The persecution was of course a time of testing. If some who suffered were over-zealous and provocative, and rushed fanatically to death ; there were many others, **Effects of the persecution.** who, as in the Decian terror, either apostatised or gave up the sacred books, or in some underhand way endeavoured to obtain the *libelli*, or certificates of sacrifice ; some too who feigned madness in order to escape. And such conduct brought sad results of controversy and schism in the after-days, notably in the Meletian and Donatist schisms, which will be spoken of in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, as a whole, the persecution provided Christian evidence of a high order. It won a new respect and admiration for Christians. A courage unknown to the world before was revealed in the endurance of torture even by women and children ; in the patience and fortitude with which death itself was faced and overcome, and above all in the absence of resistance. It may have been that here and there hot indignation blazed out, and a cruel magistrate was reprov'd or a heathen altar kicked over, as was done by a woman at Gaza (*Eus. Mart. Pal.* 8) ; but there were no reprisals, no insurrections, no outcry for vengeance. *Aeterna Christi munera*, the conduct of the martyrs and confessors is for all time a witness to a new power at work in human nature which nature never gave. ' They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.'

One remarkable instance of the influence of Christian witness under persecution is seen in the conversion of Arnobius. He

was an African, a philosopher, and professor of rhetoric at Sicca, and noted for his devotion to pagan religion and for his attacks on Christianity. The sight of the martyrdoms is said to have turned him to Christ. He presented himself as a candidate for baptism. So astonished was the Church at Sicca, that before he was accepted he had to write his book in defence of Christianity—'Disputations against the Gentiles.' He was baptized and afterwards became a priest

A similar conversion was that of Lactantius, also an African, and said to have been a pupil of Arnobius. Invited by Diocletian to Nicomedia to set up a school of rhetoric, he was converted by the sight of the constancy of the Christian martyrs. This meant to him at once the loss of his worldly prospects, and great poverty. He employed his talents in writing in defence of the Christian faith and in attacking two of the prominent enemies of the faith, an unnamed sophist who lectured against the Christians, and the governor of Bithynia, Hierocles, who had written a book with the same object. Later on, Lactantius was appointed by Constantine tutor to his son Crispus. A work attributed to him is the treatise, 'On the Death of the Persecutors,' in which he shows how miserable was the end of all those who had used their imperial powers to persecute the Church.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What changes in the imperial system were made by Diocletian?
2. What causes led to Diocletian's persecution?
3. Describe the methods of this persecution?
4. Sketch the rise of Constantine to sole power.
5. What was the character of Maximin's persecution?
6. What was the Edict of Milan and its importance?
7. What were the effects of the great persecution upon—  
(1) the Church, (2) the heathen world?

#### SUBJECT FOR STUDY

The Emperor Diocletian.

Mason. *Persecution of Diocletian.*



## CHAPTER XIII. CONSTANTINE

THE same generation that saw the fires of martyrdom burn through the length and breadth of the Empire saw the marvel of a Christian Emperor, and Christianity established as the favoured religion. Such a transformation is without parallel in history. But like all great changes it needed first the gradual preparation of men's consciences and thoughts, and secondly, the hand of some powerful individual to give the final turn to an issue which had long been shaping. Christianity had been slowly but surely establishing itself; the last persecution had only shown the firmness of its roots, and the impossibility of either destroying it, or compromising with its claim. The time was ripe for the umpire's decision. And that umpire was Constantine.

Constantine, the son of Constantius and Helena, had been brought up among circumstances and people that **The Vision of the Cross.** prepared him to look favourably on the Christian Church. His father was at least no enemy to the faith; his mother had probably adopted it. At Nicomedia, where he had lived as an imperial hostage from about 292 to 305, he must have been surrounded by Christians; he experienced the hatred of Galerius, the champion of paganism, and he saw the beginnings of the great persecution, probably, like his father, with disgust. But the turning point of his life was the mysterious vision he saw before the decisive battle of the Milvian Bridge (312). We have the account of this practically from the Emperor himself, for Eusebius, his personal friend, states that Constantine described it to him and confirmed it with an oath. The Emperor had been thinking deeply over the failure of the heathen gods and oracles to help the rulers who had so devoutly worshipped them, and he prayed for

guidance to the God of his father Constantius. The prayer was immediately answered. Just after noon he saw in the sky 'the trophy of a cross of light, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, *ἐν τούτῳ νίκα*, "In this conquer!"' In a dream on the following night, Christ Himself appeared to him, bearing the same sign of the cross, and commanding him to use it as his standard of victory. This was immediately done, and the armies of Constantine marched to their great victory over Maxentius, led not by the eagles but by the new ensign.<sup>1</sup> Christian priests had been summoned to explain the vision, and Constantine having had clearly put before him the facts of the Christian Creed, decided, it is said, henceforth to worship no other God save Him who had thus appeared to him. He commemorated his victory and his conversion to Christ in the statue which he erected in Rome, a figure of himself bearing the cross, with an inscription stating that by virtue of this sign of salvation he had liberated the city, the Roman Senate and people, and restored to them their ancient dignity.

The truth of this vision and the sincerity of Constantine's conversion have been often questioned. But both seem proved by their actual results. Whatever psychological or physical explanations may be offered for the former, the fact remains that Constantine believed that he saw it, and in making the cross the standard of his armies henceforth he made a daring and momentous break with the past. As to his sincerity, though he delayed his baptism till the approach of death in 337, it is clear that he was profoundly convinced of the importance of religion, and convinced too of the power of Christ, as exerted in his behalf. His steps for the furtherance of Christianity and the extirpation of heathenism may have been slow and tentative, but a prudent ruler could

<sup>1</sup> This ensign, usually called the Labārum, is exactly described by Eusebius. It was clearly a Christian adaptation of the old eagle ensign. A spear of gold was crowned with a wreath of gold and jewels, within which was set the trophy of the vision *✠*, the first two Greek letters of the name of Christ. Beneath this was a portrait of the Emperor and then a bar (making the spear into a cross), from which was suspended a richly embroidered banner.

scarcely have gone faster, and his whole attitude towards the faith and the Christian Church is that of a convinced if not always consistent believer. That he retained the old title of *pontifex maximus*, as head of the Roman State religion, meant really very little. So completely had the religious offices of Rome been identified with mere civil dignities that even before his time Christians had actually held the office of *flamen*, or priests of the Roman gods, as well as other offices of State. The chief blot on Constantine's practical Christianity has been held to be his execution, in 326, of his own wife and son. But the whole question is wrapt in obscurity; and if he was guilty, it was not as a mere murderer, but as supreme judge of the Empire. As to the 'miracle' involved in such a conversion as his, all that need be said is that such things must be judged on their evidence and the results that flowed from them, and to a Christian both the whole circumstances and the greatness of the issues involved will surely seem not unworthy of a supernatural interposition. He who spoke from heaven to Saul of Tarsus may well also have shown a sign which would render such persecution as that of 303-313 impossible again, and turn to the faith the man who held in his hands the destiny of the world.

So long as Licinius shared the Empire with Constantine, no very definite or universal measures for the establishment of Christianity were possible. Licinius was a **Persecution** heathen; moreover, his increasing jealousy of his **and Licinius** colleague tended to render him more and more adverse to the religion his colleague favoured. In spite of the edict of toleration of 313, Christians in the East were dismissed from the court, and then from the army. Meetings of bishops were forbidden, and Christian worship was not permitted within the walls of towns. This attitude grew into something very like a general persecution, and a number of martyrdoms took place. Among these tradition places that of the famous forty martyrs of Sebaste in Armenia. These were soldiers who refused to offer sacrifice, and were immersed all night in a pond of icy-cold water. One of them apostatised, but his place was taken by

the sentry, who was converted by the prayers and patience of the sufferers.

But the growing sufferings of Christians were brought to an end by the final quarrel between the two Emperors. Licinius, defeated by Constantine at Adrianople and then at Chrysopolis, in 323, was put to death at the demand of the army. Constantine's first act, as sole Emperor, was to reverse his rival's anti-Christian policy, and to restore to Christians their positions and property.

Before this the principal acts of Constantine in the interests of Christianity had been the building of churches in Rome, and several significant legal enactments. Among these were, in 316, the permission for the emancipation of slaves to take place in churches; in 319, the prohibition of private sacrifices and magic; and, most important, in 321, the command for the general observance of Sunday as a holiday throughout his dominions. Other enactments of this period have also been thought to show the growing influence of Christian ideals on the Emperor. Such were various relaxations with regard to criminals, debtors, and prisoners; the abolition of crucifixion; the removal of taxes which Roman law had attached to celibacy; and, on the other hand, the infliction of the death penalty on adultery.

But the removal of his rival enabled Constantine in 324 to take a more decided line. He issued an edict to the Eastern provinces, in which he stigmatised the persecutions, acknowledged God and the sign of the Cross as being his own helpers, and prayed his subjects to become Christians, though compelling none of them. All were to have, he said, equal privileges. Those who still 'delighted in error,' might still continue to have their 'temples of lies.' Neither party was to molest the other.

It was impossible to suppress heathen worship, but various measures were taken in the years that followed both to curtail it and to exalt that of the Christians. Emperor worship was forbidden; a great visitation of the various temples of note was made, and some were destroyed. Christian churches of

**Gradual  
establish-  
ment of  
Christianity.**

great splendour were erected, notably at Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, and Antioch. At Jerusalem, the site of the Crucifixion was crowned with a magnificent basilica: Christian tradition had probably preserved the memory of the sacred spot through all the vicissitudes of sieges and rebuildings. Here, too, it was said that the remains of the actual cross on which the Lord had suffered were discovered, and identified by miracles of healing. In this work of honouring the holy places of Palestine, the Emperor's mother, Helena, took a prominent part.

But the greatest memorial of the change of the religion of the Empire was the foundation of a new Christian capital at Byzantium. This city was henceforth to be called Constantinople or 'New Rome.' It was enlarged and beautified, and new churches were built in it, notably one dedicated to *Sophia*, i.e. Christ, the heavenly 'Wisdom'—afterwards replaced by the Emperor Justinian by the magnificent cathedral, now used as a mosque and still waiting its restoration to Christian uses. In this new capital there were to be henceforth no heathen temples or gladiatorial shows.

In some places popular feeling followed the Emperor's lead, and the temples were destroyed. In others the old worship was clung to obstinately. Gradually expelled from the cities of the Empire, it retained its hold for long on the rural districts (hence the name 'paganism,' the religion of the *pagani* or rustics). It was not till the reign of Justinian, two centuries later, that the last relics of public heathen worship and teaching were destroyed. As late as the ninth century, the mountaineers of Greece still worshipped Aphrodite and Poseidon, and indeed heathen rites and superstitions, and even traces of sacrifice still exist among the Christians of the Balkan regions.

Nevertheless the tide had turned with the conversion of Constantine. The impossible had happened. The Church henceforth was the dominant religious power in the Empire. Results of mingled good and evil followed inevitably. Persecution could never again threaten the very existence of the Church. The civil government closely allied with the Church was bound to

Varied results of Constantine's conversion.

be influenced more or less by Christian ideals. And yet the Church herself suffered by the change in many ways. We may regard it as an exaggeration to represent all the failures of Christianity as due to this alliance with the State. Dante was influenced by the belief in the genuineness of the 'Donation of Constantine' (p. 339) when he wrote his famous denunciation:

'Ah, Constantine! to how much ill gave birth  
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower  
Which the first wealthy father gain'd from thee.'

(*Inf.* xix.)

But insincerity and worldliness became now the foes of the Church. It paid to be a Christian, and converts, uninstructed and desiring chiefly to be in the fashion, poured into the Church. Consequently it became much more difficult to exert discipline and maintain a high Christian standard. Bishops and clergy, dazzled by their unaccustomed honours, grew often worldly, avaricious, and time-serving. Moreover, the spiritual character of the Church and of her authority was imperilled as never before. Both ancient imperial precedent and Christian gratitude tended to invest the Emperor with powers to which he had no claim under the law of Christ. Constantine, still unbaptized, was encouraged to intervene in ecclesiastical matters, as if a sort of Christian *pontifex maximus*. It is only fair to Constantine to say that such intervention was largely forced upon him, and that in his attempts to settle ecclesiastical questions he was not so much desirous of playing the theologian as of enforcing peace and unity. He was statesman enough to foresee the disastrous consequences to the commonwealth of religious divisions. Nevertheless, in the position of Constantine we see the foundations laid of the unhappy domination of the Eastern Emperors in matters ecclesiastical, of the medieval confusion of Church and State, and of the constant tendency for the secular power to fetter the spiritual liberty of the Church. The evils of the 'establishment' of religion as well as its benefit have their roots far back in Christian history.

The great persecution, like that of Decius in the previous century, resulted in grave dissensions and schisms in the Church

and for the same reasons. Many Christians, in one way or another, failed to stand firm, and either denied their faith or compromised with the persecutor. They were eager to return to Church fellowship when the storm was passed, some no doubt genuinely penitent, others with less perfect motives. The question whether such should be treated with mercy or severity divided the Church into two camps. Where feeling ran especially strong, as in Africa and Egypt, actual schisms resulted, and Constantine found them in existence when he came to power, and seriously hindering the unity of the Church.

The Meletian schism in Egypt arose about 306. Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, was a fanatical rigorist, and also a busybody and intriguer. Bishop Peter of Alexandria showed himself on the side of clemency, though **Meletian Schism**. certainly not of weakness. Meletius protested, and when, on the revival of persecution in the East, Peter was imprisoned, he went about Egypt stirring up disaffection, and ordaining priests and bishops of his own way of thinking. He was excommunicated by Peter. The latter died a martyr, the former was sent by the persecutors to the mines. Even here he employed his leisure, such as it was, in intrigues and strife, and on his return started a definite schism in Egypt, with bishops and churches. The trouble was dealt with unsuccessfully at the Council of Nicaea in 325, and the schism lasted for a century.

The Donatist schism, which arose about the same time in Africa, out of the same causes, was the most important and long-lived of all the ancient schisms, and in the **The** attempt to end it Constantine played a prominent **Donatists**. part. It is a melancholy story of bitterness, insincerity, and bigotry, which left wounds in African Christianity from which never recovered.

Troubles began in 305, soon after the cessation of the persecution. Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, was unpopular with the party of zealots, because he had tried to discourage Christians from rushing on martyrdom and provoking the officials. His archdeacon, Caecilian, was even more disliked.

He was charged with checking the excessive devotion paid to those who were in prison or awaiting martyrdom, and even with standing at the prison doors to intercept the presents of food brought to them by the faithful. Moreover, Mensurius was under suspicion of being himself a 'traitor,' *i.e.* of having given up the sacred books to the persecutors, a form of apostasy which seems to have been most common. As a matter of fact, Mensurius, on his own admission, had pretended to do this, but had substituted heretical writings, and so had satisfied the officials.

In 311, on the death of Mensurius, Caecilian was elected to succeed him, and consecrated in a somewhat private manner by Felix of Aptonga and two other neighbouring bishops. A rebellion was at once stirred up against him. The general dislike of Caecilian's past conduct was fanned by personal animosity. He made enemies by demanding back the Church treasures which his predecessor had entrusted to two persons of doubtful honesty. And there was, of course, a woman also in the case. Lucilla, a rich and self-willed devotee, was angry with Caecilian, because he had forbidden her to kiss the bone of a supposed martyr before receiving Holy Communion. She lent her influence to stir up the bishops of Numidia against Caecilian. Seventy bishops met, presided over by Secundus of Tigisi. They summoned Caecilian to appear before them, and on his refusal pronounced his consecration invalid, on the ground (probably false) that Felix, his chief consecrator, was a 'traitor.' This council had little moral claim to judge such cases, for both Secundus and several other members had been 'traitors' themselves! Majorinus was declared to be bishop in the place of Caecilian; and a definite schism was begun. Majorinus claimed the allegiance of the party of severity; Caecilian, in the eyes of the Church at large and of the Emperor, was still the lawful bishop, and in possession of the churches.

The next and most unfortunate step was an appeal to the Emperor by the party of Majorinus. Constantine was asked to appoint judges from among the bishops of Gaul, on the ground that that district had been outside the area of persecution.



The Emperor agreed, and three Gallic bishops were summoned to Rome. To them the Emperor added fifteen from Italy, and the council was presided over at the Lateran, by Miltiades, Bishop of Rome. The schismatics were represented chiefly by Donatus, Bishop of Casae Nigrae. (It is uncertain whether it was his name, or that of another and greater Donatus, that led to the schismatics being called Donatists.) The decision was that no case had been made out against Caecilian, and that he was still the lawful Bishop of Carthage.

The malcontents appealed again to Constantine and demanded a fresh trial. All Africa was in an uproar, and the Emperor agreed, in the hope of peace. In 314 one of the **Council of Arles**, most important Church Councils which had yet been held since the days of the Apostles assembled at Arles. A large number of bishops are said to have been present, including at least three from Britain (London, York, and Lincoln). The decisions of this Council were most weighty. Not only was Caecilian vindicated, but the whole question at issue was dealt with. 'Traditors,' it was laid down, ought to be removed from the clerical office, but ordinations performed by them must be allowed as valid. [This is the important principle laid down in Article XXVI. of the Church of England that the unworthiness of ministers does not hinder the validity of their ministerial acts, a principle without which an official ministry would be practically impossible.] The Council also dealt with the earlier question of Cyprian's day (p. 157), and declared that heretical or schismatic baptism is valid, if performed with water and in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Council requested the Bishop of Rome to publish their decrees.

The schismatics were irreconcilable, and again appealed to the Emperor. After various attempts to heal the quarrel, he summoned the heads of the two parties in 317 to appear before him, and he gave his personal decision in favour of Caecilian. It was of no avail, and Constantine now tried the effect of a little persecution. He ordered the churches which the schismatics had seized in Carthage to be taken from them. This was accomplished with a certain amount of bloodshed,

but the schism raged more furiously than ever, especially as now it had as its head a man of power, Donatus the Great, who had succeeded Majorinus in 316. Constantine now seems to have given up the attempt to end the troubles by force, and contented himself with writing severe edicts against the schismatics, and exhorting their opponents to patience under their sufferings.

The Donatists grew in numbers until they were a larger and more powerful body than the Catholics. They regarded **The Circum-** themselves as alone constituting the true Church, **cellions.** and the rest of Christendom as apostate. A few years later, an extreme party of fanatics developed who called themselves 'Agonistae' ('champions'), but were nicknamed 'Circumcellions,' 'vagabonds.' They roamed about Numidia, yelling their war-cry, 'Praises to God,' committing all sorts of outrages on their opponents, and eagerly seeking martyrdom (as they called it) for themselves. They were armed with heavy clubs, which they called 'Israels,' and even proved formidable antagonists to the imperial armies.

The Emperor Constans again attempted, about the middle of the century, to reunite the Christians of Africa. He sent two **Later** commissioners, Paul and Macarius, who first tried **history of** by bribery and then by force to compel the Donatists **Donatism.** to abandon their schism. Donatus replied to them in words curiously unsuitable to those who a few years before had pestered Constantine with their appeals: 'What,' he asked, 'has the Emperor to do with the Church!' The commissioners then proceeded to suppress the Donatists by military power. Battles were fought, and finally Donatus and the leading bishops of the schism were sent into exile, and a great council in 348 attempted to settle finally all the outstanding disputes. For a time the Catholics were triumphant, but the Emperor Julian, to annoy them and injure the Church, restored the exiled Donatists, and the weary strife began again.

Optatus, Bishop of Milevi, and the great S. Augustine of Hippo wrote against the schismatics. The former addressed a treatise to Parmenian, the successor of Donatus, appealing to him in a very temperate manner, on the ground of a common

faith and Church and sacraments and ministry, to be reconciled. After the time of Augustine the Donatists declined in numbers, but they lasted on till the extinction of African Christianity in the seventh century, a calamity for which they must be held largely responsible.

The chief characteristics of the Donatists were their bitter and fanatical intolerance, which regarded all Christians as apostate except themselves, and their narrow puritanism. The holiness of the Church, they thought, must be enforced in all her members. But the holiness which passed muster among the Donatist leaders was often of a curiously non-moral character (a phenomenon not without parallel among later puritanical sects). In the attack on Felix, forgery was made use of to prove that he had been a 'traitor.' At a later date some of the Donatist bishops who had taken a prominent part in the agitation were found guilty of thieving, and receiving bribes. And, like all puritans, the Donatists were inveterate persecutors.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. How was Constantine influenced to become a Christian?
2. Trace the steps by which Constantine gradually established Christianity as the imperial religion.
3. What were the effects on the Church of Constantine's conversion?
4. What was the Meletian schism?
5. Who were the Donatists, and how did they affect African Christianity?
6. What is the importance of the Council of Arles?

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The character of Constantine.  
     'Constantinus I.' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.  
     Stanley. *History of the Eastern Church*.
2. The Vision of Constantine.  
     Newman. *Essays on Miracles*.

## CHAPTER XIV. ARIANISM

SCARCELY had the Church attained her new position as the favoured religion of the Empire, when she found herself plunged into a life and death struggle concerning the very fundamentals of the faith ; a struggle which lasted acutely for more than half a century. Arianism, which took its name from Arius, a Christian priest of Alexandria, attacked the central doctrine of Christianity, the Incarnation. It appeared suddenly, but its seeds had long been germinating.

The Church had always believed in and worshipped Jesus Christ as God, who for man's salvation had become man, but **Forerunners** without in any way impairing His essential Godhead. **of Arianism.** That this was from the beginning the normal and dominant belief there can be no reasonable question. But side by side with this orthodox or Catholic belief, there were other attempts to explain in what men thought to be simpler or more philosophical ways the mystery of Christ. There was a long line of rationalising tradition which called itself Christian, by which He was regarded as a holy man who had been ' adopted ' by God as His Son, who might be worshipped and given divine titles, but was after all a created being, and not truly and eternally God. Such was perhaps the teaching of the obscure sect of the Ebionites ; it became more prominent for a time in the third century in the theories of the Monarchian heretics, like Theodotus and Artemon (p. 145) ; it made a bolder bid for existence in the effrontery of Paul of Samosata at Antioch.

Again, the various Gnostic theories had endeavoured to fit the figure of Christ into their systems as a mysterious and exalted being, who was far above man, and stood in some intermediate position between him and the supreme and impersonal God.

The teaching of Arius had no doubt affinities with that of the Adoptionists, in its exaltation of the unique divinity of the Father and the subordination of the Son. But it was not so frankly humanitarian. Arius taught that Christ was pre-existent before His human birth, though not eternal: that He was more than a mere man, but less than God. Thus Arianism was really more akin to Gnosticism. It interposed between God and man this indefinable being, half-God and half-man, as a mediator and redeemer. It did not, like most of the Gnostics, deny the true human life and flesh and blood of Christ, but it touched the fringe at least of Docetism in substituting the Godhead for a soul, an error which afterwards took a different form in Apollinarianism.

It was on the question of the eternity of Christ that the quarrel first arose. Arius, with his favourite affectation of logic, seized on the title 'Son of God,' and asked, 'how can **Is Christ** a son be as old as his father?' From the human **eternal?** impossibility of this, he proceeded to argue that the Son of God cannot be eternal. He may be the highest of all creatures, invested with divine dignity and attributes, but not God in the same sense as the Father. He must have had a beginning and be, in the last analysis, a created being. Shrinking from making the Son a mere creature of time, Arius used a vague phrase, 'There was a then when the Son was not.' But there can be no doubt that he taught that the Son was created before the worlds, out of what was not previously existent (*ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*).

The Catholic reply to this Arian quibble is simple. In thinking of the Godhead, we must divest our minds of the ideas of 'before' and 'after.' The word 'Son' is applied to the Second Person of the Trinity, the Logos or Word, incarnate in Jesus Christ, not because it is fully adequate, but because it most nearly conveys, in the ordinary language of finite beings, the nature of the relation between Him and the Father. But it must not be understood as implying any act of generation, or priority of one Person to another. It expresses a relation which is unchanging and eternal. As Origen himself had taught, 'The Son of God is always being begotten.'

Clear-sighted Christian thinkers recognised at once, and the Church as a whole went with them, that such a conception of **Arianism not Christianity.** Christ as was taught by Arius was entirely irreconcilable with the Catholic Faith. It destroyed the very essence of Christianity. For to the Christian, Christ is the full and final expression of the Father; who knows the Father fully, and is able to reveal Him to men, only because of His own identity of nature with the Father. For the same reason He is the true and only mediator. Being truly God, and by His incarnation truly man, in one person, He has bridged the gulf, otherwise impassable, between Creator and creature. He has lifted the veil and unlocked the door that barred man's approach to his Maker. And again, for the same reason, in Christ is the only Atonement. He alone could perfectly reconcile God and man, for His self-oblation, consummated on the cross, was the effort of the very divine love itself, espousing man's cause, bearing man's sin, and offering for man a perfect penitence and an acceptable sacrifice.

But the Church had a further quarrel with Arianism. She rightly saw in it nothing but a disguised polytheism. In no **Arianism really Polytheism.** sense could the Christ of Arius be called 'God,' except on principles which were fatal to monotheism. For the Arian Christ was but a demigod, a sort of inferior deity, tricked out in the divine attributes, but essentially different from the Supreme and Eternal. Indeed, there could be no logical stopping place between the recognition of the Arian Christ as God and a heathen pantheon of competing or subordinate deities. And if Arianism had triumphed, its characteristic view could have been no more than a temporary phase. The world's thought was bound to outgrow polytheism. The next stage would have been humanitarianism. The fancy of an exalted demigod appearing on earth as the redeemer would have had to give way (as in modern Unitarianism) to the Adoptionist view of Christ as a man, pre-eminent among his fellows, endowed more richly with the Divine Spirit, but not essentially differing from them. Such a Christ could not bring

to men any certain or final revelation, and to worship him would be idolatry.

Thus, from every point of view, there was no compromise possible between the teaching of Arius and the orthodox faith. One or the other must go.

Clear as the issues seem to us, the strength and the attractiveness of Arianism must not be under-estimated. Its supporters had much to say for themselves, and they appealed in subtle ways to their own age.

First of all, Arianism claimed to represent the original faith of the Church, and maintained that its opponents were the real innovators. It is quite possible by judicious manipulation of texts of Scripture, or of the simple, unguarded statements of early Christian writers, to make out a plausible case for this statement. **The Arian claim to be primitive.** The Deity of Jesus Christ was only gradually apprehended by the Apostles themselves while the Master was on earth. In their appeal to Jews, after His Ascension, they naturally laid stress on the humanity of Christ, as the chosen and anointed Saviour of Israel and the world. This aspect is certainly prominent in the speeches recorded in the Acts. Christ's own words in the Gospels as to His human subordination to the Father might easily be pressed into the support of Arianism. And a favourite Arian quotation from the Old Testament was the Septuagint mistranslation of Prov. viii. 22, where, in the great description of the eternal Wisdom, which Christians identified with the Logos, that version reads 'The Lord *created* me before his works of old' (instead of 'possessed me').

The orthodox might well, in reply to this, appeal to the general tenor of Scripture and the continuous witness of the Church. They might rightly maintain that nothing short of the absolute Deity of Christ and His co-eternity with the Father could satisfy or harmonise all the statements of Scripture. 'I and my Father are one' has an equal claim for consideration with 'my Father is greater than I.' Nor could Christians hold themselves justified in offering Divine worship to Christ, if He were in any sense less than God.

Nevertheless, the confutation of Arianism was not easy. Though the general conscience of Christendom revolted against it, as inconsistent with the faith once received, **Difficulty of refuting Arianism.** the faith which was bound up with Christian hopes and efforts, there was no formulated statement of that faith of sufficient authority to be appealed to generally with regard to the points in dispute. Nor was theological language sufficiently elaborated for dealing with the subtle distinctions of Arian dialectic.

Creeds there certainly were, but not of the sort required. A simple confession of faith was made by each catechumen at his baptism, and most of the great Christian centres had already provided a formulary for that purpose. But these baptismal creeds were the creeds of the believer ; simple positive statements of belief, not intended for the disputant. They made, for the most part, little or no attempt to guard against error, and the Arian might profess his acceptance of them as well as the orthodox. The most notable of these early creeds is that of Rome, which at a later date became expanded into the ' Apostles' Creed ' of the Western Church (p. 41). The Deity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit is no doubt implicit in this as in the other baptismal creeds, but it is not expressly stated nor safe-guarded against misinterpretation.

Besides these attempts to claim Scripture and antiquity in its favour, Arianism could appeal in various ways to various **The appeal of Arianism.** types of mind. The simple believer it always tried to intimidate by the charge of Sabellianism. It is remarkable how much this heresy was feared ; and indeed it is one into which those unaccustomed to theological definition may very easily and unconsciously slip. In anxiety to avoid tritheism or polytheism, uninstructed persons are prone to speak of the Godhead as if the three Persons were but phases or aspects of the One God. Heresies are almost always a one-sided and exaggerated presentation of one side of the truth ; and it has always been characteristic of heretics to charge their opponents with the opposite error. Consequently, as we shall see, many of the more cautious of orthodox Christians were



afraid to take a decided line in opposition to Arianism, lest they should be accused of being Sabellians.

Again, Arianism attracted the shallow logician and the rationalist by its apparent simplicity and by relieving them of the awful mystery of the Trinity in Unity. The worldly and the compromiser found it easier to accept the Christ of Arius than the stupendous claim of One who was equal with the Father, and yet humbled Himself to become man. Lacking the deep Christian sense of sin, such persons failed to realise that none less than God Himself could make atonement for it. A defective view of what redemption means made them the more ready to accept an inadequate explanation of it.

But especially Arianism attracted the crowds of converts from heathenism who were flocking into the Church because it was fashionable. Arianism was the child of its age. It offered the multitude an easy transition from the religions they were abandoning. The centre of its worship appeared to the common man much on the same level as Mithras; the philosopher would find in the Arian Christ only one more personification of the far-off and elusive Divine principle of the universe; and the Gnostic would see in Him no more than a Christian 'aeon.' And Arianism gained an easy popularity with the multitude for still another reason. It does not seem to have made any strong claim on character or conduct. It easily sanctioned laxness of life and irreverence of speech. Its methods were thoroughly worldly, and it produced few saints.

Though Arianism first appeared in Egypt, it owed much to Antioch. Here Arius and others of his supporters had studied under Lucian, the head of a Christian **Arianism** school, a man of somewhat obscure history and **sprang from** opinions, but evidently of personal power and **Antioch.** charm. He died a martyr in 312; his disciples called themselves 'Collucianists,' and regarded him as their patron saint. Lucian may have been influenced by Paul of Samosata, though his teaching was more reverent and less crudely humanitarian. The whole atmosphere of Antioch was favourable to the growth of Arian doctrines. Jewish influence was strong, so too was

that of the Sophists, the professors of 'dialectic,' the art of subtle argumentation. The Antiochene style of interpreting Scripture was literal and logical, unlike the mysticism of Alexandria and elsewhere. In the hands of an irreverent controversialist, eager only to prove his point and overthrow his adversary, such a method applied to such ineffable mysteries as the Nature of God and the Incarnation might easily lead to conclusions which, like those of Arius, might appear more logical than the Catholic teaching, but were really one-sided and profane. The Arians indeed were always fond of playing with words, of trying to score a verbal triumph, and of battering their adversaries with isolated texts divorced from their context and from the general tenor of Scripture. At Antioch too there still existed the remnants of the party who had been led away by the eloquence and showy brilliance of Paul of Samosata.

Nor must we forget among the tendencies antecedent to Arianism the widely-spread influence, both at Antioch and elsewhere in the East, of the supposed teaching of Origen as to the subordination of the Son to the Father and of the Holy Spirit to both. Origen's Christology, without the safeguards of the reverence, the width of mind, and the humility of the great master, might easily be misinterpreted. Indeed, Arianism has sometimes been described as an attempt to combine Origenism with the Adoptionism of the heretical teachers at Rome in the previous century.

Taking into view all these peculiar conditions of the early part of the fourth century, there is nothing very surprising in the suddenness with which the cloud of Arianism darkened the Church's horizon. It was a battle which had to be fought out. We may regret that it was necessary to go beyond the simple statements of faith which satisfied an earlier age, but after all the simplicity of early Christian belief had within it implicitly the profound convictions which Arianism denied. The course of the struggle added nothing new, but only brought out to light, and safeguarded by clear statement, what Christianity really is and always has been.

Arius began to make himself prominent in Alexandria about the year 318. He was a man of interesting appearance, grave and ascetic; attractive in utterance. His undoubted powers were only spoiled by vanity and intellectual pride. He soon won a following in Alexandria, not only among the clergy, but among the common people, and he was a special favourite with women, notably among the consecrated virgins of the Church. In 319 he deliberately charged his bishop, Alexander, with teaching Sabellianism in an address he had delivered to his clergy on the Unity of the Trinity. The bishop treated him at first with great gentleness, but, as the matter became serious, he called a council of the bishops of Egypt to consider it. Arius was heard and condemned. He himself, with eleven others of the Alexandrian clergy, were deposed from the priesthood and excommunicated, and also two bishops who took his side, Theonas and Secundus. These all withdrew from Egypt, and found a welcome in Caesarea. The Bishop of Caesarea, the great Eusebius, the historian, was really at heart an Arian, though he managed afterwards so to trim his course as to appear orthodox. Arius soon found another and more thorough-going supporter in the Bishop of Nicomedia, who also bore the name of Eusebius, a crafty and powerful person, in high favour at the time with the Eastern court, and especially with Constantia, the sister of Constantine and wife of Licinius. Both he and Arius employed themselves busily in writing letters of protest to various bishops and in trying to intimidate Alexander into altering his decision. Alexander too wrote from his point of view to the leading bishops of the Church—to Rome, and Antioch, and elsewhere, stigmatising the Arian error as the forerunner of Antichrist. The type of mind of Arius himself, and the sort of methods which he and his party thought worthy of such a stupendous controversy, may be gauged from the fact that he at this time wrote a poem called *Thalia* (a name appropriate to a drinking song), in a rollicking metre, praising himself and the correctness of his views, and intended to be sung by the populace. Arius, whether he had a zeal for truth or not, was out to win his cause, and he certainly succeeded in stirring up

the passions and party-spirit of the Alexandrians. The most sacred names and phrases were bandied about by the rabble of the streets and the docks.

This was the position of things when Constantine attained sole power and came prominently into the life of the East. He **Constantine and Arius.** had been distressed enough already by the dissension of Christians both in Africa and Egypt, and he imagined that it was his duty to act as arbiter between Arius and Alexander and make peace. It was not that Constantine took no interest in theological discussion, but his view was that of the statesman, who thinks that peace is the most important thing, and that controversies on fundamental questions can be stopped by the simple method of ordering them to stop. He wrote a wordy and rather remarkable letter to the two chief disputants, in which he blamed them both, Alexander for propounding an 'unprofitable question,' and Arius for obstinately insisting on a view which he ought either never to have conceived or kept buried in silence. How little Constantine at this time understood either the importance of the controversy or the temper of the two parties is shown by some words that follow: 'The cause of your difference has not been any of the leading doctrines or precepts of the Divine Law, nor has any new heresy respecting the worship of God arisen among you. You are in truth of one and the same mind; you may therefore well join in communion and fellowship!'

This well-intentioned epistle was despatched to Alexandria by the hands of Hosius, Bishop of Cordova. Its effect was **A Council summoned.** what might have been expected. The exhortations of Hosius were equally futile. Returning to the Emperor at Nicomedia, he reported his failure, and probably gave Constantine the memorable advice to summon a general council of the whole Church to settle the controversy. At the same time other outstanding questions, like the Meletian schism and the dispute about the time for keeping Easter, might be dealt with. A council was the traditional and proper method for settling such disputes. The pattern had been set in the apostolic age itself by the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.), which

arbitrated between the Jewish and Catholic conceptions of the Church. In the second century councils had been held to deal with Montanism and the Paschal controversy; in the third, very frequently—as, for example, that of Iconium about 230, on the question of heretical baptism; and those which dealt with Novatian and Origen, and with the teaching of Paul of Samosata. In the early fourth century, Illiberis in Spain had seen an important council which passed eighty-one disciplinary canons; the Council of the Lateran in 313 had discussed Donatism; that of Arles in 314 has already been described (p. 181). About the same time councils at Ancyra and at Neocaesarea in Pontus had dealt with the questions of the re-admission of the lapsed, with ordinations, and with the marriage of the clergy.

There was therefore abundant precedent for that council which Constantine summoned to meet at Nicaea (near Nicomedia) in 325. It was the natural method of the Church's appeal to that perpetual guidance of the Holy Ghost which the Lord had promised.

But the council at Nicaea was to differ from its predecessors in some important particulars. It was summoned by an Emperor who had the power to compel attendance—even though he did not impose his own views on the members. It was an attempt for the first time to represent all parts of the Christian Church. And, as the event proved, its decisions were generally accepted as final and authoritative by the general body of Christians. For these last two reasons the Council of Nicaea is called 'Oecumenical,' representing the whole world, and it marks not only a great crisis, but a new development in the history of the Church.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What was the Arian heresy?
2. What causes made it difficult to refute?
3. Show the inconsistency of Arianism with Christianity.
4. How can you explain the popularity of Arianism?
5. Trace the origins and early stages of the Arian heresy.
6. What was Constantine's attitude towards the Arian controversy?
7. What step was taken towards dealing with the Arian problem?

## SUBJECT FOR STUDY.

Arianism and the Catholic Faith.

Newman. *Arians of the Fourth Century.*

Gwatkin. *The Arian Controversy.*

„ *Studies of Arianism.*

Robertson. Prolegomena to 'Athanasius' in Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.*

The chief original authorities for this period of the definition of Catholic doctrine are S. Athanasius himself, and the Church<sup>s</sup> Histories of Socrates (extending from 306 to 439), Sozomen (from 323 to 423), and Theodoret (322-427). All these are translated in Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.*

## CHAPTER XV. THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA

THIS memorable assemblage met on June 19, 325, at Nicaea, a place probably chosen for its nearness to Nicomedia, the imperial residence; perhaps also for the augury of its name, 'City of Victory.' Its authentic 'Acts' are no longer extant; but its proceedings can be learned from several trustworthy sources, *e.g.* from Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, Eusebius of Caesarea, and from Athanasius, all of whom were present. The number of bishops who attended is variously given from 220 to 318; the latter number, that of Abraham's household, has become (probably for that reason) the prevailing tradition. Nearly all of these were from the East; the West was scantily represented by one bishop from Gaul, one from Calabria, Caecilian of Carthage, Hosius of Cordova, and the aged Sylvester of Rome, who, being unable to come himself, sent two priests. Many of those present had been confessors in the persecution, and some, like Paphnutius and Potamon from Egypt, bore in their blinded eyes and maimed limbs the marks of their fortitude under torture.

By far the greatest man at the council was Athanasius, at that time only a deacon in attendance on Alexander of Alexandria. He had no vote, but by his eloquence and spiritual force, as well as his learning and acuteness, he really led the council to its decision. He is the most prominent figure of the next half-century; the rare combination of the ecclesiastical statesman, the theologian, and the saint; one whom writers of every school have combined to honour, 'royal-hearted Athanase, with Paul's own mantle blest.'

The council was an appeal to the conscience of the universal Church. The bishops had assembled, not to devise new articles of faith, nor to impose new terms of communion, but to bear

their witness at a great crisis to the faith which they had themselves received. The spirit which animated most of the council is illustrated by a remarkable scene which occurred during the preliminary discussions. Many others besides the bishops were present at these, and among them both laymen and even heathen dialecticians. One of these, according to the historian Sozomen (i. 18), was jibing at the statements of the bishops, and reducing them to confusion by his clever tricks of argument, when an old man of no learning (said to have been Spiridion, the shepherd-Bishop of Cyprus) silenced and finally converted him by these words: 'In the name of Jesus Christ, O philosopher, hearken unto me. There is one God, the maker of heaven, and of all things visible and invisible. He made all things by the power of the Word, and established them by the holiness of His Spirit. The Word, whom we call the Son of God, seeing that man was sunk in error and living like unto the beasts, pitied him and vouchsafed to be born of woman, and to hold intercourse with men and to die for them. And He will come again to judge each of us as to the deeds of this present life. We believe these things to be true with all simplicity. Do not therefore spend your labour in striving to dispute facts which can only be understood by faith, or in scrutinising the manner in which these things did or did not come to pass. Answer me, dost thou believe?' The philosopher, overcome, as he said, by some inexplicable impulse, replied, 'I believe,' and became himself a preacher of the faith.

The meetings were held first in the cathedral, and then, after Constantine's arrival, in the great hall of the palace. The Emperor, at the first of these sessions, presided himself, magnificent in purple and gold. He addressed the Council in a speech which Eusebius records, and though he took no actual part in the discussion, nor attempted to influence its course, he followed it with the keenest interest. It must well have seemed one of the great miracles of history to those who looked back upon the recent persecution, to hear the lord of the world, the inheritor of the throne of Diocletian and Decius, of Marcus Aurelius, of Domitian

**Constan-  
tine's  
welcome.**



and Nero, thus address the assembled bishops: 'Delay not, dear friends, delay not, ye ministers of God and faithful servants of our common Lord and Saviour: begin from this moment to discard the causes of the disunion which has existed among you, and remove the perplexities of controversy by embracing the principles of peace. For by such conduct you will at the same time be acting in a manner most pleasing to the supreme God, and you will confer an exceeding favour on me your fellow-servant!'

It has been estimated<sup>1</sup> that the members of the council consisted of the following parties. First, there was a distinctly Arian party of about fifteen, headed by Eusebius of Nicomedia, and the Bishops of Nicaea and Chalcedon. Next came an equally decided body of anti-Arians, about thirty in number, led by Alexander and Athanasius. This party included all the Western bishops, and the anti-Origenists of the East. The third party, the vast majority, sometimes called 'Conservatives,' were represented by Eusebius of Caesarea. They were ready to condemn Arius, but too cautious, too uncertain in their theology, or even, like Eusebius himself, too much inclined to a modified Arianism, in their fear of being Sabellians, to desire to do more than condemn the individual heretic. They shrank from imposing any test of Catholicity; but, as usually happens in such circumstances, they found themselves compelled to follow the lead of a few clearer-sighted men who had made up their minds and knew exactly what they wanted.

The work before the council was first of all to deal with the doctrine of Arius himself. He was twice examined, and boldly declared his belief that the Son of God was a created being, made out of nothing,' as the current phrase went, and that He might have sinned. The council almost unanimously condemned this as heresy and approved Alexander's deposition of Arius.

But a more difficult matter was to formulate some standard of faith which would be a safeguard for the future. There were materials to hand in the baptismal creeds, and it was proposed

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Robertson, *Prolegomena to Athanasius*.

to make use of one of these. Eusebius of Caesarea presented the creed which was in use in his own Church. It was more doctrinal than the creeds of the West, and might **The question of a Creed.** have been accepted as quite satisfactory, if the Arian question had not arisen. It stated of Jesus Christ, that He is 'the Logos of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, His only Son, the First-born of all creatures, begotten of the Father before all time, by whom also everything was created.' This creed was, as a matter of fact, adopted as the groundwork of the Nicene statement; but it was felt not to be explicit enough on the eternal relationship of the Son to the Father. Hence came the necessity of adding some phrase which could not be misunderstood or quibbled with. Various suggestions were made, which proved futile in face of the obvious collusion and sophistry of the Arian party. Athanasius has described vividly how they were noticed nodding and winking at each other as each proposed test from Scripture was brought forward, and evidently suggesting ways of evading it. For example, the phrase 'from' or 'of God' was capable of being explained in the sense that all creation is of God; 'the power of God' was ambiguous because even the army of locusts is spoken of in the Scriptures in similar language; 'the image of God' is applied in the Scriptures to man himself.

Finally the great phrase was produced, which no Arian could accept or explain away, the Son is 'of one substance (*ὁμοούσιος*) **The Homoousion.** with the Father.' It is difficult to say who originally proposed it. It exactly expressed the views of Alexander and Athanasius, but it may (as Duchesne suggests) have emanated from the Roman legates, for it had been in regular use in the Church of Rome for the past sixty years. (The word certainly marked the fundamental difference between the Catholic conception of the Son of God, and all Arian teaching. But it was not accepted without a struggle. A large number were opposed to it for various reasons; it was suspected of being Sabellian; it was not found in Scripture; philosophically it was thought to imply a 'substance' prior to both Father and Son in which they both shared, and historically it was under a

cloud, as having been proposed and rejected in the previous century at a council at Antioch, when Paul of Samosata had astutely suggested that it implied that Father and Son were the same Person. Nevertheless, the fathers of Nicaea ultimately accepted it. The Creed of Caesarea was carefully revised clause by clause, the *homoousion* was inserted, and other expressions introduced to guard the personal pre-existence and eternity of the Son; 'Son' was substituted for 'Logos'; 'came down' (from heaven) was added, also the word 'was-made-man,' safeguarding the mystery of the Incarnation. The phrase 'first-begotten of all creation,' though Scriptural, was omitted, as liable to Arian misconstruction. Finally certain 'anathematisms' were added as follows, stigmatising the special errors of Arius: 'As to those who say, There was a time when the Son was not: before He was begotten He was not: He was made out of nothing, or of another substance or essence: the Son of God is a created being, subject to change—such persons the Catholic Church anathematises.'

The completed Creed ran as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,  
 Maker of all things both visible and invisible;  
 And in one Lord Jesus Christ  
 The Son of God,  
 Begotten as the only-begotten of the Father,  
 that is, of the substance of the Father,  
 God of God,  
 Light of Light,  
 True God of true God,  
 Begotten, not made,  
 Of one substance with the Father;  
 Through whom all things came to be, both  
     those in heaven and those in earth;  
 Who for us men and for our salvation  
 Came down,  
 And was incarnate,  
 And was made man,  
 Suffered,  
 And rose again on the third day,  
 Ascended into the heavens,  
 And cometh again  
 To judge living and dead;  
 And (we believe) in the Holy Ghost.

Hosius signed this creed first, apparently as president, and the next signatures were those of the two Roman legates. Seventeen of the bishops at first refused to sign it, but pressure ultimately reduced the number to two Egyptians, Secundus and Theonas. These the Emperor banished along with Arius to Illyria. Eusebius of Nicomedia, to his discredit, signed it; he cannot have been sincere, but shortly afterwards he too was banished, for reasons which are not very clear. The creed was sent round to the various churches of the East, and at once accepted by them as a true statement of the Catholic Faith. Eusebius of Caesarea seems to have found it a tough morsel, and the letter to his Church accompanying the creed is very disingenuous. He actually quibbles with the anathematism on those who say that before the Son was begotten He was not, by asserting that 'begotten' applies to Christ's temporal birth as man, an interpretation which was palpably incorrect, as he must have known.

The council also dealt with the Meletian schism and the Paschal controversy. With regard to the former, very mild measures were adopted, which Athanasius found cause to regret. Meletius himself was to remain a bishop, but not to exercise his functions. Those whom he had ordained were to be re-ordained. The Meletian bishops were to give way to those appointed by Alexander, but might succeed them in the event of the death of any of the latter. This arrangement, made in the interests of peace, proved futile.

It was agreed that Easter should be kept by the whole Church on the same day, viz. the Sunday after the full moon which occurs next after March 21. Thus the quarto-deciman practice was finally abolished. It was also settled that the Bishop of Alexandria was to send year by year a 'Paschal letter' to Rome declaring the right day for the festival. This was probably a tribute to the well-known skill of the Egyptians in astronomy.

The council also passed twenty canons of discipline, which

are interesting and important, though not of the same permanent character and authority as their doctrinal decisions. Men were not to be ordained immediately after their baptism (2). The ancient rights of metropolitans were to be maintained, the Bishop of Alexandria having jurisdiction over the churches of Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, 'since this is also customary for the Bishop of Rome' (the phrase is ambiguous; Rufinus quotes the canon as giving the Bishop of Rome authority over the 'suburbicarian' churches, *i.e.* those dioceses bordering on Rome) (6). Dying men, even though excommunicate, are not to be denied the Holy Communion, if they desire it (13). Clergy, including bishops, are not to move from city to city, but to remain where they were ordained (15). Deacons, having no authority 'to offer' (*i.e.* to celebrate the Eucharist), are not to minister the Holy Communion to priests (18).

Canons.

The council also discussed the question of clerical marriage. The rule already existed that men should not marry after ordination to the priesthood. There were those who desired greater strictness, and wished that married men when ordained should separate from their wives. This proposition was defeated, largely through the influence of Paphnutius, who, though himself a celibate, pleaded the cause of the married clergy. Those priests who were already married were still allowed to retain their wives. The question was laid to rest for the present, but it was to be raised again, and prove a fruitful cause of controversy.

Clerical  
Marriage.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the constitution of the Council of Nicaea.
2. What parties existed in the council?
3. What was the chief work of the council?
4. What test-word was adopted by the council, and why?
5. Compare the Creed of Nicaea with the earlier creeds.
6. What other matters were discussed by the council?

SUBJECT FOR STUDY.

The Council and its Work.

Stanley. *History of the Eastern Church.*

Robertson. Prolegomena to *Athanasius.*

Bright. *Age of the Fathers.*

'Athanasius' by Bright in *Dictionary of Christian Biography.*

## CHAPTER XVI. ARIANISM AFTER NICAEA

### I.—THE ARIAN ATTACK

THE council, though apparently final, was only the beginning of the battle. The great majority of the orthodox bishops, though at the crisis of decision they had accepted the *homoousion*, had not yet reached a clear grasp of its necessity. The Arians were only checked, not crushed. The next half-century shows a strong reaction, during which they used all their efforts to undo the work of Nicaea.

Among the characteristics of this period are to be noted (1) the multiplicity of phases through which Arianism passed. At first largely a personal movement, to vindicate **Arian** the orthodoxy of Arius himself, after his death in 336 **methods**, it enlarged its designs and methods. Arians divided into parties, which agreed only in their common dislike of the *homoousion*. Each party produced creeds which it wished to substitute for that of the council, creeds for the most part heretical only in their studied omissions. On the other side the Catholics steadily adhered to the Nicene formula, and ultimately brought round the great body of the undecided to accept it.

(2) The unscrupulousness of the Arians was very marked. From the beginning their leaders showed themselves masters of intrigue. Not one of them was eminent as a religious character (Harnack). They were ready to employ unworthy means to compass their ends. Their influence at the imperial court was strong, especially among women and eunuchs and the 'backstairs' powers of an Oriental palace. They pressed into their service the discontents and the plots of Donatists, Meletians, Judaizers, and even heathen. Nor did they scruple to make use of cruelty, false witness, and persecution. Such weapons

had not hitherto been used by one body of Christians against another, and it is to the credit of the Catholics that they abstained from them, and won their cause, as Christians had done in the face of heathen persecution, by patient suffering and non-resistance.

(3) The period of struggle was also remarkable for the defenders who were raised up on the Catholic side. Most notable **S. Athanasius** of all was the great Athanasius, the centre and protagonist of the conflict. During the earlier part of the period he practically stood alone. His magnificent personality shines out in clear contrast with the motley crew of intriguers, time-servers, and persecutors who gained the ear of the Emperors. He was the one great man of the age, supreme in every line, great in intellect, in sanctity, in courage, in wisdom, in patience; never wavering in that devotion to the Nicene faith which was inspired by his own personal loyalty to Christ. He stood firm even though saints and confessors and the Bishop of Rome himself fell victims to Arian subtleties. He stood firm even in that terrible moment when Arianism seemed to have triumphed. He was not unworthy even of the praise which Milton gave to his stedfast Abdiel.

‘faithful found

Among the faithless, faithful only he :  
 Among innumerable false, unmoved,  
 Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified.  
 His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal :  
 Nor number, nor example, with him wrought  
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,  
 Though single’ (*P. L. v.*).

Constantine was at first zealous in his determination to uphold the decisions of a council in which he himself had been so deeply interested. But he was before long induced to **Return of Arian exiles**. take a different view about the Arian exiles. First, Eusebius of Nicomedia, the evil genius of the period, was allowed to return (about 327). This marks the beginning of the establishment of Arian influence at the court. Eusebius resumed his course of intrigue, which continued to the end of his life.



Meanwhile, Alexander of Alexandria had died. On his death-bed he called on the name of the absent Athanasius as his successor, adding significantly, 'You think to escape, but it cannot be.' Athanasius was elected by the bishops of Egypt, and consecrated in 326. The lists were set, and the great conflict was about to begin.

The policy of Eusebius was at first not to attack openly the Nicene decision, but to obscure the real issue under various personal matters. He aimed first at the recall of Arius and his recognition by the Emperor and the Church as orthodox; and next at the gradual removal of the leading bishops who defended the *homoousion*, especially Athanasius. The Emperor was influenced through his sister, Constantia, the widow of Licinius, to reconsider the case of Arius. He was summoned from his Illyrian exile along with one Euzoius, and examined privately by the Emperor. The two heretics presented a creed with which the judge declared himself satisfied. Its statements were correct enough as far as they went, but of course they ignored the vital problem. Jesus Christ was said to be 'Lord, the Son of the Father, begotten by Him before all worlds, God, Logos, through whom all things came to be, both in heaven and in earth.' (It is interesting to note that this creed added further clauses after belief in the Holy Ghost—'the resurrection of the flesh, the life of the world to come, the kingdom of heaven, and one Catholic Church of God.') Constantine, persuaded that Arius was himself orthodox, revoked the sentence of exile.

But Athanasius had to be dealt with before there was any hope of an ecclesiastical recognition of Arius. Eusebius found ready tools at hand in the Meletians, who had broken loose from the compromise of Nicaea; and after the death of Meletius had defiantly elected another patriarch of their sect, John Arcaph. With their assistance a series of charges were laid against Athanasius before the Emperor in 331. He was accused of extortion, of having compelled the Egyptians to contribute linen garments (variously described by historians as vestments and shirts!);

**The first  
attack on  
Athanasius.**

of treason, in having assisted an enemy of the Emperor with money; and of sacrilege. This last charge referred to the famous incident of the 'Chalice of Ischyras.' It was alleged that Athanasius had sent a priest, Macarius, to stop the services performed by a Meletian priest or bishop called Ischyras. The envoy was said to have entered the church during Mass, broken the altar, and flung the chalice on the ground.

The Emperor dismissed all these charges as trivial or non-proven. The case of the chalice of Ischyras, though it appeared again in the next attack made on Athanasius, was particularly groundless. Ischyras was proved to be not in orders, for he had been ordained only by Colluthus, a presbyter (an interesting sidelight on the view taken by the Church about non-episcopal ordination); there was no Eucharist on the day in question, for Ischyras was ill in bed; there was not even a chalice at all in the village, and lastly, Ischyras himself confessed the story to be an invention!

About the same time a more successful attack was made on Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch. He had been a strong supporter of the *homoousion* at Nicaea, and was an enemy of Eusebius of Caesarea—a man of strong principles and of somewhat unguarded words. He was accused before a council at Antioch of being a Sabellian, and also of impure life. The latter accusation was certainly false; and the first was the stock charge to bring against a supporter of the Nicene faith. However, the council condemned him, and the Emperor, having given him a hearing, banished him to Thrace. It is said that there was a personal question involved; that Eustathius had spoken disparagingly of the Emperor's mother, Helena. It is possible that this was true, for Helena had a devotion to the martyr Lucian of Antioch, the special patron saint of the Arians. Antioch was handed over to one Paulinus of Tyre; but a strong Eustathian party refused to acknowledge him as bishop, or any of his successors; and Athanasius and his supporters looked upon these Eustathians as the true Church of Antioch.

The attack on Athanasius was resumed in 335. A second

set of charges was brought against him. The old one of the chalice of Ischyra reappeared; but a new one was fabricated of murder and magic. He was accused of killing Arsenius, a Meletian bishop, and cutting off his hand for magical purposes. Athanasius was solemnly arraigned before a council at Tyre, presided over, to his discredit, by Eusebius of Caesarea. A human hand was actually brought forward in evidence. But Athanasius by a dramatic stroke produced in court Arsenius himself, alive, with both hands intact. The Meletians fled in confusion, but the Arians turned on Athanasius with a charge of being a sorcerer, and he was actually in danger of his life. The council then appointed commissioners to go through Egypt and hunt for fresh evidence. The proceedings of these were shameless and violent, and when the supporters of Athanasius at Alexandria protested, a mob of heathen soldiers was let loose on them.

Next, the council condemned Athanasius, in his absence, to deposition; and restored the Meletians to communion. From Tyre the members of the council proceeded to Jerusalem to attend the festival of the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built by Helena, and here they put the crown on their acts by admitting Arius to communion.

Athanasius fled to Constantinople, met the Emperor as he was riding into the city, and laid his case before him. Constantine summoned the members of the Council of Tyre; some of them came, headed by Eusebius of Caesarea. They had another charge ready. Athanasius, they said, had threatened to stop the corn-ships sailing from Alexandria to Constantinople. The Emperor, whether he believed the charge, or whether it seemed the easiest ending for the moment to the controversy, banished Athanasius to Trèves in Gaul. No attempt, however, was made to fill up his see.

Athanasius out of the way, the Arian ringleaders now endeavoured to get Arius formally readmitted to communion. The attempt failed at Alexandria; the presbyters refused, in the absence of their bishop. At Constantinople a more

determined attempt was made. The Emperor was induced again to hear Arius, and upon his declaration on oath that **Death of Arius.** he held the Catholic Faith, commanded Alexander, the aged Bishop of Constantinople, to admit him. Alexander is said to have prayed, prostrate before the altar, that God would take away either Arius or himself before such a sacrilege was committed. The sequel was at least a strange coincidence; to many it appeared a special judgment of God. Arius, on the eve, as it seemed, of his triumph, died with extraordinary suddenness (336).

The Arian attack was now directed against another of the prominent defenders of the Nicene Creed, Marcellus of Ancyra. **Marcellus of Ancyra.** He had made the mistake of writing a book against his adversaries, for which he was evidently not sufficiently equipped as a theologian. Eusebius of Caesarea discovered in it traces of Sabellianism. Marcellus apparently was vague as to the eternal and distinct personality of the Son and the Holy Spirit. He was declared deposed, the Emperor banished him, and a successor was appointed to his see.

Constantine died in 337. He seems to have fallen completely under the domination of Eusebius of Nicomedia. It was he **Changes in the Empire.** who baptized the Emperor a few days before his death. He had not till then even become a 'catechumen,' although he had lectured Christian bishops and pretended to decide on the orthodoxy of Arius.

The Empire was once more divided. The three sons of Constantine, all of them brought up as Christians, shared out the provinces, after nearly all the other claimants to the throne, including the brother of the late Emperor, had been massacred. Constantine II. received all that lay West of the Alps; Constantius had Egypt and the East; Constans, Italy and Africa.

The Arian policy continued. Catholic bishops were attacked: vacant sees were filled, if possible, by Arian sympathisers. **Arian intrigues.** About 338, Eusebius of Nicomedia got himself translated to Constantinople, and for the next forty-two years the see was held by a succession of like-minded bishops (Eusebius, 338-341; Macedonius, 341-360; Eudoxius,

360-370, an irreverent and intriguing place-hunter; Demophilus, 370-380). In 340, Eusebius of Caesarea was succeeded by Acacius, a man of somewhat similar type. At Antioch, Leontius became bishop—a time-server, though with some sense of humour. He was careful, in repeating the Doxology in church, to pronounce the first and last words very loudly, but to slur over, or cough at the intervening ones, so that it could not be told whether he was repeating it in the Arian or Catholic manner. (The former said, 'through the Son,' the latter, 'to the Son.')

Constantius, a young man of twenty, was completely under the dominion of eunuchs and Arian intriguers. His elder brother Constantine II., however, was of a different mind, **Return of Athanasius.** and insisted on the recall of Athanasius, who returned to Alexandria with great popular rejoicings after more than two years' exile. The Tenth Festal letter, written from Trèves, breathes the spirit of a saint who rejoices in tribulation; and throughout it is most characteristically animated by intense devotion to the person of the Saviour.

The Arians, or Eusebians, as they came to be called, recommenced of course their plots against him, but at first without success. He had powerful supporters—Constantine II., the churches of Egypt generally, and the influence of the mysterious hermit of the desert, S. Antony. An Egyptian council in 338 acquitted Athanasius of all charges, and wrote a circular letter to the Church to that effect. S. Antony, to welcome the returned exile, left his solitudes, though now in his ninetieth year, and visited Alexandria for two days, where he is said to have performed many miracles.

S. Antony is the traditional founder of the solitary religious life. He lived in the deserts of Egypt for more than eighty out of his hundred and five years of life—in prayer and labour and lonely wrestling with evil spirits. **S. Antony.**

(Only twice he visited Alexandria, the first occasion being during the great persecution in 311, when he appeared to comfort and strengthen the confessors and martyrs. Against his will he was compelled to receive disciples; but breaking off from them at

last, he retired to a more distant solitude. His influence was always on the side of the orthodox faith; and Athanasius himself wrote his life. Both the authenticity of this, and the very existence of such a person as Antony, have been doubted by some scholars, but both seem now to be established.

The next set of accusations which were fabricated by Athanasius' enemies was cunningly devised to put him wrong both with Church and Emperor. He was charged with having returned to his diocese on secular authority alone, after a canonical deposition by the Church at the Council of Tyre. And he was said to have embezzled a bounty of corn which the Emperor had sent to the widows of Egypt; and to have used force and cruelty to re-establish himself at Alexandria. The accusers endeavoured to gain over Julius of Rome to their side, by sending a deputation to complain of Athanasius having returned uncanonically to his see. While their negotiations were going on at Rome, Eusebius (now of Constantinople) and his friends managed to win the ear of Constantius; and to persuade him to appoint a new Bishop of Alexandria. This was rather cool from the supporters of canonical election and deposition; but for the moment they succeeded. One Gregory, a Cappadocian, was consecrated and deliberately forced, without any election, and simply by imperial authority, upon the Christians of Alexandria. The intruder, supported by soldiers, took forcible possession of his see, amid scenes of fire and bloodshed. Athanasius wrote an indignant protest to the bishops of the whole Church, fled from Alexandria, and made his way to Rome, accompanied by two priests and two Egyptian monks.

Pope Julius received them and other refugees from the East, and was ready to act as arbiter. After long delays, the delegates he had sent to the East returned, bearing a very high and mighty letter from Eusebius and his friends. After elaborate compliments to the Church of Rome, they proceeded to claim their own equality with Julius: they com-

plained bitterly that he had admitted Athanasius to communion and reversed their decrees. Julius held a formal synod, at which not only Athanasius was pronounced guiltless, but Marcellus of Ancyra (p. 208) was freed from the charge of heresy. This latter decision was much more dubious than the former. Men on both sides held Marcellus to be a Sabellian, and it is recorded that Athanasius himself, when questioned years after by Epiphanius as to the orthodoxy of Marcellus, refused to commit himself and replied only with a smile. However, Marcellus was astute enough to accept from the Pope a creed which, though worded in Greek, is really identical with the Baptismal Creed of the Roman Church, *i.e.* the earlier form of the Apostles' Creed.

Julius then addressed a long and dignified reply to Eusebius and his supporters (*Ath. Apol.* ii.). It is one of the weightiest productions of the Arian controversy. Its whole tone speaks well for the temper and the ability of its author. Its contents are really a smashing blow at the methods and intrigues of the party of Eusebius. Julius shows that they themselves are the real transgressors against ecclesiastical law, especially by their readmission of the Arians to communion in defiance of the Nicene Council; that their whole proceedings against Athanasius have been unfair and irregular; that the appointment of Gregory of Cappadocia was an utter scandal to the Church and against all ecclesiastical order; and that the deposition of Athanasius had not been, as ancient precedent required, first communicated to the Roman Church, for its approval. This last point, of course, opens another question; but it can scarcely be thought from the whole spirit of Julius' letter that he would have made such a claim for his see, if he had not been convinced, rightly or wrongly, that it was according to ancient custom.

Julius' indignation is throughout tempered by courtesy and Christian charity, but it is none the less heavy. Some of his phrases must have stung those who received the letter, if men like Eusebius were not past feeling shame: 'in ecclesiastical matters, it is not a display of eloquence that is needed, but the

observance of the apostolic canons and an earnest care not to offend the little ones of the Church' . . . or after describing the entrance of Gregory into Alexandria, ' You write that perfect peace prevailed in Alexandria and Egypt. Surely not, unless the work of peace is entirely changed, and you call such doings as these peace . . . O beloved, the decisions of the Church are no longer according to the Gospel, but tend only to banishment and death.'

The Roman exile of Athanasius lasted for seven years (339-346). It is for many reasons an important episode. The Western Church now definitely entered into the Arian controversy, and on the side of Nicaea. The Bishop of Rome appears as the champion of the faith, and that in an impressive and entirely worthy manner. Athanasius himself here learned Latin, and was accepted as representative of the Catholics of West as well as East, so that when, in later days, the orthodox definitions were worked by some unknown hand into the great hymn of the Western Church, *Quicumque vult*, it seemed natural to inscribe it as *Fides Catholica Sancti Athanasii*. The monks who accompanied Athanasius, and the ascetic ideals of the saint himself, introduced also into the West the conception of the monastic life, already familiar in Egypt, and destined to a great development later under S. Benedict (*see* Chapter xxiv. and Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, iii.).

#### QUESTIONS.

1. By what methods did the Arian party endeavour to overthrow the decision of Nicaea?
2. Sketch the history of Arius himself after Nicaea. Who was his chief supporter?
3. Describe the events leading up to the first exile of S. Athanasius.
4. What other eminent bishops were attacked by the Arians?
5. How was S. Athanasius' exile to Rome brought about by the Arians?
6. Show how that exile strengthened the cause of the defenders of Nicaea.
7. What do you know of S. Antony, and of Gregory of Cappadocia?



## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

## 1. The Roman exile of S. Athanasius.

'Athanasius' in Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.

See translation of Pope Julius' letter in that volume.

'Athanasius' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

## 2. The Life of S. Antony.

See translation of S. Athanasius' 'Life of Antony'  
in Schaff's *Athanasius*.

## CHAPTER XVII. ARIANISM AFTER NICAEA

### II.—THE ARIAN COUNCILS AND CREEDS

IN 340, Constantine II., the protector of Athanasius, was slain in battle near Aquileia, fighting with his brother Constans.

**The Council of the** The latter now became Emperor of the West.  
**Dedication.** For the next ten years the Arians pressed on their

attack, now not merely against individual bishops, but against the Creed of Nicaea itself, which they definitely endeavoured to get rid of. It is the period of *doctrinal* reaction.

In 341 came the Council of the Dedication, at Antioch, on the occasion of the dedication of the new cathedral, begun by Constantine, called 'the Golden Church.' No Western bishops were present among the ninety-seven who attended. A large minority of Arians carried the council with them. They were led by Eusebius of Constantinople, whose last public appearance happily it proved to be, for he died shortly afterwards. 'The memory of this intriguing prelate,' says Duchesne, 'in whom one can find no single sympathetic feature, remains weighted with a heavy responsibility.'

The council considered the letter of Pope Julius; but re-enacted the sentence of Tyre against Athanasius, pretending that he had been canonically deposed and that his return was illegal. They passed twenty-four canons, some of them of permanent importance, as they afterwards became part of the regular canon law of the Church. The aim of these canons was to strengthen episcopal authority against the Emperor, and the authority of provincial synods against outside interference, probably aiming at preventing appeals being taken to Rome. If a synod was unanimous there was to be no appeal from it. Bishops ordaining out of their diocese were to be deposed.

But the most characteristic work of this council was the adoption of three creeds; thus setting the type of controversy for some years to come. Hitherto no attempt had been made, except by Arius and Euzoius (p. 205), to substitute a new creed for that of Nicaea. The Creeds of Antioch were intended apparently to conciliate the moderates, who did not sympathise with Arius, but disliked the *homoousion*: men who were more frightened of Sabellianism than of Arianism. Indeed, the council began its statement of faith by definitely stating 'we are not followers of Arius: how could we, being bishops, be led by a priest?'—a statement which sounded well, but meant little. The creeds are studiously vague on the crucial question, but evidently aim at condemning Marcellus of Ancyra, who is definitely anathematised in the third of these statements. The second, said to have been the work of the martyr Lucian, is usually called the Creed of the Dedication. It describes the Son of God by all manner of splendid titles, and repudiates the idea that He is a creature, but it is careful of course not to say that He is of 'one substance with the Father.' It makes indeed one contribution to theological language, which the Church ultimately accepted, by calling the Three Persons distinct *hypostases* (see pp. 216, 232), who are *one* in harmony.

In 343 a great council, intended to be oecumenical, was summoned at Sardica in Thrace (now Sofia), at the wish of the Emperor Constans, to decide on the Athanasian question. There were present 170 bishops, of whom 100 were Westerns, and a Western presided, the famous Hosius of Cordova, the probable President at Nicaea. Athanasius and his fellow-exiles were present. This led at once to a protest from the Easterns (which had been previously engineered). They all withdrew from the council, and held an opposition synod at Philippopolis in Thrace, within the territories of Constantius. Here they excommunicated Athanasius, Marcellus, Julius of Rome, and others, and adopted a creed on much the same lines as that of the Dedication.

The bishops who remained at Sardica acquitted Athanasius and others, including Marcellus, and excommunicated their

opponents. They proposed to put forth a statement of faith ; but this was withdrawn, fortunately, for it stated that in the Godhead is only one *hypostasis*. (Of course the difference was one merely of definition ; by *hypostasis* the Easterns meant 'Person' : the Westerns 'Substance.' But to have proclaimed *one hypostasis* would have only further embittered the theological quarrel.) Instead of a new statement the bishops, through the influence of Athanasius, simply confirmed the Nicene Creed. They also enacted twenty-one canons, of which the third, fourth, and seventh are something of a landmark in the development of the papacy. An appeal is allowed to the Bishop of Rome in the event of the decision of a local council being disputed. The Pope is to have power to stay proceedings until the case has been judged again by the bishops of some neighbouring province, at whose synod the Pope is to be represented by legates.

The Council of Sardica, called to make peace in Christendom, had only succeeded apparently in increasing the tension. East and West were now definitely estranged over the case of Athanasius, an ill omen for the future of Christendom. Bad feeling was still further increased over the case of one Photinus, Bishop of Sirmium, a disciple of Marcellus. (His name means 'Bright' : his opponents nicknamed him Scotinus, 'Dark.') He was plainly a heretic with affinities to Paul of Samosata. He was condemned by a council, but, like Paul, refused to budge. Athanasius had no sympathy with such a person ; but it was unfortunate that Photinus should in any way be classed, like Marcellus, in the same category with him.

The Emperor Constans, in spite of the failures of Sardica, was determined that Athanasius should be restored, and pre-**Athanasius** vailed upon his brother to do this. His return **restored.** was rendered easier by the fact that the usurper Gregory was dead. And for the moment the Arian party were somewhat discredited by the discovery of an infamous plot by Stephen, Bishop of Antioch, to destroy the reputation of Euphrates of Cologne, who had come on a mission from Constans to Constantius. Permission to return was given to Athanasius, who was then at Aquileia. He proceeded by a

circuitous route to Egypt, staying at Antioch, where he communicated with the Eustathians (p. 206), and at Jerusalem, where he was received by a council of bishops. At Alexandria he was welcomed with great popular rejoicings. Both the Pope and the Emperor Constans wrote to the Alexandrians to congratulate them. Two of the bitterest enemies of Athanasius, Valens and Ursacius, retracted, promised to have nothing more to do with the controversy without the consent of Rome, and wrote to Athanasius an apology. For several years peace was secured, and it seemed as if the great quarrel was gradually being composed. But darker days were at hand. The year 351 proved a fatal turning-point. Constantius became sole Emperor, for Constans was assassinated (350) in the course of a conflict with a usurper, Magnentius. The latter was defeated in 351, near Mursa in Hungary, the see of Valens, who now gained a complete ascendancy over Constantius, and began again, in spite of his promises, a new campaign against Athanasius.

This third period of Arian reaction (351-363) marks a further advance of Arian principles, pushed on not only by intrigue but by direct persecution. Constantius had the worst possible qualities for an autocrat; obstinately self-willed and conceited, cruel and weak, he was the prey of courtiers and plotters. Under his sole rule, Arianism apparently triumphed over the faith of Nicaea.

From this time, however, there can be traced three distinct parties among the opponents of Athanasius and Nicaea. (1) The semi-Arians; as they are called by Epiphanius. **Arian parties:** These were the theological descendants of the waverers at the Council of Nicaea. They were for **Semi-Arians.** the most part conscientious, and desirous of holding the true Catholic Faith, but they were afraid of Sabellianism, and afraid too, as most bishops are, of taking a decided line. They included men like the learned and pious Basil of Ancyra, Mark of Arethusa, and for a time perhaps even S. Cyril of Jerusalem. They would have liked to substitute *homoiousios* for *homoousios* (i.e. of like substance, instead of the *same* substance). A single letter marks the difference between the spelling of the two words, a fact over

which Gibbon and others have made merry, but there is a world of difference between their meaning. The semi-Arian formula might be interpreted to mean almost anything; the Nicene formula means one thing and one only, the absolute identity of Divine nature in the Father and the Son. The semi-Arians were gradually driven by their disgust at the extreme party into the ranks of the Catholics.

(2) The original 'Eusebians,' men without serious convictions, and not distinguished for piety. They disliked principles of any sort. Their Arianism was political, personal, **Eusebians.** traditional, rather than doctrinal. Their test-word was the vague *homoios*, 'like,' which was asserted to be more Scriptural, and might indeed be used in an orthodox sense, as even Athanasius had used it in his earlier writings, but clearly was no criterion of orthodoxy. The leader of this party was now Acacius of Caesarea, a man of great learning and persuasive style, but a real Arian at bottom.

(3) The Anomoeans, the 'extreme left' of the Arians. They maintained that the Son was 'unlike' (*anomoios*) the Father. **Anomoeans.** This was certainly a logical deduction from the teaching of Arius, and had the merit of making the issue between Catholics and heretics perfectly clear. The founder of this new school of Arianism was one Aetius, a sophist and an adventurer, who had a strangely chequered and disreputable career. First a travelling tinker, then a quack-doctor, he became a philosopher, and employed his abilities in dialectic, and his ungovernable tongue in refuting both heretics, Catholics and semi-Arians. He was ordained deacon by Leontius of Antioch, but proved too heterodox even for that easy-going Arian, and was deposed. After various exiles he even became an Arian bishop, and was held in great regard by his disciples. First among these was Eunomius, after whom the party were sometimes styled Eunomians. Other prominent Anomoeans were Theophilus 'the Indian,' a pupil of Eusebius of Nicomedia, who passed for a saint among the Arians; Eudoxius, whose idea of theology was to proclaim that the Father is 'impious,' because He worships none, the Son 'pious' because He worships

the Father ; Valens, who seems now to have taken the place of Eusebius of Nicomedia as an irreconcilable intriguer ; and another Athanasius, Bishop of Anazarbus, who is credited with having said that the Son is but one of the hundred sheep of the parable.

The next attack on Athanasius began in 353 at a council at Arles, where he was arraigned in his absence, before Constantius. He was defended by Vincent, a legate from Pope **New** Liberius, who had succeeded Julius in 352, but **attack on** Vincent was terrified into submission. The charges **Athanasius.** against Athanasius were (1) that he had influenced Constans against Constantius ; (2) that he had corresponded with the usurper, Magnentius ; (3) that he had used without permission at Easter a church which was being built by the Emperor at Alexandria, and had not yet been dedicated. Any stick would do to beat Athanasius with, and these charges were flagrantly political rather than religious. The first two were certainly false ; the third comparatively harmless ; at the worst the use of the church was a mere lapse from discretion. But they were enough for Constantius, whose pride was wounded. Athanasius was condemned ; the Western bishops were carried away by the efforts of Valens and by their respect for Constantius. The Pope protested, and another council was held in 355 at Milan. Here Constantius is said to have behaved like a wild beast, asserting that whatever *he* willed was a canon of the Church. Athanasius was again condemned, in spite of the efforts of the papal legates and Eusebius of Vercellæ. Valens succeeded in making nearly all present sign the sentence of deposition against Athanasius. Only three refused, and were sent into exile. The Roman deacon Hilarius, in answer to his protests, was publicly scourged in the palace.

The Emperor hesitated for some time, in spite of all this, to interfere with Athanasius. But early in 356, Syrianus, governor of Egypt, was sent to Alexandria to eject him. A **Third exile of** dramatic scene ensued. In the night of February **Athanasius.** 8, the Church of S. Theonas, where Athanasius was presiding at a vigil-service (*pannychides*), was beset by soldiers. Athanasius

remained seated on his throne, and bade the deacon intone Ps. cxxxvi. with its significant verses—‘ who smote great kings . . . Sihon, king of the Amorites—Og, the king of Basan—for his mercy endureth for ever.’ The soldiers forced the doors and began to shoot arrows, and slay and outrage the faithful Athanasius would not leave the Church until he had ensured the escape of as many as possible; and then succeeded himself in slipping away, unnoticed, or at any rate unmolested. He at once left the city and fled to the deserts of Egypt. S. Antony had died a month before; but the monks of the desert sheltered the great bishop now in this place and now in that.

One story is preserved of how his ready wit extricated him in a very tight place. He was being hotly pursued by an imperial barge on the Nile. At a bend in the river he directed his boat to turn and meet the pursuers, who had not actually recognised him. ‘ Have you seen Athanasius?’ was the challenge. ‘ Yes,’ the bishop replied, ‘ he is not far away, row on quickly.’ So they did, and pursued and pursuers were soon far distant.

Athanasius was searched for incessantly; hunted like Elijah by Ahab; a price was set on his head, but Egypt was absolutely loyal to him. He was never betrayed; though he remained in hiding some five or six years. He spent the time living the ordinary religious life of a monk, and writing some of his most important works, including his masterpiece, the four great *Orations against the Arians*. He was quite unconquerable, and his exile was more disastrous to his enemies than his years of victory. ‘ In Athanasius we never see the panic-stricken outlaw; he is a general always meditating his next movement, and full of the prospects of his cause’ (Robertson, *Proleg. to Athanasius*, li).

After the Council of Milan, the Arians proceeded to aim at the overthrow of the highest and most venerable supporters of **Fall of Pope Athanasius.** Pope Liberius had clearly shown **Liberius.** himself on his side. Liberius must go. At first he was approached in a conciliatory manner through the eunuch Eusebius. Large money was offered, which the Pope promptly refused. He was then carried off to Milan for a personal inter-



view with the Emperor, who charged him with disturbing the peace of the world, and threatened him with exile if he would not condemn Athanasius. 'The laws of the Church,' he boldly replied, 'are dearer to me than Rome.' 'If you do not assent in three days, consider what other place you desire to be sent to.' 'Not three days nor three months will change my mind.' He was banished to Beroea in Thrace. Here he remained two years, and an antipope Felix reigned at Rome. But Liberius was not able to maintain this splendid consistency. He condemned Athanasius in 357, apparently signed some Arianising creed, and humiliated himself to ask the Arian leaders to re-admit him to their communion. It was a melancholy downfall, and, though it may be regarded as a temporary and personal lapse, it constitutes an awkward problem for the defenders of Papal Infallibility.

The aged Hosius of Cordova was next attacked. More than a hundred years old, he had sat in the Councils of Illiberis, Arles, Nicaea, and Sardica. Decency might have **Fall of** left him alone. He refused emphatically to condemn **Hosius.** Athanasius, and was removed to Sirmium. Here, after a year's exile, he too broke down under constant pressure. He is even said to have been scourged by the Emperor's orders. He signed a declaration which seems to have been distinctly Arian; but he remained absolutely loyal to Athanasius, and refused to the end to condemn him. He was allowed to return to Cordova, where he shortly afterwards died, repenting, as Athanasius bears witness, of a lapse, for which senile decay rather than cowardice was responsible.

Meanwhile, Alexandria was given up to Arian and heathen outrages. The churches were profaned, the faithful were tortured and murdered. The Arians had appointed **The Church** as bishop one George of Cappadocia, who has been **Arianised.** sometimes confused with his predecessor Gregory. His qualifications for episcopacy seem to have been only that he was an Arian, and a man of vigour and business capacity. He had originally been a pork-contractor to the army. He was, according to Athanasius, a great proficient in plundering and killing,

and he used his new office to enrich himself by various commercial enterprises. Similar scenes were going on at Constantinople under Macedonius, and at Toulouse. Gaul was being brought under Arian rule, the great S. Hilary of Poitiers having been banished to Phrygia for daring to remonstrate with Constantius. About the same time S. Cyril of Jerusalem was expelled from his see by Acacius.

The year 357 saw a bold stroke on the part of the extreme Arian party. At Sirmium a declaration was put forward in **Creed of Sirmium.** Latin by Bishops Valens, Ursacius, and Germinius which was definitely Arian and 'Anomoean.' It declared the unique Godhead of the Father, the subjection and inferiority of the Son; and it repudiated both terms *homoousios* and *homoiousios*, and indeed all discussion of 'Ousia' or the Divine substance. This, the second Sirmian Creed,<sup>1</sup> called by the Catholics 'the Sirmian blasphemy,' was apparently the document which the unfortunate Hosius was induced to sign. It was not well received by the Church at large. It disgusted the semi-Arians and all moderate men, and ultimately reacted on the extreme Arians. They had shown their hand too definitely.

The events of the next two years are complicated and puzzling. They saw a conflict between the two Arian parties of the Eusebians and the semi-Arians, ending in the defeat of the **The Semi-Arians in the latter.** The Eusebians were led by Acacius of **ascendant.** Caesarea, the semi-Arians by Basil of Ancyra. The latter, a militant person, held a council at Ancyra in 358, in which a determined attempt was made to avoid the *homoousion*, and at the same time to escape from the extreme Anomoeans. This council adopted the watchword of *homoiousios*, and condemned the two rival formulas. Constantius at this moment inclined to the semi-Arians, and followed up the action of the council by banishing Aetius. It seemed now a favourable opportunity to Basil to make peace in Christendom on semi-Arian lines. He proposed an oecumenical council to be held at Nicaea.

<sup>1</sup> The first Sirmian Creed had been put forth in 351 against Marcellus and Photinus.

The place was changed to Nicomedia ; but the plan was frustrated by an earthquake in the city. This gave the Eusebians time for fresh intrigues, and Acacius hit upon the expedient of dividing the council, the Western bishops to meet at Ariminum, the Eastern at Seleucia in Isauria. Meanwhile, his party produced a third Sirmian formula, usually known as ' The Dated Creed, ' because it bore the names of the two consuls of the year 359. The test-phrase in this creed was the expression that the Son ' is like to the Father in all things, as also the Scriptures teach ' ; a formula quite capable of being used in an orthodox sense. It was proposed to thrust this creed upon the two councils.

At Seleucia, 160 bishops met. It was a struggle between the three Arian parties, and the semi-Arians scored a partial victory. They refused the Dated Creed with its *homoios* ; and also one proposed to them by Leonas, an officer of the imperial household, who presided. They refused also both the formulas *homoousios* and *anomoios* ; but they were unable to accept unanimously any creed of their own. The council broke up in confusion, but before this Acacius and a party had separated themselves, and gone to lay their case before the Emperor.

At Ariminum no fewer than 400 bishops assembled, including some from Britain. The leader on the Arian side was Valens. Rome was unrepresented. Liberius had indeed returned, but his rival Felix was still partly in possession. The council refused the Dated Creed, and confirmed the Nicene Creed, and excommunicated Valens and Ursacius. Without breaking up, they despatched ten envoys to Constantius to inform him that nothing but the Nicene Creed would bring peace to the Church. The defeated party also sent their envoys.

The Emperor was in Thrace, on his way to Persia. He received the Arian envoys at once, but declined to see the others. While they were waiting the imperial pleasure, every effort was made by Valens and his party to turn them from the purpose for which they had been sent. Strangely enough, these efforts proved successful. The very men who had been sent from Ariminum

**Twin-**

**Council of**

**Seleucia and**

**Ariminum.**

**Submission**

**of both**

**councils to**

**Arianism.**

to champion the Nicene Creed were prevailed upon to sign a new and worse form of the Dated Creed! This took place at Nice in Thrace, a place whose name gave the unscrupulous Arians the opportunity to delude the ignorant into the idea that this was a decision of Nicaea. Both sets of envoys, now unanimous, returned to Ariminum. The Emperor was now determined to make the whole council apostatise. They were told falsely that the council at Seleucia had also signed the Dated Creed. They were exhorted not to separate East and West in a quarrel about words. They were threatened with exile if they would not sign. The bishops were weary with waiting, and far from their homes, and the severe winter of Northern Italy was coming on. They wavered, and one by one they yielded. Finally, after seven months' sitting, the Council of Ariminum broke up, after all its remaining members had given in to Eusebianism. Ten delegates were once more sent to the Emperor at Constantinople, where they joined the party of Acacius.

The final scene of the tragedy or farce was enacted at Constantinople in a council of fifty bishops (among them the famous Ulphilas, the Apostle of the Goths), in which Acacius was predominant. The party of Acacius had now gained the Emperor's ear. Constantius had become a Eusebian. The council adopted the Creed of Ariminum, proclaiming merely that the Son is *like* the Father and repudiated all other creeds. The Nicene Creed was thus definitely rejected, and Arianism in its vaguer but equally mischievous form had triumphed. As a compromise, the council deposed Aetius, the leading Anomoean; and also all the leading semi-Arians, including Macedonius of Constantinople, Basil of Ancyra, and Cyril of Jerusalem. Eudoxius, most profane of the Arians (p. 218), became Bishop of Constantinople. Hilary of Poitiers made an indignant protest both to the council and to the Emperor, but in vain. Constantius enforced the Creed of Ariminum on the Church. In the famous words of S. Jerome, 'the whole world groaned and marvelled to find itself Arian. For twenty years the official creed of Eastern Christendom

at least, was not that of Athanasius and Nicaea, but that of Constantius and Ariminum.

But at any rate the air was cleared. It was evident that the final conflict would be between two parties only—that of Athanasius, and that of official and state-favoured **Imperial Arianism**. The semi-Arian waverers would have **changes**. To make up their minds. Meanwhile, Athanasius remained hidden in Egypt, biding his time. And great changes in the State were at hand. Murmurs of civil war were heard. Julian, the Emperor's cousin, whom he had made Caesar of the West, was proclaimed Augustus by the soldiers at Paris. He announced himself a pagan, and marched against Constantius. The latter left his Persian campaign, and hurried westward. But death struck him in Cilicia: he was baptized by the Arian Euzoius, Bishop of Antioch. A heathen Emperor was once more lord of the world.

Against its melancholy catalogue of intrigues and intriguers, Arianism must be credited with one spiritual achievement. The Goths, who had begun in the previous century **Conversion** to be a danger to the Empire, and were now settled **of the Goths** in Dacia, owed both their conversion and the beginning of their literature to Ulfilas, an Arian bishop. His history is wrapped in much obscurity. He was consecrated about 340, possibly by Eusebius of Nicomedia, at the Council of the Dedication, and he laboured in Dacia and Moesia from then till 380. His greatest work was the invention of the Gothic alphabet, and the translation of the Scriptures into that language, all except the four books of Kings, which he omitted as tending to encourage the Goths in war, an exercise in which they were already so proficient.

But with this exception, Arianism was not a spiritual power, and it produced no great men in the least comparable to the protagonists of the Catholic side. It had no **Catholic champions**. Athanasius, of whom Hooker has well said, 'there was nothing observed in the course of that long tragedy other than such as very well became a wise man to do and a righteous to suffer.' S. Cyril of Jerusalem soon cleared himself from the

taint of semi-Arianism, and his Catechetical Lectures, delivered about the middle of the century, are monuments of Christian instruction, especially on the Sacraments. The Catholics, too, had S. Hilary of Poitiers, the bulwark of the faith in Gaul; a clear and eloquent writer and speaker, 'the Rhone of Latin eloquence.' Hilary's disciple, S. Martin of Tours, became even more famous. A favourite saint with the English, he was born in Pannonia in 316, and served as a soldier; baptized after that vision of Christ which followed his well-known gift of his military cloak to a shivering beggar at Amiens in 334, he became a monk at Tours, and in 371 bishop of that city. He is said to have been the great evangeliser of the rural districts of Gaul, and had much influence with the Emperors. He died in 397.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What was the characteristic of the second period of Arian reaction?
2. Describe the Council of Sardica.
3. What was the line taken by the Emperor in this period?
4. Who were the semi-Arians?
5. What were the key-words of the different parties in this controversy? Show their importance.
6. Describe the third exile of S. Athanasius.
7. Describe the Arian attack on Pope Liberius, and its results.
8. What events led up to the apparent triumph of Arianism?
9. What were the characteristics of the most prominent Arian champions?
10. What other eminent supporters of the Nicene Creed are to be noted besides S. Athanasius.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The position of the Papacy during this controversy.  
Puller. *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*.  
'Liberius' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.
2. Ulfilas and the Goths.  
Hodgkin. *Italy and her Invaders*, vol. i.  
Duchesne. *Early History of the Church*, vol. ii.  
C. A. A. Scott. *Ulfilas*.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### JULIAN AND THE PAGAN REACTION

THE eighteen months of the brief reign of Julian are a memorable epoch in the history of the Church. The new Emperor, baptized in his childhood and brought up strictly as a **Julian the Christian**, had secretly been long in revolt from **Apostate**. His faith, and he now stood declared as a pagan. He was a strange and eccentric man, a compound of curious littlenesses and prejudices, and of really great ability. He was a pedant, visionary, and a prig; on the other hand, during his office as Caesar in Gaul he had shown himself capable of reorganising the army and winning victories over the Germans, and as Emperor he was a conscientious and untiring administrator and reformer.

Julian's apostasy from Christianity was due to a combination of causes—his perverse and restless intellect; his infatuation over Greek learning and philosophy; his mysticism **Causes of his** and love of the marvellous. Moreover, brought **apostasy**. Up as he had been, he had seen imperial Christianity in its most unfavourable aspects. He hated Constantius, the patron and would-be ruler of the Church, with a bitterness that finds some justification. Constantius had treated him in his childhood with severity and suspicion. He had trapped and murdered Julian's only brother, the Caesar Gallus, and Julian had anticipated a like fate for himself. And the Christian guides and teachers who had been given him were such men as Eusebius of Nicomedia and Aetius. The Arians that surrounded and dominated the court were largely responsible for Julian's misunderstanding and contempt of Christianity.

Julian's own life was pure and strict. He even affected the cleanliness and untidiness of an ascetic philosopher. His character

was spoiled by his inordinate intellectual vanity, his spiteful narrowness towards those who differed from him, his lack of **His** sense of humour, and his superstition. It was this **character.** last trait that separated his paganism from that of the great imperial philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, on whom he tried to model himself. Julian's philosophy inclined rather to the mystic and occult, to the Neoplatonists and to Iamblichus rather than Plato. He was the ready gull of every sort of traffic with the unseen—astrology, necromancy, and the like. He eagerly followed oracles and soothsaying, and all the mysterious and even disgusting ceremonial of the different pagan cults. He had submitted, as an antidote to his Christian baptism, to undergo the *Tauropolis*—the shower-bath of a bull's blood which was part of the solemnities of the worship of Mithras.

He set himself at once to discredit Christianity and to restore or reconstruct a heathen religion for the Empire. His first **Universal** step was to declare universal toleration. **H** **toleration.** informed the various Arian, heretical, and schismatical Christians, as well as the orthodox, that there would be henceforth no favouritism. All were equal. And all religious exiles were recalled. Athanasius, of course, returned to his see but the exiled Donatists returned to Africa, with results that may be imagined. The purpose of Julian was not to administer even-handed justice, but to create confusion in the Church by allowing the different parties to rend each other.

Next, the attempt was made to lower the prestige of the Church by taking away all the civil honours and privileges of **Attack on** the bishops and clergy, by removing Christian **Christianity.** from all office in the imperial household and elsewhere, and by generally casting ridicule on the faith. For example, it was ordered that Christians should be spoken of only as 'Galilaeans.' Julian not only encouraged sophists and philosophers to write against Christianity, but he did so also himself. In collaboration with the sophist Libanius he composed an anti-Christian treatise, now only known to us by the fragments preserved in the reply written to it by Cyril of Alexandria.



The severest measure under this head was the prohibition (in 362) of Christians acting as teachers or exercising any learned profession. Julian cynically pointed out to them the inconsistency of lecturing on the classics, when they did not believe in the gods of whom Homer and Hesiod had written. 'Let them go,' he said, 'to the Galilaean churches and expound Matthew and Luke.' Even the pagans themselves were shocked at this narrow bigotry. It touched some of the most distinguished scholars of the age, such as Proaeresius at Athens, and Victorinus at Rome, whose conversion and public profession of Christianity in his old age had only recently startled the capital, and who now preferred to renounce his chair rather than apostatise (S. Aug., *Conf.* viii.).

But Julian's constructive policy towards paganism is more interesting than his direct blows at Christianity. He ordered as a preliminary the temples to be reopened, and the sacrifices, which Constantius had forbidden, to be restored. **Attempt to restore paganism.** And whenever possible he compelled Christian bishops to rebuild temples which they had helped to destroy. He endeavoured to seek out and restore the now silent oracles, including that of Delphi; and to call to life again every obsolete superstition and method of divination. But he had grander schemes than these. There was to be a new universal religion to take the place of Christianity, and a new pagan organisation to supersede the Church and the Christian hierarchy. It was here in his two most ambitious schemes that he most conclusively failed, as might have been expected. Both schemes showed the influence of Christianity and paid it the unconscious flattery of imitation.

The new religion was to be a sort of spiritualised sun-worship. Corresponding to the sun of the material world, **Julian's new religion.** Julian conceived a sun of the 'intelligent world,' which was the central object of human worship, being the mediator between things that are seen and the unknowable mysteries of the highest world. This 'intelligent sun' was clearly Julian's substitute for the Christian Logos, the mediator between God and man.

And as a substitute for the Church of Christ he proposed organising into unity all the different pagan priests and priest-hoods, with division into something like dioceses. And this new hierarchy was to be distinguished for holiness, strictness of life, and good works, such as the care of the poor and the sick.

But Julian's schemes and dreams brought him little but disappointment. His new religion did not appeal to men's con-  
 Julian dis- sciences, and a pagan priesthood zealous of good work-  
 illusioned. and living a holy life was a contradiction in terms

Just as he over-estimated the good in paganism, he misunderstood and under-rated the power of Christianity. Men either laughed at him, or followed his lead for what they could get. At Antioch his personal appearance and his unkempt philosophic beard were held up to derision; and he was foolish enough to reply by a treatise defending himself, called the 'Misopogon' (beard-hater). At Antioch too he was compelled to recognise by the logic of facts that paganism was really defunct, and Christianity in possession. On a high festival of Apollo which he desired to keep, only one priest appeared, and the only sacrifice he had been able to raise was a single goose! The oracle in the grove of Daphne which he tried to revive gave him great trouble. The oracular voice was indeed heard in answer to the Emperor's incantations, but all it would say was 'The dead, the dead.' This was interpreted to mean that its precincts were defiled by the presence of the bones of the Christian martyr Babylas, buried there. Julian ordered the Christians to remove them. But it was made the occasion for a great procession which translated the relics, chanting the Psalm—'Confound be all those that worship carved images and delight in vain gods.' The Delphic oracle, the great centre of ancient Hellenic reverence and superstition, remained obstinately dumb. The temple was deserted and in ruins. A late tradition records however, that Julian had his answer in three hexameter lines in the ancient style of the Pythian priestess:

'Tell ye the king that to earth hath fallen the glorious dwelling;  
 Phoebus no more hath his cell, no more his oracular laurel;  
 No, nor his babbling fount: the water that spake is quenched.'

A more authentic and still more remarkable story is that of his attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. It would have been a pretty bit of vengeance on the Christians, **The Temple** who pointed to the end of Temple and sacrifice **of Jerusalem.** as the fulfilment of the Master's prophecy. Preparations were made on a great scale, but flames burst forth from the foundations when these began to be excavated: the workmen fled in terror, and the work was never resumed. This event is recorded not only by Christian writers, but by the heathen historian Marcellinus, the admirer of Julian. Probably natural causes may be found for the mysterious flames, but the coincidence was at least remarkable; and preparations begun on the imperial authority could hardly have stopped so suddenly and finally had there not been some cause which was interpreted as supernatural. Julian made no direct attempt to suppress Christianity: he did not destroy churches or punish Christians for following their religion. A considerable number of Christians suffered torture and death during his reign, but it was ostensibly for insulting the Emperor or for attacking pagan worships; or else it was due to the exulting pagans taking the law into their own hands, as, for example, at Alexandria and Gaza, where priests and consecrated virgins were cruelly murdered. Mark of Arethusa, the Arian, who had protected Julian during the massacre of Constantine's relations after his death, was abominably treated by the mob. He had destroyed a heathen temple, and refused to rebuild it when ordered. Julian did not punish these outbreaks; at most he only lectured the evil-doers.

One of the first results of Julian's act of toleration was the return of Athanasius. The intruder, George of Cappadocia, had been seized by the populace only four days **Athanasius** after Julian's accession, imprisoned, and then **returns.** dragged out and lynched. Another Arian, Lucius, succeeded him, but he was compelled to give way to the rightful bishop, who returned amid great popular rejoicings.

Athanasius and his friends at once set themselves to re-organise the party which remained loyal to the faith of Nicaea.

An important council was held in 362 at Alexandria. In striking contrast to Novatians and Donatists, the Athanasians were ready to treat those who had given way to Arian pressure with great leniency. All that was asked of them, if they wished to be in communion with Athanasius, was to accept the Nicene Creed and to abjure another kindred error to Arianism which was now becoming prominent. This was the denial of the equal divinity of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, and is known as *Macedonianism*, from Macedonius, the Arian Bishop of Constantinople. The question of the divinity of the Holy Spirit had not been raised at Nicaea; but it called for definition, as to deny it would be a logical deduction from Arianism.

Another step towards reconciliation of differences was taken at the same Council of Alexandria. An agreement was reached by the efforts of Athanasius as to the use of the word *hypostasis* (see p. 216). It was recognised henceforward that the Eastern use of the word as equivalent to 'persona' was correct, and that *substantia* might be used in Latin as equivalent to the Greek *ousia*. Both Greeks and Latins could speak of the Trinity as meaning three *hypostases* or *personae* in one *substantia* or *ousia*.

The council also addressed itself to the healing of the schisms in the Church of Antioch. Here it will be remembered there was a long-standing division between the orthodox party, who called themselves after the exiled Eustathius, and the official Arian party. The matter had been complicated by the fact that Meletius, whom the Arians had introduced into the see, proved himself on the side of orthodoxy by preaching in defence of the Nicene Creed. The Arians had got rid of him, and Euzoius had succeeded. Now Meletius had returned, and a party of the orthodox adhered to him. The Council of Alexandria directed that the two orthodox parties, the original Eustathians and the followers of Meletius, should now unite under the latter. But this was frustrated by the over-zeal of Lucifer of Caliaris in Sardinia. He had been one of the leading sufferers for the faith under Constantius, and had now returned from exile. He went to Antioch and

consecrated for the Eustathians another bishop, Paulinus. Thus the schism was perpetuated. Lucifer returned to his diocese and started a schism on his own account, which came to be called Luciferianism, and which lasted for half a century. Lucifer represented the same type of mind which, after the great persecutions, had wished to exclude all who had given way from any further communion with the Church, even if they repented. The Council of Alexandria also condemned an error with regard to the human soul of our Lord, which seems to have been an anticipation of that of Apollinaris, if not identical with it (p. 247).

The prominence and influence of Athanasius soon attracted Julian's notice and anger. At the end of 362, the bishop was again banished, this time as 'the enemy of the gods.' **Fourth exile of Athanasius.** He took it calmly enough, assuring his flock that it was but 'a little cloud which would soon pass,' and remained in concealment until the Emperor's death.

He had not long to wait. In 363 Julian set out on his Persian campaign. At first he was successful, won a victory on the Tigris, and pressed to the gates of Ctesiphon. But **Death of Julian.** here he was played false by Persian spies, and had to retreat. In the course of this he received during a skirmish his death wound by a thrust from a spear. There are various stories of the manner of his death. Ammianus, the historian, who was with him, puts in his mouth a theatrical speech, in which he asserted that his life gave him confidence that he was to be taken 'to the islands of the blest, to converse with heaven and the stars.' Christians believed that he cried out 'Galilæan, thou hast conquered!'

His reign was the last effort of the ancient paganism to make head against Christianity. Its failure is the more significant because Julian attempted to fight the Church not **Effects of his policy.** by direct persecution, but by trying to rally what he thought were the noble and permanent forces of Hellenism, its philosophy, and its high ideals of conduct. But these had already failed to influence the mass of mankind, and they were powerless against the 'Galilæan.' The dreams of a scholar, even on a throne, could not raise the dead past, nor overthrow the

spiritual influence of the religion of the Cross: where Arianism had failed, Julian could scarcely hope to succeed.

Probably Julian's brief reign was of great value to the Church. It turned men for a little from controversy to consider their foundations. And it removed the pestilent influence of a court which, like that of Constantius, was trying to pull all the wires of ecclesiastical influence, and to reduce the Church and the hierarchy to a mere department of the State. It proved what has many times since been experienced, that the sincerity and spirituality of the Church flourish more when she has to stand by herself than when she is in the sunshine of royal favour.

It is not surprising that the period of reaction against Arianism, which led to the final vindication of the Nicene Creed in 381, must be dated from the reign of Julian.

Julian was succeeded at once by Jovian, the head of the body-guard, who was elected by the soldiers. He was a blunt good-natured warrior, a Christian who had refused to conform to Julian's paganism, and a Catholic who had no sympathy with Arianism. He restored the cross as the standard of his armies, concluded peace with Persia, and on his return to Antioch did what he could in his brief reign of eight months to undo his predecessor's work, destroying temples and building churches. But his first desire was peace: he took no ecclesiastical side, but proclaimed general toleration. He had, however, a special respect for Athanasius, and recalled him in a complimentary letter, asking for a statement of the orthodox faith. Athanasius, as might be expected, set down the Nicene Creed as the one standard to which, he said, it was 'needful for all men to adhere, as being divine and apostolic.' Jovian then invited Athanasius to visit him at Antioch. The Arians of Alexandria and Lucius, their intruding bishop, attempted in vain to prejudice the Emperor against him. A number of Arian prelates, notably Acacius, went so far now as to advise that the Nicene Creed should be accepted, as the *homoousion* was now better understood. But they were still the personal enemies of Athanasius, and refused to receive him to communion. Jovian declined to take any further action in ecclesiastical

quarrels. In the next year, 364, he died suddenly in Galatia, on his way to Constantinople.

## QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the character of the Emperor Julian.
2. What causes probably led him to forsake Christianity?
3. What methods did he adopt (1) to bring Christianity into contempt, (2) to restore Paganism?
4. What was the nature of Julian's proposed new religion?
5. What was the peculiar character of the schism at Antioch?
6. How was S. Athanasius affected by the policy of Julian?
7. What was the effect of Julian's policy on the Church and on Paganism?
8. What was the religious policy of the Emperor Jovian?

## SUBJECT FOR STUDY.

The Emperor Julian.

'Julianus' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

Boissier. *La Fin du Paganisme*.

## CHAPTER XIX. THE TRIUMPH OF CATHOLICISM

ON the death of Jovian, in 364, the Empire was once more divided. The soldiers elected Valentinian to the purple, and **New** about a month afterwards he gave the Eastern **Emperors :** provinces to his brother Valens. Valentinian was **Valentinian** a Catholic, but not much interested in theology, **and Valens.** and very desirous of peace. Unfortunately one of his first acts was to confirm the Arian Auxentius in the see of Milan, in spite of the protests of S. Hilary, 'the Athanasius of the West.' Auxentius managed to clear himself of Arianism by a clever statement of his faith, which might be read in either sense. S. Hilary wrote the last of his indignant protests against princes who support heresy, solemnly warning bishops against state interference ; after which he withdrew to Poitiers and died there in 368.

Valens, the Emperor of the East, was a thorough Arian and under the influence of Eudoxius. It was some time before he **Valens an** commenced his career of active persecution, but he **Arian.** showed himself at once hostile both to Catholics and semi-Arians. The latter party had obtained his permission to meet in council at Lampsacus in 365. Here they rejected not only Nicaea but Ariminum, and adopted the *homoiousion*. They sent delegates to the Emperor to announce this, but he declared himself in favour of the Creed of Ariminum, and followed up this by an edict exiling afresh all the bishops who had been deposed by Constantius.

Athanasius of course fell under this new condemnation. It was his fifth and last exile, lasting for about four months. **Fifth exile** Tradition says that he hid in his father's tomb. **and death of** Valens, in fear of the populace of Alexandria, allowed **Athanasius.** him to return early in 366. He spent the remaining seven years of his life in comparative peace, in writing and



endeavouring to heal the dissensions of the Church, and in affectionate intercourse with S. Basil of Caesarea.

On May 2, 373, the great defender of the faith passed away, 'after many agonies and many crowns of suffering.' He had been Bishop of Alexandria for forty-six years, of which some sixteen had been spent in exile. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the value and the influence of his life-work. His writings, especially his early treatise on the Incarnation and his four great orations against the Arians, are permanent contributions to the standard theology of the Church; but it was above all the power of Athanasius' personality, his sincerity, his devotion and his courage that ensured the final victory of the Nicene Creed. His life might be well summed up in the words of S. John (1 Ep. v. 5): 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

The semi-Arians, defeated in their attempt at Lampsacus, now began to draw towards the Catholics. They were afraid of Valens; they disliked intensely the official Arian-  
End of Semi-  
Arianism.
 ism which held sway in the East; their own compromise had failed, and they desired the support of Valentinian and communion with Rome. Delegates were sent to Pope Liberius who were prepared to signify the adherence of their party to the Nicene Creed. Almost the last official act of Liberius was to accept their submission, not to himself, but to the faith, and to write a letter to this effect to all the orthodox bishops of the East. The successor of S. Peter had, like him, as a fruit of his penitence, 'strengthened his brethren.' The semi-Arian party now practically disappears. The remnant of it becomes merged in the party of 'Macedonians,' or *Pneumatomachi*, i.e. 'fighters against the Holy Spirit.' These 'moderates' confined their Arianism to a general haziness as to the personality and divinity of the Third Person of the Trinity, a very illogical position if they were really orthodox as to the Second Person.

Valens in the troubled East took up the rôle of Constantius, and endeavoured to propagate Arianism by brutal and oppressive

methods. At Antioch many supporters of the faith of Nicaea were drowned in the Orontes. When the see of Constantinople became vacant in 370, Demophilus, a well-known Arian, in spite of protests, was made its bishop by imperial order. And when a deputation visited the Emperor at Nicomedia to expostulate, he put eighty of them on board ship, and there had them burned to death. The Creed of Ariminum was forced upon bishops and clergy, and their refusal meant exile, loss of privileges, and in many cases the handing over of the churches to heathen licence. At Alexandria, after the death of Athanasius, shameful scenes were enacted in the Cathedral. The Emperor refused his sanction to the election of Peter, whom Athanasius had desired as his successor, and an Arian, Lucius, was forced upon the Church, and those who protested were sent to prison or the mines. The malice of Valens was only checked by his occupation in wars against the Goths, and to some extent by the influence of S. Basil.

The West was largely untouched by these troubles. Liberius was succeeded in 366 by Damasus, who was strong on the Catholic side and gave a refuge to Peter, the exiled Bishop of Alexandria. The accession of Damasus to the papal throne, which he held for eighteen years, was unhappily marked by scenes of riot and bloodshed, through the rivalry of an 'anti-pope,' Ursinus, who remained for years a thorn in the side of Damasus. This rivalry was the after effect of the state interference which had superseded Liberius by Felix. The position of Bishop of Rome was already much coveted, and loomed large in the eyes of men. 'Make me Bishop of Rome,' said the prefect of the city, 'and I will turn Christian at once.' Already the withdrawal of the Emperor's residence from Rome was tending to make its bishop the most important man in the ancient capital, and was preparing the way for the imperial papacy of the centuries to come. Indeed, in Damasus we see the first example of a papal type which later history has made familiar; a stately figure, learned himself and a patron of learning, an antiquary and a lover of art and poetry, a builder

and a beautifier of the monuments of a Christian Rome. His secretary and friend was the great S. Jerome, whom he encouraged in his noble enterprise of a new and more accurate translation of the Scriptures into Latin. One of the most remarkable works of Damasus was the investigation and opening out of the Catacombs, in which he sought out the tombs of the early martyrs and marked them with finely executed inscriptions. 'Never have worse verses been transcribed so exquisitely' (Duchesne).

The closing years of the life of Athanasius saw the rise to influence of a remarkable trio of defenders of the Catholic faith in the East, to whom the ultimate defeat of Arianism was largely due. These were S. Basil, called 'the Great',—the Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia—his brother, S. Gregory of Nyssa, and his friend, S. Gregory of Nazianzus. To the influence of these must be added that of an equally great or greater man in the West, S. Ambrose, who became in 374 Bishop of Milan.

S. Basil, who is counted as one of the four great Greek Fathers, was a man of great ability and spiritual power. His life, though short, was full of labour and struggle, but difficult to summarise or appreciate. He sprang from a wealthy Christian family in Cappadocia; his grandparents had been confessors in the great persecution; his father was a teacher of rhetoric and noted for the good influence of his Christian life. Basil had the highest education of the day, and was, like the early Alexandrines, a lover of the classics. As a student at Athens, the Oxford of the ancient world, he had cemented his school-boy friendship with Gregory, son of the Bishop of Nazianzus. Both friends showed great intellectual promise, combined with purity of life. At Athens, strangely enough, they became friends of the future Emperor and apostate Julian, and protected his eccentricities from the practical jokes of his fellow-students, who seem to have been then much what undergraduates are now.

At the end of his university career Basil had the promise of a great future before him as a teacher and professor of rhetoric; but the influence of his sister, Macrina, led him to a complete

The Cappadocian Fathers.

S. Basil's conversion.

self-dedication to Christ. He was drawn especially to the monastic life. After his baptism he visited various solitaries of the desert, and then returning to his native country he established himself in a monastic retreat in a beautiful and romantic spot among the mountains and rivers of Pontus. Here he commenced his life-long course of rigorous self-discipline, which appears to have undermined his health and shortened his days. But his monastic ideals were not those of the hermits. He is usually regarded as the founder of the community life—the monasticism of the future. It seemed to him more in harmony with the precepts of the Gospel. ‘Whose feet wilt thou wash?’ he asks in his Rule, ‘whom wilt thou serve?—how canst thou be last of all, if thou art alone?’ Numerous other settlements on his model sprang up in Asia Minor, and it is important to note that these were all strongholds of the Nicene Faith.

But Basil was not allowed to remain long in his secluded life of fasting and study. As a deacon he was in attendance at the unhappy Council of Constantinople in 360 (p. 224). In the same year he was deeply distressed at the acceptance by his Bishop Dianius of Caesarea (in Cappadocia) of the Creed of Ariminum. He retired to Nazianzus, but two years later Dianius on his deathbed sent for him, protested his loyalty to the faith, and the two were reconciled. Julian, on his accession, attempted unsuccessfully to attract his old friend to the court, and his refusal made the Emperor his enemy. Eusebius, the successor of Dianius, ordained Basil to the priesthood in 364. For two periods during the next six years he worked as the bishop’s right hand, organising Christian work and Christian charities, and recognised by the Arian Valens as a dangerous champion of orthodoxy. The jealousies which dogged Basil all his life drove him back for a time to his monastic retreat, but he returned, and on the death of Eusebius in 370 he was elected and consecrated in the teeth of strong opposition to this the metropolitan see, which gave him jurisdiction over more than half of Asia Minor.

Athanasius himself wrote to congratulate the people of

Cappadocia on their new primate, whom he regarded as destined to carry on his own great work. Basil's episcopate only lasted nine years, but in that brief space he suffered much and accomplished much. His work lay in other directions than that of councils, and, though a mark for hostility and persecution, his career has little of the dramatic adventurousness of Athanasius.

His first great object was to reunite, consolidate, and defend the churches of the storm-tossed East, torn as they were by internal dissensions and harassed by the per- **S. Basil and**  
secution of Valens. He wished them to present a **Valens.**  
united front against Arianism. In this he had but little help. His own diocesan bishops hated him; he was suspected of being a heretic himself. He appealed again and again to Pope Damasus, to bring active sympathy and help to the Eastern Catholics, but in vain. He was not a *persona grata* at Rome, and he treated Damasus too much as an equal to suit the growing imperialism of the Roman see. He had, however, the sympathy of S. Athanasius and S. Ambrose.

He was soon to come into collision with Valens. The Emperor had determined to force Arianism upon Cappadocia by his own personal authority and presence. He was heralded first by the bluster and expostulations of Arian bishops, and then by the insolence of the officers of the imperial household. The Emperor's *chef*, Demosthenes, opened the battle, but S. Basil, with the humour which was a feature of his character, recommended him to return to his kitchen. On another occasion the same Demosthenes made a bad blunder in his Greek. 'An illiterate Demosthenes,' said Basil, 'had better occupy himself with his soups and sauces.' He was followed by the praetorian prefect, Modestus, who threatened Basil with all sorts of punishments. But Basil was perfectly firm, his only wealth, he said, was a few rags and a few books, and death would be a mercy. Modestus expressed amazement at being met in this way, and Basil replied, 'You have never before encountered a real bishop!' Then came the Emperor Valens himself. But even he found his genius rebuked by that of Basil. Entering the cathedral

of Caesarea during the Eucharist, he was so confounded by the impressiveness of the scene, and the stately form of the bishop standing at the altar, that, like Saul before Samuel, he was carried away in spite of himself and for the moment made friends with Basil, though he soon yielded again to the influence of Arian intriguers. But Basil had triumphed over the chief enemy of the faith, and for the time was unmolested.

Basil knew that the real strength of the Church is to be found within, rather than in outward defenders, or the support of great men. He gave himself, indefatigably, in spite of his bad health, to the reforming and organisation of his diocese and province. In this he met with much opposition, partly perhaps due to his own strictness and strong assertion of his authority. He gave special care to the selection of candidates for the ministry, to the rooting out of simony, and to the extension of the episcopate. It was in this last activity that his over-bearing zeal alienated his friend Gregory. The latter was a sensitive and cultured student, but Basil insisted on consecrating him to a new see of which the centre was to be a miserable village called Sasima, only a remote posting station, at the junction of three dusty highways, a place where nothing could be done, or at any rate not by such a man as Gregory, who, after relieving his feelings by writing a poetical satire on his bishopric, retired from it to Nazianzus. A grander and wiser work of Basil's was his *Ptochotropheion*, a hospital for the poor on a magnificent scale, centring round the cathedral and the bishop's house; it contained hostels and workshops and an asylum for lepers, and was so extensive that it became known as the 'new town.' Basil had a deep sense of the dignity and importance of Christian worship. He reorganised the services and at least laid the foundations of the great liturgy which is called by his name, and is still occasionally used in the Eastern Church.

Basil was a prolific writer, especially of letters. His correspondence, brilliant and incisive, was one of his great weapons for restoring and defending the Church. Many of these letters are of great interest as illustrating the ecclesiastical law

of the time, *e.g.* marriage with a deceased wife's sister is forbidden ; those who have married twice are not to be ordained ; professions of virginity are to be very cautiously received ; heretics, if penitent, may be admitted

Writings.

on their deathbed to communion. He produced also a number of solid works—commentaries on the Scriptures, a course of sermons on the Creation (called *Hexæmeron*) and other subjects, and various writings on the monastic life. But perhaps his most original and valuable work was the treatise on the Holy Spirit, the first produced in the Church on this subject, and called for by the heresy of Macedonius, now becoming prominent. He and his friend Gregory also performed the great service of rehabilitating the orthodoxy of Origen. They drew up a valuable collection of choice passages from his writings, known as the *Philocalia*.

'The ecclesiastical history of these years, as far as the East is concerned, might be described as a history of the sufferings of S. Basil' (Bright). It has already been noted

Sorrows of

S. Basil.

how he was a mark for the jealousy and opposition of his brother bishops. He was continually being accused of divers heresies. His friends were alienated or turned into bitter enemies, like Eustathius of Sebaste. He saw the supporters of the faith exiled ; among them his own brother, S. Gregory of Nyssa, and Eusebius of Samosata. He was snubbed by Rome and the West. He saw the rise of Macedonianism, and a new error, connected with the name of Apollinaris, respecting the perfect manhood of our Lord. 'I seem for my sins,' he said, 'to prosper in nothing.' And he constantly suffered from such ill-health as would have completely broken down a less indomitable spirit. His friend, S. Gregory, describes him as 'without wife, without property, without flesh, and almost without blood.'

Some consolations came to him. He saw, in 371, Auxentius, the Arian Bishop of Milan, condemned by a council held at Rome. And in 374, S. Ambrose was elected to the see. Damasus condemned Apollinaris in a statement of the faith known as 'the Tome of the Westerns.' And finally he saw the persecution of Catholics checked by the preoccupation of Valens

in his campaign against the Goths, and ended by his death after the great defeat of the Romans at Adrianople in 378. In 379 S. Basil died, worn out by austerities, sufferings, and labours. He ended with the words of faith, 'Into thy hands I commend my spirit.'

A brighter day for the Catholics of the East was already dawning. The new Emperors had no sympathy with Arianism and **Two Catholic** paganism. Gratian in the West, who had succeeded **Emperors.** Valentinian in 375, had come under the influence of S. Ambrose. Theodosius, a Spaniard and a catechumen, who was appointed by Gratian Emperor of the East, was a descendant of the Emperor Trajan, and a distinguished soldier. After his baptism in 380, he proclaimed himself by edict a believer in the Catholic Faith as taught by Damasus and Peter of Alexandria.

Meanwhile, the influence of the two other great Cappadocian fathers was growing. Not such commanding personalities as S. Basil, they were greater than he in their intellectual grasp of the Catholic Faith; and as teachers and preachers they made a profound and lasting impression.

S. Gregory, the brother of S. Basil, and like him influenced by the devout sister Macrina, was brought out of his scholarly **S. Gregory** retirement by his imperious brother, and conse- **of Nyssa.** crated against his will to the bishopric of the obscure Nyssa in 372. It was a place that would never probably have been heard of but for its bishop. Unlike S. Gregory of Nazianzus he stuck to his uncongenial outpost, until he fell a victim to Arian intrigues. In 375 he was accused falsely of embezzling Church money, and banished to Seleucia. Here he suffered great miseries until he was restored at the death of Valens in 378. After Basil's death he was generally recognised as the leading defender in the East of the Nicene Faith. A synod at Antioch entrusted him with the task of visiting and reforming the Church in Arabia and Babylon. He also visited Jerusalem, and gives a melancholy account of the absence of sincere religion there and the evils attending the pilgrimages. He became a favourite with Theodosius, and it will be seen what a prominent



part he took in the triumph of Catholicism in the great Council of Constantinople in 381. His most important work is his treatise against the Anomoean leader Eunomius.

S. Gregory of Nazianzus proved one of the most eloquent preachers and profound theologians of the ancient Church. After the fiasco of his consecration to Sasima, **S. Gregory** he found his vocation later in his celebrated mission **Nazianzen.** at Constantinople. This was also due to the influence of S. Basil. He left his retirement with much fear, saying that 'in God's providence he was absolutely compelled to be a sufferer.' He took up his residence in a private house at Constantinople, where he established a chapel, which he called by the prophetic name of *Anastasia* or *Anastasis*—'house of the Resurrection.' Here he prayed, and taught all who would come to hear him. It is one of the most interesting episodes in the struggle with Arianism. Not only his eloquent tongue and profound learning, but the sweetness of his character and his spirituality (so unlike the coldness and irreverence of Arianism) gradually effected a transformation in the capital. His first task was to gather together and build up the scattered and disheartened Catholics. And also he had to refute Arianism conclusively, if possible, in a place where it had reigned supreme for forty years. To this end he delivered his five celebrated *Theological Orations* (1) against the Eunomians; (2) On the Nature of God; (3) and (4) The Son of God; (5) The Holy Spirit. These luminous orations mark an epoch in the great controversies of the fourth century. They have won for Gregory the same title which was given to S. John himself, Theologus—the Divine.

Gregory gathered round him a devoted circle of hearers; among whom was the great S. Jerome. But he also became a mark for Arian spite. He was mobbed and stoned, and narrowly escaped assassination. The simplicity of his character led him into blunders. He knew more of theology perhaps than of human nature. He was taken in by an adventurer named Maximus, a Cynic philosopher, who had embraced Christianity and was ambitious enough to desire the bishopric of Constantinople. Maximus gained not only the friendship

of Gregory, but the support of Peter of Alexandria, and was consecrated in a secret and irregular manner by some Egyptian bishops as Catholic bishop, in opposition to the Arian Demophilus. But Theodosius refused to recognise him, Damasus of Rome wrote against him, and he was expelled from Alexandria where he had taken refuge. Gregory was deeply distressed at all this, and wished to retire from the Anastasis, but the appeals of his disciples kept him there.

The next stage in the triumph of Catholicism was the entry of Theodosius into Constantinople, where he promptly restored **The turn of the tide.** all the churches to the Catholics. Demophilus refused to accept the Creed of Nicaea and withdrew. Early in the next year 381, an imperial decree expelled all the Arians of the East from the churches, which were given back to the Catholics. At Constantinople S. Gregory was solemnly installed in the cathedral of S. Sophia. Popular enthusiasm fixed upon him at once as the right person to be bishop, but the election was deferred pending proper ecclesiastical action. Gregory was no Arian to be content to be foisted upon a diocese by the mere fiat of a secular ruler.

Theodosius now prepared to summon a great council to end the long-drawn Arian controversy. This council met at Constantinople in 381. **The Council of Constanti-** It is counted as the second **nople.** of the great oecumenical councils; but it had many extraordinary features. Of the 150 bishops that met, not one was from the West; its first president, Meletius of Antioch, was not even in communion with Rome. And much uncertainty attaches to its actual proceedings. Nevertheless its authority is undoubted, owing to the subsequent reception of its decisions by the whole Church.

It is easier to say what work lay before the council than to estimate what it actually did. There were questions both personal and doctrinal. Under the first head comes the election of a bishop for Constantinople, and the ending of the schism of Antioch, where two rival Catholic bishops were in occupation the saintly and popular Meletius supported by the East, and Paulinus whom Rome and the West recognised. The doctrinal

questions included the claim of the Nicene Creed to be the one creed of Catholicism, and the consideration of the heresies of Macedonius on the Holy Spirit, and Apollinaris on the humanity of our Lord.

This latter heresy needs explanation. Its assumed author was Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea, a man of great learning, who had fought vigorously against the Arians, Apollinarianism, and was a friend of Athanasius and other leading Catholics. But in his over-zeal to emphasise the true divinity of Jesus Christ, he fell into, and obstinately maintained, an error as to His humanity. Taking the usual philosophical division of human nature (which S. Paul also employs) into body, soul, and spirit, he maintained that in the Incarnation the Divine Logos took the place of 'spirit,' the rational and religious part of our being, so that while Jesus Christ had a true human body and an animal soul (*i.e.* the life which man shares with the animals), He had no human 'spirit.' This error seems to connect on one hand with the earlier Docetism, and on the other with the Monophysite heresy of later days. And by a curious irony it seems to have resembled the teaching of Arius—a remarkable instance of extremes meeting. But it was not a mere philosophical error—it was pregnant with vast religious issues. If Christ was what Apollinaris taught, He was certainly not perfect *man*; the Incarnation did not touch the highest part of our nature. It substituted something else for it. The Christ of Apollinaris was a new sort of being, a fusion of God and man, God clothing himself with part only of our nature. To Apollinaris himself the Catholic teaching seemed to imply a division of Christ into two persons, a human and a divine. Nevertheless, nothing but this Catholic teaching of two whole and perfect natures indissolubly united in one Divine Personality will either satisfy the witness of Scripture, or provide a real redemption for all sides of our nature. And the fact that Apollinaris seemed to have clung to his error after the Church had definitely pronounced against it justifies us in speaking of him as a heresiarch, and not as a mere speculator.

S. Gregory of Nyssa preached the sermon at the opening of

the council, presented to it part of his treatise against Eunomius, and throughout its proceedings exerted great influence. It has been said that there was never a council of the Church at which so many saints and confessors sat as at this. To deal first with the personal problems. As to the see of Constantinople, the consecration of Maximus the Cynic was declared null and void; Demophilus was gone, and S. Gregory of Nazianzus, much against his will, was placed on the vacant throne.

With regard to Antioch, it is said that a compromise had already been arranged by the clergy of the city that Meletius **The Schism at Antioch.** should be recognised by all Catholics, but that Paulinus if he survived should succeed him. But before the council could decide, Meletius himself, to the grief of all, died suddenly. He was counted by all men as a saint, and, though he died out of communion with Rome, his name stands in the Roman calendar of Saints (Feb. 12). With the Antiochenes he was so popular that they carried his portrait on their rings, and put it even on the walls of their bedrooms. Strangely enough, the council refused to ratify the arrangement which he had apparently approved that Paulinus should succeed, and they actually perpetuated the schism by electing Flavian. The only explanation of this conduct seems to be jealousy or mistrust of the West. Paulinus was the candidate favoured by the Pope and the Western Church, and had been supported by them against Meletius, and so the council would have none of him.

S. Gregory Nazianzen, who was now president of the council, was much distressed at this failure to end a schism; and **Retirement of S. Gregory.** presently his sorrow was added to by a personal attack. The Bishops of Egypt who arrived late at the council protested against his election to Constantinople on the ground that he was already Bishop of Sasima, and a Nicene canon had forbidden translations. Gregory was not the man to stand up against this sort of thing. He was too sensitive. He determined to resign his new dignity at once, and be, as he said, the Jonah to still the storm. He put the crown on his life's eloquence by his celebrated 'Farewell Discourse'

(Orat. xxxii.), an *apologia pro vita sua* as far as his work at Constantinople was concerned, and ending with a most moving and affectionate farewell to the Anastasis, to the Church and city, to his own disciples and hearers, and to the invisible witnesses of his sojourn among them, the angel guardians of the Church. There is the ring of sincerity throughout, which redeems what might be thought an excess of personal effusions. 'Farewell,' he cries, 'my throne, envied and perilous height . . . Farewell, Emperors and palace and ministers, and household of the Emperor—whether faithful or not to him, I know not, but for the most part unfaithful to God. . . . Farewell, mighty Christ-loving city, though thy zeal be not according to knowledge; be converted at this late hour. . . . Farewell, East and West, for whom and against whom I have had to fight; He is witness, who will give you peace, if but a few would imitate my retirement.' He retired to Cappadocia, where he spent the last ten years of his life in seclusion, prayer, and writing—composing, among other poems, an autobiography in verse. 'His only luxuries were a fountain and a garden.' He was often in great bodily pain and spiritual desolation, but he died as he had lived, a saint. Even Gibbon is compelled to give an unwonted tribute to his memory; he speaks of 'the tenderness of his heart and the elegance of his genius.'

The council, at the Emperor's suggestion, now took the extraordinary step of electing and consecrating to the see a layman, not even baptized as yet—Nectarius, the 'praetor' of the city. He seems to have made a dignified but somewhat colourless bishop. One so uninformed and unexperienced was scarcely the man either to succeed Gregory, or to build up the desolations of a Church which had so long been under Arian rule.

The question of the doctrinal work of the council is difficult to decide. It is quite certain, however, that its assembled bishops (1) confirmed the Nicene Creed, (2) anathematized not only the older errors of Sabellius and Arius, but the new ones of Macedonius and Apollinaris. Did they go further than this? The answers given by

Nectarius.

Doctrinal  
work of Con-  
stantinople.

historians vary widely. It has generally been assumed that they also put forth that longer confession of faith which is now used throughout Christendom as the Nicene Creed. This confession was certainly read and confirmed at the Fourth Oecumenical Council, at Chalcedon in 451, as 'the Creed of Constantinople'; but there was no allusion to it at the Third Council, at Ephesus in 431. Again, it has been commonly thought that this longer form of the Creed was due simply to the addition of various clauses in the second and third sections—first, to emphasise the manhood of Christ and the reality of His Incarnation, and secondly, to bear witness to the Divinity and the work of the Holy Spirit. (Compare carefully the present Creed with the original Nicene Creed given on p. 199.) It has even been asserted that S. Gregory of Nyssa was the author of these additions.

But modern historians have practically decided that this enlarged Creed, whether put forth at Constantinople or not, **The Creed of Jerusalem.** is not really the Nicene Creed at all, but the Creed of Jerusalem as preserved by Epiphanius in his *Ancoratus*. How this came to be substituted all over the Church for the Creed of Nicaea is a mystery: though it need not disquiet us. The key-word of Nicaea was of course *homoousios*, and this occurs in both Creeds. Moreover, the Creed as we now have it possesses at least the oecumenical sanction of Chalcedon, and also the general acceptance of the Church, with the exception of the *Filioque* Clause, which will be dealt with later.

The council also passed two canons with regard to the jurisdiction of bishops, and the independence of metropolitans, **Canons.** notable because it is laid down that the Bishop of Constantinople is to have the next place in honour to the Bishop of Rome, 'because Constantinople is new Rome.'

Whatever difficulties surround the history of the Second Council, it is indisputable that it marks the end of Arianism **Collapse of Arianism.** in the East as a competitor with the Catholic Faith. The Catholics had conquered, not merely by their deeper theological learning, or their eloquence, but by

their sufferings, and above all by their personal devotion to the Master and the spirituality and sincerity of their religion.

A similar downfall came for Arianism in the West in the same year, 381. A council at Aquileia, presided over by S. Ambrose, at which the Pope was not even represented, condemned the teaching of Arius, and deposed two Arian bishops from Dacia who had appealed to Gratian to be tried by an oecumenical council.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the events leading to the end of semi-Arianism.
2. Describe the persecution of Valens.
3. What do you know of Pope Damasus?
4. Give a sketch of the life of S. Basil.
5. What were the permanent features of his work?
6. Describe the collision between S. Basil and Valens.
7. Who was S. Gregory of Nyssa?
8. What was the influence of S. Gregory of Nazianzus in the Arian struggle?
9. What is Apollinarianism?
10. Describe the Second Œcumenical Council.
11. What was the doctrinal work of this council?
12. What is the relation of our present 'Nicene Creed' to the original Creed of Nicæa?

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. S. Basil.  
Duchesne. *Early History of the Church*, ii.  
Bright. *Waymarks in Church History*.  
'S. Basil' in Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.
2. S. Gregory of Nazianzus.  
Duchesne. *Early History of the Church*, ii.  
'S. Gregory' in Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Father* .
3. The development of the Nicene Creed.  
Burn. *Introduction to the Creeds*.  
Gibson. *The Three Creeds*.

## CHAPTER XX. THE WEST: S. AMBROSE AND S. AUGUSTINE

THE most prominent figure in the West during the last quarter of the fourth century is undoubtedly S. Ambrose. His election **Ambrose** to the bishopric of Milan (now a rival of Rome, **bishop.** as one of the seats of imperial residence) was unexpected and picturesque. He belonged to a noble Roman family, which had long been Christian; his father had held high military office in Gaul, and he himself in 374 was governor of Aemilia-Liguria. He was in the cathedral of Milan on the day when the Christians had assembled to elect a successor, at the Emperor's bidding, to the Arian Auxentius. He had just been exhorting the crowd to keep order, when a child's voice raised the cry, 'Ambrose Bishop!' It was taken up all over the cathedral, as if it were a divine omen. Ambrose was only 34, and not yet baptized; he tried for several days to escape the greatness which was being thrust upon him, but in vain. He was baptized and consecrated, and for the present applied himself to the study of theology. In the coming years he was to prove himself both the great defender of the Catholic Faith in the West, the champion of the Church against the imperial power, and the greatest force of his time for righteousness. And as to sacred learning the common consent of the Church has placed him as one of the four great Latin Fathers.

The secular history of the Empire may now be briefly summarised. Gratian in the West was a sincere supporter **Gratian.** of Catholicism, and he was especially anxious to put down pagan worship and customs, which hitherto had been treated very tenderly by Christian Emperors. He dropped the title of Pontifex Maximus, and he took the significant step of ordering the removal from the Senate-house of the Altar



of Victory. Symmachus, the leader of the pagan senators, one of the most eloquent men of his time, protested, but to no effect. S. Ambrose advised Gratian to stand firm. Gratian's life was cut short in 383, at the early age of twenty-five. The troops in Britain rebelled and proclaimed Maximus Emperor. Gratian was defeated by him at Paris, and assassinated at Lyons by his own soldiers.

The natural successor of Gratian was his younger brother, Valentinian II., who was under the tutelage of his mother, Justina, an Arian. Maximus consented, at the courageous intercession of S. Ambrose, to leave Italy to them. But Justina made a sorry return to the bishop. She began to agitate in favour of the Arians. At Milan she demanded the use of churches for them, and when Ambrose refused, she sent soldiers to seize one, and hang up the imperial banners. The Christian populace of Milan were entirely on the side of Ambrose, and he had to use his influence to restrain them from violence. The next day even the soldiers who had been sent to seize the church crowded in to worship, and while Ambrose was preaching the news came that the banners were being taken down. The bishop remained all day in his church, singing psalms with the faithful worshippers. Finally, the imperial soldiers that were surrounding the church were withdrawn, and victory remained with the bishop.

The next year Justina's attack was renewed. Ambrose was summoned to plead his cause against an Arian bishop and before a secular court. He refused, and said, 'The Emperor is within the Church, but not above it.' The laity of Milan kept watch and ward for days round their bishop, who encouraged them by preaching, and by giving them hymns of his own composition to sing, in honour of the Trinity. Their enthusiasm was also supported by the discovery, as it was believed, of the relics of two early martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius, by which many miracles were performed. These scenes have been described by S. Augustine (*Conf.* ix.), who shortly afterwards received baptism in Milan from S. Ambrose. Ambrose and his churches were henceforth left undisturbed,

and in 387 the Empress and her son had again to ask for his intercession. Maximus had invaded Italy. But the appeal of the bishop was this time unsuccessful: the two rulers of Italy fled to Thessalonica, and threw themselves on the protection of Theodosius. The latter married the sister of Valentinian, marched against Maximus and overthrew him. After spending some time in Milan, he entered Rome in 389 in triumph, and restored Valentinian. Before this Justina had died, and the dying Arian cause in the West lost its chief supporter.

Before describing the relations of S. Ambrose and Theodosius, two other events in the West claim notice. In 384, on the death **The decretal of Damasus, Siricius succeeded to the papal chair. of Siricius.** He distinguished himself not only by his zeal against heresy but by his high belief in the prerogative of his see. One of his first acts was to issue a decretal (the first undisputedly genuine on record), addressed to a Spanish bishop in answer to questions, but intended to apply to the whole Church, at any rate in the West. It is very much in the style of an imperial 'rescript,' which, though addressed to a provincial governor, had the force of law for the Empire. Siricius bases his authority deliberately on the fact that he is the inheritor of the power of S. Peter, and that the Roman see is the rock on which Christ built His Church. The most remarkable pronouncement in this decretal is that which absolutely forbids the clergy to be married men or live with a wife. Undoubtedly there had been for long a strong feeling in the Church in favour of clerical celibacy, but the custom was by no means universally observed, especially in Spain. It will be remembered that the Council of Nicaea had declined to legislate on the matter. But the command of Siricius was peremptory. Those clergy who in the past have lived with a wife must separate from her, and will not be allowed to proceed to any higher office in the Church: those who are contumacious are to be degraded from their office 'by the authority of the apostolic see.' It was many centuries, however, before Rome succeeded in making this rule observed, even in the letter; and its result, in the Middle Ages at least, was only to substitute concubinage for marriage. In

the Eastern Church no such rule obtains—except in the case of bishops. Parish priests not only may but *must* marry before ordination.

During these latter years of the fourth century a new form of heresy, called Priscillianism, began to be prominent in Spain. It was a sort of revival of Gnosticism in its ascetic form. Priscillian was a man of wealth and brilliant gifts, but with a leaning to the occult sciences and astrology. He gathered round him a great number of enthusiasts. It is difficult to establish any definite charge of heresy in doctrine against him, except that he appears to have grounded his extreme asceticism on the old theory of the evil of matter. But the secrecy of the new movement, its use of apocryphal books, and its extravagances in self-discipline laid it under a probably well-deserved suspicion. Whether the charges of immorality and falsehood were true, it is difficult to decide. But the Priscillianists were credited with teaching that lying might even be a virtue, and with practising witchcraft and astrology. A melancholy importance attaches to the attack made upon them by sundry orthodox bishops. For the first time the penalty of death for heretics was demanded and obtained. The Emperor Maximus was strongly influenced against them, and a secular court at Trèves tried, tortured, and executed Priscillian and six of his followers, and banished and fined others. This severity failed to extirpate the movement. Priscillian was counted as a martyr and his followers long survived. A more pleasing side to the picture is the fact that Pope Siricius, S. Ambrose, and S. Martin of Tours protested indignantly against this shedding of blood for religion, and refused communion with the bishops who had urged the Emperor to it.

Theodosius, Emperor of the East, was a sincere Christian and a man of high character, though of violent passions. He had been endeavouring since 381 to abolish paganism in his dominions, and he had destroyed many famous temples, especially the Serapeum, the temple of Serapis, at Alexandria, on which was supposed to depend the annual overflowing of the Nile and the harvests of

Priscillian.

Theodosius

and

Ambrose.

Egypt—nay, the very existence of the world. It was a bold step to destroy it, but the image fell beneath the axes of the soldiers. The only portent was the escape from the recesses of the idol of a host of mice. Heaven and earth remained as they were, and the Nile overflowed more plentifully than usual. The entry of Theodosius into the West and his stay at Milan brought him to close quarters and indeed to conflicts with S. Ambrose. But their quarrel was clearly not that of a worldly-minded or non-Christian ruler with the representative of the Church. Theodosius was no Constantius or Julian, nor was Ambrose a mere ecclesiastic fighting for his order or his dignity. The two were worthy representatives of two principles or two types of authority, and while the moral and spiritual triumphed in S. Ambrose, the way in which the secular ruler took his defeats shows him as great a man as his opponent. For example, Theodoret tells the story how, when Theodosius came to Milan and attended Mass, he remained within the sanctuary, as the custom was at Constantinople, after making his offering, as he intended to communicate. But such was not the Milanese custom; the sanctuary was strictly reserved for the clergy, and Ambrose sent word to Theodosius to retire to the place of the laity. The Emperor obeyed, and afterwards acknowledged the custom as right, saying to Nectarius of Constantinople when he returned, 'I have now learned the difference between a Prince and a Bishop!'

Two protests of S. Ambrose on public matters are recorded; both are picturesque and courageous, and one certainly was entirely worthy of the representative of Christ. On the first occasion perhaps the ecclesiastic showed himself too little tolerant of the rights of others. Somewhere in the East, Christian monks had violently destroyed a synagogue and a Gnostic meeting-house. Theodosius ordered the bishop to rebuild them and the monks to be punished. Ambrose, first by letter and then in a sermon, pleaded against this decision: following up the sermon by refusing to celebrate the Eucharist unless the sentence was revoked. The Emperor admitted it was too severe, and with some reluctance withdrew it.

In 390, the populace of Thessalonica in a riot murdered the military commander and several of his officers. Theodosius was roused to fury. Three years before he had pardoned the people of Antioch, at the intercession of Bishop Flavian, for an insult done to his own statue and that of his dead wife. But this time he inflicted a punishment out of all proportion to the offence. Soldiers at his command were introduced by stealth into the theatre, and a general massacre ensued, in which more than 7000 of the populace were slain. Ambrose wrote an indignant letter to Theodosius, urging him to repentance, and forbidding him till then to be present at the Eucharist. Eight months elapsed, and then the Emperor appeared at the church door on Christmas Day, intending to communicate. Ambrose shut the door against him until he had done penance, lying on the floor in sackcloth, like any other grievous offender against righteousness. Ambrose also made him promise that in future no capital sentence should be carried out until thirty days had passed.

**The penance  
of Theodo-  
sius.**

In 391, Valentinian II. was overthrown and murdered by Arbogastes, his Frankish general, a heathen, who placed on the throne of the West one Eugenius, a puppet of his own. Valentinian died unbaptized, though earnestly desiring baptism, which Ambrose was hastening to him to administer. Ambrose preached the funeral sermon on the dead Emperor, extolling his piety, and suggesting that his death might even be counted as martyrdom and atone for the lack of baptism. In 394, Theodosius invaded the West, and met Eugenius in battle at Aquileia. Once more the banners of the heathen gods, of Jupiter and Hercules, confronted the Cross. The odds were against Theodosius, but he refused to give way. The issue was almost miraculous. A blinding storm beat in the faces of his opponents, who were utterly defeated. 'The stars in their courses' seemed to be fighting for Theodosius. Even the heathen poet Claudian confessed him the favourite of heaven.

**Theodosius  
sole  
Emperor.**

'O favoured child of God, upon whose side  
Aeolus pours forth embattled storms  
From caverns dark : the welkin fights for thee,  
And to thy bugles haste confederate winds.'

A few months later, and Theodosius, now sole Emperor, was dead himself. His two sons, Arcadius in the East, and Honorius in the West, divided the Empire, which was never again to be united in its old extent under one master.

S. Ambrose survived the great Christian Emperor little more than two years. He died on Good Friday, 397, engaged almost to the end in dictating an exposition of the Psalms. The Bishop of Vercellae, who had lain down to rest near him, heard a supernatural voice saying, 'Rise quickly, he is ready to go.' He rose and gave him the Viaticum, and the saint immediately breathed his last. He was buried in the presence of vast crowds of mourners in the Ambrosian Basilica at Milan on Easter Day.

Ambrose was a born ruler of men, brave, tactful, just, with all the Roman largeness of view and grasp of administration.

**Character and work of S. Ambrose.** Christian faith and self-discipline elevated these gifts of nature and training into a power that seemed supernatural. His biographer, Paulinus, justly says that for the fear of God Ambrose never feared to speak the truth to kings. His theological writings borrowed considerably from other authors; they are rigidly orthodox, but thoroughly practical, as for example, his treatise on the Duties of the Clergy. In expounding Scripture he inclined to the mystical rather than the literal interpretation; but he showed a clear grasp of the connection of Old Testament and New Testament. Compare his famous saying, 'The shadow is in the Law, the image in the Gospel, the reality in Heaven.' But his special gift lay in preaching. He ranks as the first really great preacher in the Latin tongue; and, as in the case with all preachers of power, his personality and his moral earnestness impressed as much as or more than his words. His most distinguished convert, greater even than himself, was S. Augustine (*Conf.* vi.). S. Ambrose was also the first of the long line of hymn-writers of the Western Church. Some of his hymns survive and are still popular, as *e.g.* 'Splendor paternae gloriae' (Hymns A. and M. 2), 'Deus Creator Omnium' (*ib.* 83), 'Lux beata Trinitas' (*ib.* 14), 'Veni Redemptor Gentium' (*ib.* 55). His hymns were written in a classical metre, in pure

and harmonious Latin verse. They are marked by all the characteristics of the best hymns of the ancient Church ; terse and luminous statement of doctrine ; the absence of subjectivity or sentimentalism ; sober devotion, stateliness, and a prevailing note of praise.

From S. Ambrose we pass naturally to his illustrious convert S. Augustine, the best known and greatest of the Latin Fathers ; one who has deeply impressed his personality and his theology upon all the subsequent history of Western Christianity. His early life and his spiritual history he has described himself in one of the most fascinating books of religious autobiography in the world, his *Confessions*. Here we may read of the wayward boyhood and the sinful youth ; the pride of a brilliant intellect, which, although he had been made a catechumen of the Church, led him wandering for nine years in Manichæan heresy ; the long unanswered prayers of the holy Monica, his mother ; his migration to Italy and his coming under the influence of S. Ambrose ; the ebb and flow of the struggle between self-will and the Divine call ; and then the great scene under the fig-tree in the garden of Milan, when the voice, ' Tolle, lege ' ( ' take up and read ' ) led him to read and obey S. Paul's words, ' Not in rioting and drunkenness . . . but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ ' ( Rom. xii. ). He was baptized on Easter Eve, 387, by S. Ambrose, at the age of thirty-three. His mother's death occurred some few weeks afterwards. In one of the most wonderful passages in literature (*Conf.* ix.) he describes his last conversation with her at Ostia, in which they seemed to soar above all created existence, and apprehend the mystic vision itself, the ultimate reality, and for a moment to enter even into eternal life, and taste ' the joy of the Lord.'

After his mother's burial at Ostia, he returned to Africa, where he became a priest, and in 395 Bishop of Hippo Regius. He was great as a preacher, as a ruler, and as a theologian ; a restorer of the schism-torn African Church, and a defender of the faith against heresy. The most memorable of his writings, next to the *Confessions*, is his book

**Writings.**

*de Civitate Dei.* It was prompted by the attacks of the heathen, who were ascribing the disasters which had begun to fall on the Roman Empire to the Christians, for persuading men to forsake the ancient gods. His reply is constructive. In contrast with the decaying pagan world, he elaborates the picture of the eternal city of God, the Church, which will outlast time and change and attain 'final victory and perfect peace.' As a commentator Augustine suffers through his ignorance of Greek and Hebrew, and his fondness for elaborate allegorising. His sermons are remarkable for their vivid and epigrammatic terseness, their teaching power, and the flashes of genius which sometimes expound a mystery in a single phrase.

But the larger part of S. Augustine's work lay in the field of controversy. He had the Donatists all around him; the Manichaeans he had known by his own experience as one ensnared by them; and a new form of error, Pelagianism, presented itself in the course of his episcopate. Augustine's own history and the leading principles of his thought seemed to render him peculiarly fitted for dealing with each of these three. To the Donatist narrowness he could oppose his own magnificent conception of the meaning of the Church; to the Manichaeans his deep reverence for the sovereignty and supremacy of the one God; while the convictions of his own spiritual experience made him pre-eminently the 'Doctor of Grace,' in contrast with the Pelagians, who exalted man's self-sufficiency.

These three lines of controversy may now be sketched in rather more detail. The early history of Donatism has already been described (p. 179). In Augustine's time its adherents were still numerous and troublesome. He wrote against them at great length; his leading argument being the true nature of the Church. The Donatists asserted that the Church could only be where there was holiness. As usual with bigots, they constituted themselves the judges of what is holiness and where it is to be found. They unchurched the rest of Christendom and proclaimed their schism the only Church. To Augustine the Church does not appear and dis-



appear with the comparative holiness of her members. She is a Divine institution that can never wholly fail; a continuous Divine society descending by unbroken succession from the Apostles. She is the ark secure amid the waves of the world and within her alone is salvation. And to the insolent Donatist claim to be alone the Church, Augustine has an answer in the one sentence which so profoundly influenced J. H. Newman, *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*—‘the whole (Christian) world judges, without fear of contradiction.’ Donatism, however, was not to be put down altogether by argument. An imperial commissioner at a Council of Carthage in 410 heard both sides, gave judgment against the Donatists, and ordered all their bishops (nearly 300) to return to the Catholic Church. This was confirmed by the Emperor in 412. At first there was a new outburst of fury from the Circumcelliones, which was followed by severe decrees of confiscation and exile. Augustine, though he had been prominent in the council, and approved of strong measures, endeavoured to save the Donatists from the worst results of their obstinacy. The struggle does not seem to have lasted long. Donatism, apparently still strong, collapsed. Its vitality was really gone; the arguments of Augustine and the Catholics told with many of its adherents, and others had no stomach for martyrdom. The schism died out practically soon after this time, though there were Donatists left in North Africa until even Christianity itself was extirpated by the invasion of the Mohammedans.

Manichaeism was a foe of a very different order. It was a non-Christian religion, which claimed to be universal. Its founder, Mani, or Manes, was a Persian nobleman who began to teach in the latter part of the third century, the time when the pagan religions were making their final and most combined attack on Christianity. It resembled in some ways the Gnostic systems, in its elaborate mythology, its condemnation of the Old Testament, its employment of Christian phrases in non-Christian senses. But it differed from ordinary Gnosticism in its attitude towards the historic Jesus, whom it regarded as a Jewish false Messiah, whose instigator

was the devil. The central principle of Manichaeism was *dualism*, the theory of two eternal and opposing principles in the universe, one good and the other evil: matter belonged to the latter class; man was a compound of both. Hence it followed that sin was not really sin, because it sprang from the inherent evil dwelling in the flesh, and not merely from a perverted will. The Manichaean Christ (not the historic Jesus) was an aeon, the champion of Adam against Eve and Satan. There was no Incarnation, for none was possible on Manichaean principles. The founder was crucified in Persia, and his teaching fell early under the condemnation of Rome. Diocletian forbade it under the severest penalties. Nevertheless it gained a wide vogue. Its followers formed a highly organised society, with bishops, a ritual and sacraments. But the higher mysteries were kept very secret, and reserved for initiates, called 'the elect.' These alone were able to maintain the ideal asceticism of the religion, which forbade animal food, wine, and marriage, and only allowed vegetables if some one else gathered them! The rank and file were allowed to live much as they pleased, provided they ministered to the elect. It followed that Manichaeism had no moral force, and only promoted speculation and vanity.

Against this system Augustine had to maintain that one God is the author of all things, that all things in their essential nature are good, that evil has no absolute existence, 'sin is not nature, but only a vice of nature,' and that the Incarnation has sanctified man's nature and all creation.

Manichaeism proved a very persistent heresy. It is found as late as the tenth century, and only disappeared to reappear under other names, as in the *Paulicians*, who arose in the East in the seventh century, and the later *Albigenses* and *Cathari* of the West.

Pelagianism may more rightly be called a 'heresy,' arising as it did within the Christian Church. Its leading principle **The Pelagian** was the exaltation of man's nature and the denial **Controversy.** of the necessity of grace. It was an error with which Augustine was peculiarly qualified to deal, and in his controversy with it he made his most remarkable contributions

to theology. Pelagianism was of Western origin. Its founders, Pelagius and Celestius, were probably both Britons. The former, a learned layman, appeared in Rome about the end of the century, and in 410 he was in Africa. Thence he went to Palestine, leaving Celestius behind, who was condemned by an African synod in 412, and thus came under the notice of Augustine. In 415, Pelagius was accused before a council at Jerusalem of disparaging the need of Divine grace, and asserting that man can live without sin. The proceedings were unsatisfactory. The accuser was Orosius, a Spanish priest and historian, sent by S. Augustine. He knew no Greek, and the judges knew no Latin. Pelagius was a master of both, and had also, it was said, bribed the interpreter. The council was unable to come to a decision, and Orosius proposed to refer the question to Innocent of Rome. A second council held in the same year at Lydda pronounced Pelagius orthodox. The African Church held two councils protesting against this decision, and the matter was then referred by letter to Rome. Innocent in 417 wrote to the Africans, making exalted claims for the authority of his see, and pronounced the opinions of Pelagius to be blasphemous and dangerous.

In the same year Pope Innocent died, and now Celestius, who had been to Ephesus in the meantime and there been ordained, appealed personally to his successor Zosimus. Both he and Pelagius presented confessions of faith which were studiously orthodox on the points which were not in dispute, but slurred over the real questions at issue. Zosimus was deceived, and wrote a letter of reproof to the Africans for being over-hasty in their condemnation. But Augustine and the Africans were not to be put down in this way. A great council at Carthage in 418 confirmed the decision of Innocent, condemned Pelagius, and wrote a protest to Zosimus.

Meanwhile, the matter had attracted imperial notice. A decree was issued banishing both Pelagius and Celestius and all their followers. This seems to have operated strongly with Zosimus, who now faced about, condemned them both, confirmed the African decisions, and in a circular letter ordered all

bishops to abjure Pelagianism. Nineteen Italian bishops were in consequence deposed; including the distinguished Julian of Eclanum, who proved himself a weighty opponent of Augustine. The Pelagians made many attempts to get their orthodoxy recognised, but in vain. The imperial authority, as well as the general mind of the Church, was against them. They were condemned again at the oecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431.

The connection of Pelagianism with the British Church is interesting, because it marks one of the very few occasions **The British Church.** when that obscure and little known Christian Church comes into some prominence. Though Pelagius (a Grecised form of Morgan) was by birth a Briton, he never apparently taught in his native island; and it was not due directly to him that his error began in the early fifth century to attract followers there. Hitherto the British Church, on the witness of Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Jerome, had kept herself remarkably free from heresy; Arianism had gained little foothold. But now a Pelagian teacher, named Agricola, began his campaign in Britain, gaining many adherents among the wealthier laymen. The bishops appealed to the churches of Gaul for their assistance, and two helpers were sent (whether by a Gallican council or by Pope Celestine is not quite clear) —Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus of Troyes. Their mission was most successful. After preaching up and down the country, they held an open debate with the chief Pelagians at Verulam (S. Albans), and reduced them to silence by their Scriptural arguments.

The influence these orthodox teachers had already gained was strengthened in a remarkable way by the famous 'Alleluia Victory.' The Picts and Saxons were invading North Wales, and were met near Mold in Flintshire by a little army of Britons, many of whom were recent converts to the preaching of Germanus and Lupus. It was Eastertide, and these converts had just received baptism. At the instruction of the two bishops, they raised the Easter cry of 'Alleluia' as the heathen army rushed to meet them in a narrow glen. Sudden terror struck the invaders, and they turned and fled in confusion. The victory

was won without striking a blow. This was in 430; seventeen years later Germanus paid a second visit to Britain, accompanied by Severus of Trèves, in order to root out whatever remained of Pelagianism, and again apparently with complete success.

There is something peculiarly 'modern' in the spirit of the teaching of Pelagius and his party. Pride in the dignity of man, and the freedom of his will, combined with a defective sense of sin, produced a type of error **Pelagianism.** which is always likely to recur, if not in formal teaching, at least in a tone or attitude which is very different from that of the Church. Pelagius is credited with having denied original sin. Each human soul he held to be a direct creation of God, and therefore pure and in the position of Adam before his fall. There was no transmitted corruption, still less transmitted guilt. Every man, like Adam, was perfectly free to choose between good and evil. Adam set a bad example, but nothing more.

Consequently the Pelagians denied the absolute necessity of *grace*. It is difficult to be certain what the Pelagian doctrine of grace really was. They had much to say about grace, but apparently meant by it not what the Church means, the new gift from God of power to choose and do His will, but rather such external helps as are found in Christ's example, in the reading of the Scriptures, and the Sacraments. Man's power of free choice is the main thing, and grace only assists it. The logical conclusion from all this (which, however, Pelagius stopped short of) would be to deny the necessity of the Incarnation, or of the Sacraments. But the general tendency of Pelagian teaching is, in any case, towards spiritual pride and self-sufficiency, and an irreverent attitude in regard to the great mysteries of supernatural religion.

S. Augustine, on the other hand, had the congenial task of maintaining the absolute supremacy of God as the giver of all grace, grace which is necessary (a) to originate **Augustine's** man's desire to do God's will; (b) to accompany **arguments.** all his efforts and make them efficacious; (c) to bring him to

perfection. In doing this Augustine was led, however, to dwell too exclusively on the doctrine of predestination, and even to go beyond the teaching of Scripture on this difficult subject. Several causes combined to produce this one-sided tendency in Augustine's teaching: the force of controversy; an overstrained logic; his own vivid sense of the over-mastering power of God's call and God's grace in contrast with human weakness of will, as experienced in his own conversion; perhaps, too, as his opponents did not fail to insinuate, some unconscious effects of his own Manichaean period. Augustine himself was kept free from actual heresy by his grasp of the Catholic doctrine of the visible Church and the Sacraments. But when these were rejected, as by the Calvinists, the road to error was open. Augustine's teaching on free will and predestination, while it overthrew the Pelagians, laid the foundation for much false doctrine, rebellion, and despair in centuries to come.

The Pelagian controversy raises another question, which was to become more and more insistent as time went on. What **Position of the Pope.** was the position of the Bishop of Rome with regard to disputed points of doctrine? We have the spectacle of Innocent saying one thing and Zosimus another, and the African Church again, as in the days of Cyprian, asserting its independence, and calling a pope to book. Without doubt very great deference was already being paid to the Roman bishop. He was becoming gradually an arbiter not merely in the West, but everywhere. He made exalted claims for his authority; and language was used by others which often seemed to re-echo and admit these claims. But in a real crisis, it is pretty clear that the dicta of Rome were only accepted when they were felt to be in harmony with the mind and the ancient teaching of the Church. To quote the candid admission of Duchesne, 'There was not a guiding power, an effective expression of Christian unity. The papacy, such as the West knew it later on, was still to be born.'

S. Augustine was apparently the last Bishop of Hippo. In 430 he was taken away from the evil to come. The Empire of the West was in the throes of dissolution; the Vandals were laying

waste Africa and besieging Hippo. He died, as he had lived for forty-three years, in the spirit of continual penitence, his eyes fixed to the last on a copy of the penitential Psalms placed beside his bed. His greatest contribution to the history of the Church is after all not his theology, nor his controversial powers, but his personal devotion. The medieval artists rightly drew him bearing not only staff and book, but a heart on fire. One of the opening sentences of the *Confessions* sums up his Christian experience, and is in itself enough to immortalise him: 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is disquieted until it find rest in Thee.' Augustine worthily completes the great trio of African saints; more humble than Tertullian, more profound than Cyprian, he combines the excellences of both. His death almost closes the great chapter of the African Church; which was itself soon to perish, weakened by its own dissensions, before the invader.

There, too, unwearied Austin, thy keen gaze  
 On Atlas' steep, a thousand years and more  
 Dwells, waiting for the first rekindling rays,  
 When Truth upon the solitary shore  
 For the fallen West may light his beacon as of yore.

The immense influence that Christianity was exerting in this period of political and social upheaval upon some of the finest characters is illustrated in the life of S. Paulinus of Nola, the admired friend of S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, and S. Jerome. Born in 353, very wealthy and occupying high dignities in the State, a scholar and a poet, he was led about 392 to give himself entirely to the religious life. He settled at Nola, of which he became afterwards the bishop, and lived till his death (431) the life of a monk, spending large sums on very practical good works. He had a life-long devotion to the martyr S. Felix, whose tomb was at Nola, and in honour of whom he erected a magnificent new church, and wrote annually a poem for the martyr's festival. (See his life written by the seventeenth century poet, Henry Vaughan, and the article in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.)

## QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the conflicts of S. Ambrose with the Arians.
2. What was the decretal of Siricius and its significance?
3. What was Priscillianism?
4. Describe the relations of S. Ambrose with Theodosius.
5. Estimate the character and influence of S. Ambrose.
6. Sketch the life of S. Augustine previous to his conversion.
7. How was Donatism finally suppressed? What contribution did S. Augustine make to the controversy?
8. Describe the principles of Manichaeism.
9. What was the Pelagian controversy, and how does S. Augustine figure in it?
10. What do you know of the British Church at this period?
11. Estimate the permanent influence of S. Augustine on the Church in the West.

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

S. Augustine—

*De Civitate Dei*, translated in Ancient and Modern Theological Library, and by S.P.C.K.

*Confessions*, translated by Dr. Pusey.

Bright. *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers.*

Milman. *History of Latin Christianity.*

Hodgkin. *Italy and Her Invaders.*

The British Church—

Bright. *Early English Church History.*

Perry. *English Church History.*



## CHAPTER XXI. S. JEROME AND S. CHRYSOSTOM

A CONTEMPORARY of S. Augustine was Eusebius Hieronymus, called usually in English, S. Jerome, and counted as the third of the four great Latin Fathers. He was a man of great gifts of intellect and utterance, and exercised a wide influence both in his lifetime and afterwards, as a controversialist and a promoter of asceticism, but most of all by his labours in the study and the translation of the Scriptures. At the same time it must be confessed that in disposition he is one of the least pleasing of the fathers of the Church. Like Milton in later days, he is a strange example of the combination in one person of the narrow, bigoted, foul-mouthed disputer and the lofty-souled teacher and seer ; a man who could toil and suffer for God, but could not bridle his tongue, nor keep patience with his fellow-men.

He was born in Dalmatia ; the date is uncertain, traditionally 347, but it may be as early as 330. His youth was spent in Rome, where he received a liberal education, and Jerome's where he fell, like Augustine, into evil courses. But, **early life.** happier than Augustine, he was early converted and baptized. His special bent for literature, especially Biblical study, and for the ascetic life, showed itself almost at once. Leaving Rome he made some stay in Gaul, where he produced his first commentary, on Obadiah. Then for several years he lived at Aquileia, surrounded by various student friends, of like mind. In 374 he proceeded to the East, and after a time at Antioch he plunged with all the eagerness of his nature into the hermit life in the Syrian deserts. Here he lived for several years, in great misery, starving himself and working with his hands. But he went on with his studies and his writing, and made the important advance of learning Hebrew from a converted Jew.

Leaving the desert he returned to Antioch, where Paulinus, against Jerome's wish, ordained him priest. In 380 he was at Constantinople, a hearer and admirer of S. Gregory Nazianzen.

From 382 to 385 he was again in Rome. This proved a very important period of his life, for he became intimate with **From Rome** Pope Damasus, assisted him as a secretary, and **to Beth-** at his request undertook to revise the existing **lehem.** Latin versions of the Psalms and the New Testament. He also distinguished himself in Rome by his bitter attacks on the vices of the city, and especially on the pride and luxury of the clergy. He acted, too, as spiritual guide to a number of devout ladies, whose friendship he retained through life. Chief among these were Paula, a widow of high rank, and her daughter Eustochium. After the death of Damasus, Jerome, overwhelmed by the unpopularity his pen and tongue had incurred, and out of temper with Rome, left the capital never to return. Accompanied by Paula and Eustochium, he established himself in the monastic life at Bethlehem. Here he spent the remaining thirty-four years of his life, occupied in unceasing literary labours, both worshipped and hated throughout the Church, East and West.

Controversy was the very breath of his nostrils. The chief disputes in which he engaged during these years of retirement were (1) with the exponents of the **Jovinian.** action against the excessive asceticism which Jerome and his school were urging. Jovinian, a Roman monk, denied the merit of fasting and celibacy, and the perpetual virginity of Mary. In this connection must also be mentioned Helvidius, a Roman lawyer, who maintained the heretical belief that the 'brethren' of our Lord were the actual children of Mary. Jerome demolished Jovinian with a violent treatise in two books, in which he scourged not only his opponent's views, but his grammar.

A still more bitter tirade is that against Vigilantius, said to have been written in a single night. Certainly it is a veritable nightmare of vituperation. The unfortunate Vigilantius had

protested against the veneration of the relics of the saints and of the tombs of martyrs, as well as various other practices of devotion. Jerome has some quite sufficient answers to give to his opponent's censures, but it is difficult to distinguish these amid the torrents of personal abuse and the vulgarities which stain the treatise.

*Vigilantius.*

(2) The Origenistic controversy; a remarkable and complicated affair which involved for a time practically the whole Church. It is strange that such a controversy should have burned so hotly over the writings of a teacher who had been dead for nearly a century and a half. But the impression made by Origen seems to have grown with time, and made both enthusiastic admirers and bitter enemies. The leading features in Origen's speculations to which exception was taken were his supposed minimising of the Godhead of Christ (which had been prominent during the Arian troubles); his excessive mysticism in the interpretation of Scripture, and his eschatology. Jerome, like his friend Rufinus, had been in youth a great admirer of Origen. But in the early part of his retirement in Bethlehem he was induced to change his attitude, through the influence first of Epiphanius of Salamis, who charged John of Jerusalem with being 'an Origenistic heretic,' and then of Theophilus of Alexandria. The result was a complete estrangement between Jerome and Rufinus, and a bitter life-long quarrel. Rufinus, who remained faithful to his devotion to Origen, returned from Palestine to Rome in 397, and began to translate the great master's works, and quoted Jerome as an admirer of them. Jerome, fearful of being himself accused of heresy, began to attack Rufinus unmercifully, and in spite of the attempts of S. Augustine to reconcile the two, they remained estranged, and even after Rufinus' death Jerome could stoop to revile the memory of his dead friend, calling him 'the buried scorpion' and 'the many-headed hydra which had now ceased to hiss.'

(3) The Pelagian controversy. In this, too, Jerome took a part, writing a dialogue against the Pelagians, a much milder production than his other controversial works. He was not

deeply interested in the matter, and, while holding Pelagius to be a heretic, he did not go as far as Augustine in his predestinarian views. Nevertheless, his attack brought upon him the violence of the supporters of Pelagius. The monasteries of Bethlehem were destroyed, and Jerome himself was in danger of his life.

But the real title of Jerome to fame lies in his great Biblical work. The Church of the West had as yet no uniform or accurate version of the Scriptures, though several old Latin translations were current. And for the Old Testament the only known original was the Septuagint. Jerome's Hebrew knowledge, his critical powers, and his courage in undertaking an unpopular task began a new era in Bible study in the West. His great version, 'the Vulgate,' still the authorised Bible of the Roman Church, was begun at Rome and completed at Bethlehem. While, of course, there are many inaccuracies in his version of the Old Testament, he was on the right line in going back to the original language. His version of the New Testament, especially of the Gospels, is most correct and valuable, as he had access to MSS. older than any we now possess. His work met with singular opposition—though it was appreciated by the great mind of S. Augustine. Christians at large resented the alteration of familiar words and turns of expression. He says himself in his Preface to the Gospels: 'It is a pious task, but dangerous presumption—to change the tongue of old age, and to bring back a world already grey-haired to the rudiments of childhood. Who, whether learned or ignorant, taking up the volume and finding that what he reads differs in taste from that which he has once for all imbibed, will not forthwith give tongue and call me a forger and a sacrilegious person, for daring to add to, change, or correct, anything in the ancient books!' Nevertheless, he persevered, and his work stands as a monument of a scholar's industry, courage, and far-sighted endeavours to benefit the Church. In a time of the dissolution of society, and on the eve of a long period of intellectual darkness, S. Jerome provided a correct text and a settled canon for the Church's book. He distinguished between the Hebrew canon

and the Apocrypha, although in this the Roman Church has not followed him. The Vulgate was generally received in the West by the eighth century, and the Council of Trent pronounced it 'authentic.' The Reformation tended to disparage it, but its merits have been increasingly recognised by modern scholars.

Jerome was a great letter-writer, and in this way his personality stands out vividly both in its defects and its greatnesses. His methods of controversy were exaggerated and violent. He is most intemperate in his advocacy of asceticism and celibacy, and of other tendencies which in later times easily became abuses and superstitions. His language about his opponents was regarded even by his contemporaries as deplorable. His temper was often unchristian, though it is fair to remember that he probably did much to spoil it by ruining his health through fasting and rigour. Nevertheless, there was a real loftiness of purpose behind all his work. It was this rather than his eccentricities which attracted so many friends, and made his verdict looked for and respected in Christendom. His better spirit is seen in such words as these: 'I beseech you, Paula and Eustochium, pour out your prayers for me to the Lord, that as long as I remain in this feeble body, I may write something well-pleasing to you, useful to the Church, and worthy of posterity. As for the judgments of my contemporaries, I am not much moved by them. They take sides, merely through personal feeling, whether of love or of hate.'

The death of S. Ambrose in 397 was closely followed by that of Nectarius of Constantinople. The episcopal throne of the Eastern capital had long been filled by a succession S. Chryso- of Arians and nobodies, with the brief exception tom- of S. Gregory Nazianzen. But now it was to receive one whom succeeding ages have counted as one of the greatest of the Greek Fathers, John Chrysostom, preacher, commentator, saint, and martyr. Not called like S. Athanasius and the two Gregories to be a champion of the faith at a time of acute controversy, his greatness lies rather, like that of S. Ambrose, in being a protagonist in the Church's witness for truth and righteousness

against a worldly court and a corrupt and nominal Christianity. But, unlike S. Ambrose, he triumphed only by suffering and death.

John, nicknamed 'Chrysostomos' (golden-mouthed), was born at Antioch in 347, and brought up as a Christian by his widowed mother, Anthusa, a woman of power as well as devotion. He studied under the great heathen sophist Libanius, and won such a reputation for eloquence that the master on his death-bed, when asked who should succeed him, answered, 'John, had not the Christians stolen him.' He was baptized about the year 370 by Meletius, and resolved to abandon the career of an advocate, which promised great worldly success, and to live the life of a Christian ascetic. In deference to his mother's wishes he remained at home during her lifetime, though practising there the strictest self-discipline. But in 374 he retired for four years into a monastic community, and for two more lived as a hermit. He wore out his health and strength in these austerities, and returned to Antioch, where he was ordained priest, and began to win an extraordinary reputation as a preacher. His power reached its highest during the period of suspense when Antioch was waiting in terror to know what judgment Theodosius was about to pass on the city for the insults done to the statues of himself and his wife (p. 257). John seized the opportunity (March and April 387) to preach his great course of sermons 'On the statues,' in which he calmed the agonised citizens, and exhorted them to repentance. He remained ten years longer at Antioch, during which time he wrote the larger part of his commentaries on the Scripture for preaching purposes, and also his famous treatise on 'The Priesthood.'

In 397, on the death of Nectarius, Eutropius, the unscrupulous minister of the weak Emperor Arcadius, suggested to his master that the great preacher of Antioch should be called to the see. To prevent either his own opposition or that of the Antiochenes, John was secretly seized and conveyed practically as a prisoner to Constantinople, and consecrated, whether he willed it or not, by Theophilus o

**Bishop of  
Constanti-  
nople.**

Alexandria, who himself was certainly unwilling, as he desired the place for one of his own priests. It was a curious instance of the way in which in the East the State dominated the Church. John had no easy task before him, and the days of his episcopate were 'few and evil,' for after six years he was unjustly banished and done to death in exile. Eutropius turned against him when he found that his nominee was not going to be a sycophant; the Emperor had no mind of his own; the traditions of the see of Constantinople were all on the side of time-serving and flattery; Theophilus of Alexandria was from the very first an enemy; and finally the Empress Eudoxia, at first a devotee of the bishop's, turned against him with all the fury of an unprincipled and masterful woman.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Chrysostom was not personally fitted to rule in such adverse conditions. He had none of S. Ambrose's genius for empire. He **Unpopularity.** was too much of a monk, his own temper was severe and inflexible, he had little tact or patience, and could not exercise the self-denial of mixing in ordinary society and being 'all things to all men.' And he had to meet the inevitable unpopularity of a reformer. He deposed many unworthy clergy, and endeavoured in an uncompromising manner to raise the whole standard of clerical life.

As long as he enjoyed the favour of the court, the resentment only smouldered, and for the first two years Chrysostom was able to do notable and useful work. He sent missionaries to the Goths and Scythians. He returned good for evil by acting as the protector of Eutropius, who had suddenly fallen into disgrace, and now owed his life to Chrysostom's intercession. His influence prevented the leader of the Gothic troops, Gainas, from making himself master of Constantinople. At the request of the Church of Ephesus, he spent some time in Asia Minor, restoring and reforming ecclesiastical order.

But Eudoxia had now become his enemy. Her jealousy of his influence was turned to fury by some unguarded words in a sermon in which he apparently compared her to Jezebel. But he was still the idol of the populace, and it was only

by intrigue that he could be attacked. The means was provided by the Origenistic controversy (p. 271). He had received to hos-

**First attack  
on Chrysos-  
tom fails.**

pitality four monks, known as the 'Tall Brothers,' whom Theophilus of Alexandria had violently expelled on a charge of Origenism. They appealed to the Emperor Arcadius, who summoned Theophilus to appear before a council. But on his arrival Theophilus posed as the accuser rather than the accused; he had in his favour the fact that the Bishop of Constantinople, although second in rank in Christendom, was not a metropolitan. On the ground that, as Bishop of Alexandria, he had authority over the bishops of the East, Theophilus cited Chrysostom to appear before himself and some Egyptian bishops at a place called 'the Oak' at Chalcedon. Chrysostom refused to appear before such a gathering of partisans. He was condemned in absence on a number of trivial charges (in which Origenism did not appear at all), such as those of slandering his clergy, and saying they were not worth 'three obols,' of being unsociable, of committing irreverence in church, and of administering the Communion to those who were not fasting (which he indignantly denied). Arcadius was persuaded by Eudoxia to banish Chrysostom; and, to prevent a popular rising, the bishop surrendered himself secretly to the imperial officers. But no sooner had his voyage to exile commenced than the people in anger demanded his return. A severe earthquake shook the city and terrified Eudoxia. The exile was recalled, and amidst torchlight and song was triumphantly reinstated in his cathedral.

But the attack soon began afresh, this time directly the work of Eudoxia. She had erected a silver statue of herself in front of the Church of S. Sophia, which was dedicated to the **The wrath of Eudoxia.** in rather a heathenish manner. Chrysostom publicly denounced her from the pulpit. 'Again,' he said, 'Herodias dances; again she demands the head of John the charger!' The result could hardly be doubted. Another council, engineered by Theophilus, met in 403. This time Chrysostom was declared to be *ipso facto* deposed, on the strengt



of a canon of the Arian Council of Antioch of 341, which condemned any bishop who after deposition by a council appealed to the Emperor to be restored. Chrysostom refused to recognise such a decision, and for a time went quietly on with his duties, while the Emperor hesitated to take further measures.

At last, after frightful scenes of riot and bloodshed had been enacted in the cathedral by the imperial soldiers, and Chrysostom had been imprisoned for two months in his own **Exiled to** house, Arcadius yielded to Eudoxia, and banished **Cucusus.** him to Cucusus, a lonely village among the mountains of Taurus. Here, in spite of many privations and sufferings, he did for three years a great work, furthering missions and corresponding with his sympathisers in the Church in all parts of the Empire. The Western Church especially took his part, and Innocent of Rome pronounced his deposition null and void, and reproved Theophilus. But all this had no effect on his enemies, and, enraged by the influence the exile was exerting, they resolved to banish him still farther and if possible to make an end of him.

He was conducted on foot a three months' journey towards the place chosen, Pityus on the Euxine; and instructions were given to his guards to give him neither rest **Death of** nor refreshment. At Comana in Pontus his strength **Chrysostom.** completely failed. In the chapel of the martyr Basiliscus he received his last communion, and expired, with his favourite doxology on his lips, 'Glory to God for all things. Amen.' (September 14, 407.) Thirty-one years later his body was restored to Constantinople in the presence of the Emperor Theodosius II.

Whatever may have been Chrysostom's personal faults and mistakes, there can be no question as to the grandeur of his witness in life and death to the cause of righteousness and to the rightful independence of the Church against the usurped authority and corrupt influence of that imperial court which did so much to wreck the Christianity of the East, and make it a prey first to heresy and then to Mohammedanism.

His special greatness, however, lay in his work as a preacher. In this he excelled through his knowledge and clear exposition of the Scriptures. He was in the East what **Chrysostom's** sermons. Augustine was in the West, but more learned and less fanciful. He is the great exponent of the literal method, and represents the spirit of the school of Antioch at its best, in contrast with the excessive mysticism and allegorising in favour elsewhere. It is notable how constantly also he exhorted his hearers themselves to read and study the Bible. 'This,' he says, 'is the cause of all our evils, not knowing the Scriptures.' He showed also the readiness which is typical of the great preacher, in seizing upon striking contemporary events or matters that naturally interested his hearers. The sermons on the statues have already been noted. A remarkable sermon was preached by him at Constantinople on the fall of Eutropius, while the stricken favourite was actually clutching at the curtains of the sanctuary in fear for his life. But most of all perhaps is he the model for the Christian preacher in all time, in his refusal to lower the ideal to the standards and influences of his age, and in the single direction of his endeavour, amid the distractions of popular applause, to the salvation of his hearers. He says pathetically enough, 'When I am applauded in church' (this was the custom of the time) 'I go home with a heavy heart: I weep and say to myself, "Perhaps thy vanity has lost some souls, and thou hast spent thyself for nought."'

The persecution of S. John Chrysostom is one of the most extraordinary events in the history of the Church. That one of the most eminent bishops of the time should **Theophilus** have combined with the court to crush and harry to death the greatest preacher and teacher of the age, and for motives almost purely personal, seems to point to the fact that the rise and power of the Church in the East in the fourth century had been far too rapid, and that outward splendour and prestige had outrun altogether the development of real Christianity. For Theophilus of Alexandria was not altogether what he showed himself in the attack on Chrysostom. The first ten years of his episcopate had been marked by zeal and energy in his office.

It was he who had destroyed the Serapeum, the great stronghold of heathenism at Alexandria (p. 255). He had been the friend of the most eminent men of the time, of S. Jerome and of the great monks of Egypt. His theology was sound: he was acknowledged as a spiritual power. But his high office gave too much rein to an imperious and domineering temper and a determination to have his own way at any cost. The judgment of history writes him down as tyrannical, insincere, and a persecutor of saints. And yet to the end there was another side to his character, or he would scarcely have enjoyed the affection and respect of such a man as Synesius, who was himself an admirer of Chrysostom.

Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais in Egypt, who has been immortalised in Kingsley's *Hypatia*, was himself a most remarkable product of an age of too swift development and transition. A wealthy landed proprietor, a keen **Synesius.** sportsman, a man of intense feeling, lovable and loved, devoted to his wife and family, a scholar, a poet, and an orator, he was for most of his life a Neoplatonist philosopher, and to the end a friend and admirer of Hypatia. It is difficult to say when or how he became a Christian, though there is not the least doubt of his sincerity; and the people of his district insisted on his being made their bishop, as a protection against a bad provincial governor. After long hesitation, and sorely against his will, he consented. His episcopate lasted only three years, 410-413, and was full of struggles and sorrows. His picturesque and pathetic career is a strange interweaving of the old and the new, of heathen philosophy and Christian zeal for righteousness. 'His life was almost exactly coincident with what is probably the most important crisis through which the world has passed. He witnessed the accomplishment of the two great events on which the whole course of history for many centuries depended, the ruin of the Roman Empire and the complete triumph of Christianity . . . with all the varying influences of this great age of change he was brought in contact, by all in turn his character was moulded, and all, with more or less completeness, are depicted in his works' (*D. C. B.*).

## QUESTIONS.

1. Sketch the life of S. Jerome.
2. In what principal controversies was he engaged?
3. Describe and show the importance of S. Jerome's biblical work.
4. Describe the early career of S. Chrysostom.
5. How did he become Bishop of Constantinople?
6. Why was he persecuted, and by whom?
7. Describe the closing period of his life.
8. In what does the greatness of S. Chrysostom specially consist?
9. What do you know of Synesius?

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. S. Jerome :  
     'Prolegomena' and selection of writings translated in *Jerome*,  
     Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.  
     'Vulgate,' Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.
2. S. Chrysostom :  
     Bright. *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers*.  
     *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.
3. Synesius :  
     *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.  
     Kingsley. *Hypatia*.  
     Gardner. *Synesius*, S.P.C.K.

## CHAPTER XXII. NESTORIUS AND EUTYCHES

FOR half a century after the Council of Constantinople no controversy arose serious enough to call for a general council. Pelagianism had aroused comparatively little interest in the East. Origenism was largely mixed up with personal feuds, and the questions involved in it were rather the by-products of previous heresies, such as Gnosticism and Arianism, than any new development of error. But there were still outstanding problems of primary importance which were sure sooner or later to call for settlement. The mystery of the Trinity, the relation of the Son to the Father, had indeed been sufficiently defined. The essential Godhead of Jesus had been vindicated in the condemnation of Arius and the various Arian schools. His true and perfect manhood was upheld in the condemnation of Apollinaris. But there still remained the great mystery of the Incarnation itself, the union of Godhead and manhood in the one personality of the Redeemer. The Christological problem was still to be settled, at any rate in its essentials, by the great councils of the fifth and sixth centuries.

These controversies are of a peculiarly subtle and even painful character, for they involved not so much the battle of Catholic truth against positive error as the holding of the balance between two sides of truth. Those who were condemned in these later councils for the most part held, or thought they held, the Divinity and the manhood of Christ as firmly as their opponents. They fell into error through one-sidedness and obstinacy. On the one hand were those, chiefly of the school of Antioch, who were so zealous for a truly human Christ, that they seemed to draw such a distinction between His manhood and His divinity as to make of Him two Persons, a Divine and a human Son of God. On the other hand were those who, like Apollinaris in the previous

century, were so possessed by the greatness of the Divine Son of God, that they tended to minimise or almost obliterate His humanity.

The typical name associated with the former error is that of Nestorius. But the author of it was not he, but Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, an Antiochene, of remarkable theological powers, who enjoyed the friendship of the greatest of his Christian contemporaries, and lived and died without his orthodoxy ever being seriously called in question. Nevertheless, it is clear that his over-subtle speculations into the mystery of the Incarnation led him to speak as if there were really two Sons, Divine and human, united in some undefined way in one person. In this way he and his followers imagined that they vindicated the Godhead from human limitations and sufferings, and also maintained the true human example of the historic Christ.

Nestorius was appointed by Theodosius II., in 427, to the bishopric of Constantinople. He was a man of brilliant gifts, and a notable preacher. In many ways his career presents a curious parallel to that of S. Chrysostom. Called by an Emperor to the episcopal throne of the imperial city, largely because of his preaching powers; the object of violent attack, personal as well as theological—an attack which was led by S. Cyril of Alexandria, the nephew of the notorious Theophilus; driven into exile, and there perishing miserably; his name a party-cry for enthusiastic supporters, and violent and scurrilous adversaries—but the parallel breaks down, for Nestorius had not the saintly temper of Chrysostom, nor can it be fairly said that he was persecuted for righteousness' sake. Opinions will probably always differ as to how far Nestorius himself was really a Nestorian; and how far it was only his own anger and obstinacy that were at fault.

But the question at issue goes far deeper than the personal opinions of Nestorius,<sup>1</sup> whether we regard him as a real heretic, or only an unfortunate scapegoat of controversy. The error associated with his name is destructive

<sup>1</sup> A treatise entitled *The Bazaar of Heraclides*, apparently the work of Nestorius himself, and dealing with the whole controversy in self-justifica-

of the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation. The Church held firmly to the unity of Christ's Person. And His one personality is that of the Eternal Word and resides not in His humanity *per se*, but in His divinity. If the Word had associated with Himself a human personality, there must be two Christs. The son of man who lived and suffered on earth would not be personally identical with the Second Person of the Trinity. And this would rob His mediation of its dynamic value. A Nestorian Jesus would be personally little more than the highest and most perfect of the saints. The gulf between God and man would be still unbridged.

The key-word of the Nestorian controversy was the title *Theotokos*, 'mother of God,' applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary. To understand this it must be remembered that this title was meant primarily to vindicate the dignity *Theotokos*. of Mary's Son. It was intended to emphasise the truth that her human child was personally God, and not merely a man taken into union with the Godhead. The Nestorian school, in their almost morbid fear of anthropomorphism, *i.e.* of ascribing to God human acts and sufferings, wished to substitute for *Theotokos* the vaguer word *Christotokos*, 'mother of Christ.' Nestorius himself was credited with having said that he could not admit a child of two or three months to be God. This was perhaps capable of being understood in an orthodox sense. The Godhead in its essence can neither be born nor die. Yet, on the other hand, the Church has always maintained that the Person who was born of Mary was very God, and that that Person did actually suffer in human flesh. So S. Paul says, 'the princes of this world . . . crucified the Lord of glory' (1 Cor. ii.), and even the startling phrase 'the blood of God' is found in the letters of S. Ignatius (with which may be compared the more probable text of Acts xx. 28). The word *Theotokos*, though perhaps liable to misunderstanding, really summed up the whole matter at issue. It was a term which had been  
tion, has recently been discovered. A full account of this is given by Dr. Bethune-Baker in his *Nestorius and his Teaching*, which is an interesting and powerful attempt to free Nestorius himself from the charge of heresy,

repeatedly used by orthodox writers, it was dear to the mass of Christians, and its denial or discouragement made the whole Nestorian controversy one that appealed to popular devotion and sentiment in a way that the more philosophical term *homoousios* had never done. Theodore of Mopsuestia had been rebuked and threatened by his congregation for denying the title to the Blessed Virgin, and had prudently retracted. As it will be seen, the opposition to Nestorius started not from theologians, but from the Christian laity.

Nestorius created a bad impression as soon as he was consecrated. He was a hot-headed persecutor, and in his first **Nestorius** sermon he said to the Emperor, 'Give me the earth and **S. Cyril.** purged of heretics, and I will give you heaven. Assist me in destroying heretics, and I will help you against the Persians!' Before long he was accused of heresy himself. One of his chaplains in a sermon denied that Mary was Theotokos, and the bishop defended him. There was a popular protest at once, and Eusebius, a layman, rose in church and condemned the bishop. The news soon spread to Egypt, and brought upon the scene S. Cyril of Alexandria. In 429, he began a controversy with Nestorius, which in the next year culminated in the famous statement of faith in his Second Letter, which afterwards received oecumenical sanction.

Cyril was without doubt the greatest theologian and the most commanding personality of the time. He was hated and virulently attacked by contemporaries, remarkably enough by the learned and amiable Theodoret, who for long was ranged on the side of Nestorius. And posterity has not been much kinder to Cyril's memory. The nephew and successor of Theophilus, he has been accused of acting with inherited malice against the see of Constantinople, of persecution, and fomenting strife, of bribery and unscrupulousness in gaining his ends. His earlier career gives some colour to these charges. He carried on his uncle's animosity to the memory of Chrysostom. He stirred up the passions of the Alexandrine populace and of the monks of Egypt against his enemies, the Novatians, the Jews, and even the imperial governor. He has been held



responsible, though the charge can hardly be proved, for the brutal murder of the great Hypatia. But he had also done excellent work in the exposition of Scripture, and though the temper and the methods in which he carried on the Nestorian controversy cannot be admired, there is little doubt either of the purity of his motives or the clearness of his insight into what the struggle really involved. From the point of view of Christian theology Cyril was certainly on the right side, and Nestorius on the wrong; and Cyril apart from this stands superior to his opponent on other grounds. He was more sincere. Nestorius, when hard pressed, gave the impression that he thought the matter at issue really unimportant. 'Let Mary be called Theotokos if you will!' he petulantly exclaimed, 'and let disputing cease.' Cyril was moved by zeal for the faith; Nestorius apparently by the desire to justify himself. Cyril, as will be seen, repudiated secular interference with as much zeal as Athanasius himself. Nestorius seems to have been an Erastian and a courtier.

In 430 both parties approached Celestine I., Bishop of Rome, and endeavoured to get him on their side. This appeal, no doubt, marks a stage forward in the growing influence of the see of Rome. Celestine in a council held at Rome espoused the side of Cyril. He quoted S. Ambrose's hymn for Christmas Day, 'Talis decet partus Deum' ('Such birth befits our God'). He wrote to Nestorius, threatening him with deposition, to the leading bishops of the East declaring the faith, and to Cyril bidding him 'join to his own authority that of the Roman see.'

**Appeal to  
Pope and  
Council.**

Nestorius now appealed to a general council, and Cyril wrote to him a final letter, stating the faith, calling on him to abjure his error, and appending twelve 'anathemas,' summarising the points in dispute. These anathemas were violently attacked by Theodoret, as being tainted with the Apollinarian heresy.

But meanwhile the Emperor Theodosius II. had summoned all the metropolitans of the Empire to a general council at Ephesus in the next year. He also invited S. Augustine, but he

was already dead. After this Nestorius received the letters of Celestine and Cyril, and replied to them, defending himself.

The Third General Council of the Church opened at Ephesus in June 431 with some informality. John of Antioch and **Council of** other Eastern bishops were late in arriving; after **Ephesus.** waiting some days the eagerness of Cyril prevailed to begin without them, though they had sent messages to say they were near. This gave Nestorius an opportunity to refuse to acknowledge the council, in which he was supported by Candidian, the Emperor's representative. Cyril presided at the council, partly as bishop of the most influential see, and partly perhaps as representing Rome. Celestine had despatched three delegates to the council, but these also were late in arriving. The proceedings were marked with great swiftness. The main work was done in one day, June 23. The assembled bishops, 198 in number, nearly all Eastern and Egyptian, having heard the letters of Cyril and Nestorius, condemned and deposed Nestorius, as teaching contrary to the faith of Nicaea, which was definitely taken as the standard of doctrine. The bishops were conducted home by the populace with torchlight processions and great rejoicings. The council held six further sessions and passed eight canons, the most important being the last, which declared the ecclesiastical independence of Cyprus. The Bishop of Antioch had claimed the right as metropolitan of consecrating the Bishop of Cyprus, but the council decided that he had no original connection with that see, and that no bishop should intrude into a diocese which was not under his own authority or that of his predecessors.

Complications ensued when a few days later John of Antioch arrived with fourteen bishops. These, with a number of others, proceeded under the patronage of Candidian to hold a fresh council, at which they deposed Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus, and excommunicated all the others.

Next arrived the Roman delegates, who approved the acts of the first council. Both sides appealed to the Emperor, who sent his treasurer, John, to investigate the matter, and then proposed that both Cyril and Nestorius should be deposed.

The two, along with Memnon of Ephesus, were therefore placed under arrest. But Theodosius was moved by the intercession of Dalmatius, a venerable and saintly abbot, who had not before left his monastery for nearly fifty years, to give a hearing to both parties. The Emperor confirmed the judgment of the original council, the deposition of Nestorius, and the consecration of Maximian in his place. But it was not for two years that John of Antioch was reconciled to Cyril. The latter behaved on the whole with great moderation, and showed a real desire for the peace of the Church, which was finally effected by the mediation of Paul of Emesa.

The decision of the Council of Ephesus has been accepted by the Church at large as oecumenical and binding. It definitely vindicated the unity of the Person of Christ, as the Word, whose Incarnation was not the associating of an individual man with Himself, but the actual assumption of manhood. S. Cyril lived on till 444, a man of whom it may be said in the words of Newman, 'We may hold Cyril a great servant of God, without considering ourselves obliged to defend certain passages of his ecclesiastical career. Cyril's faults were not inconsistent with great and heroic virtues.'

Nestorius was banished to Upper Egypt, where he died in 439, in great misery, the victim of persecution both by the Roman government and by African savages. His pathetic end, something like Chrysostom's, though for a very different cause, has won him a good deal of sympathy. And it is not a little remarkable that not only was his personal memory cherished by such a man as Theodoret, but his followers formed a very large and long-lasting schism. Nestorian missionaries spread eastwards beyond the bounds of the Empire, and established Christian Churches in Persia, Tartary, and China. The remnant of them endures to this day in the lonely and persecuted Church of the Assyrian Nestorians, whose heresy apparently lies only in the fact that they regard Nestorius as a saint and anathematise Cyril.

It was almost inevitable that the zeal which fired the opposition to Nestorius should lead some into the opposite error. In

their anxiety to maintain the unity of Christ's Person, men came to forget that in this one personality there were 'two whole and perfect natures,' combined indissolubly but not to be confused, and that to the fulness and saving power of the Incarnation the perfection and permanence of our Lord's manhood was as important as the perfection and permanence of His Godhead. Nestorianism had been to some extent a protest against any minimising of the human side of Christ, and naturally Nestorians had accused their opponents of being Apollinarians. And they were to this extent justified, that the reaction against Nestorius did produce a heresy which was on the same lines as that of Apollinaris, an attempt to maintain the unity of our Lord's personality by merging the manhood in the Godhead, and speaking of only 'one nature' in the Incarnate.

This error first became prominent in the utterances of Eutyches, the aged abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, who had been a prominent opponent of Nestorius. In 448, he was violently accused by Eusebius (the same man who had formerly led the protest against Nestorius, then a layman, now a bishop), and was reported to Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople. Flavian called a local council, which made lengthy and animated attempts to ascertain the true mind of Eutyches. After a considerable amount of verbiage, it seemed evident at last that Eutyches would admit 'one nature' only in the Incarnate, after the union of the Godhead and manhood: though it is not clear whether he regarded the manhood as absorbed in the Godhead, or believed that the manhood was of a different and more heavenly nature than our own. He appealed to Athanasius and Cyril as having taught the same as himself, and obstinately refused to admit the 'two natures' in their fulness. The council deposed and excommunicated him, and all who should support him. He announced his intention of appealing to Rome, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, and sent a statement to Pope Leo.

Perhaps of all those who have given their name to a great heresy, Eutyches is the most deserving of pity. He was no

popularity-hunter like Arius, nor a persecuting dogmatist like Nestorius. He was a very old man, narrow-minded and obstinate, who for a lifetime had been immured in his monastery; harried by zealots on the opposite side, and unwilling to give way to them; eager only to maintain what he thought was the Catholic faith against Nestorianism. Nevertheless, the question involved was just as serious as in the case of Nestorius. A Christ who is not just as truly and fully man as He is perfectly God could not be a true mediator.

In the subsequent controversy, the prominent place on the side of heresy was taken by Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria, a violent and unprincipled man. He proposed to the Emperor a general council, to which the latter agreed. The court influence was on the side of Dioscorus, through the chamberlain Chrysaphius. The Emperor announced that the council was to root out the remnants of Nestorianism. Those who had previously condemned Eutyches were to be allowed to be present but not to speak. The council, which was summoned to meet at Ephesus in 449, was evidently marked from its beginnings by a partisan spirit. Dioscorus was out to score a triumph over Constantinople.

Meanwhile, Leo of Rome had sent to Flavian a remarkable letter, usually called 'the Tome,' in which he explained fully the error of Eutyches, and the true doctrine of the Person of Christ. This letter was the most weighty intervention of the see of Rome in doctrinal questions which had as yet taken place in the history of the Church. It is luminously clear, charitable and devout in tone. The description of Eutyches, his ignorance and his refusal to be taught, is severe enough, though probably justified. But the outstanding feature of the Tome is the judicial balance of mind throughout. Leo was able to see both sides of the truth, state them dispassionately, and preserve the truly Catholic temper of being willing to hold two complementary aspects of the faith, without exaggerating either, and without seeking to unify them beyond what human intellect is capable of doing. The Tome was a fitting conclusion and summing up of a long controversy. It

laid down clearly all the three vital principles of a correct Christological statement, the Divinity of Christ, His humanity, and their union in one Divine Person.

It is the fashion of much modern theology to find fault with Leo's attempt to distinguish, as he does, between what is proper to the human nature of Christ in the record of his earthly life, *e.g.* his hunger, thirst, weariness, weeping, and what is Divine, *e.g.* the miracles. Nevertheless, Leo in this way avoids the charge of anthropomorphism; he preserves the Divine nature from having human weakness attributed to it; he preserves also the real humanity of Christ; and he goes at least as far as this in explaining the unity of personality in Christ, that he allows the attributes of each of the two natures to be predicated of the other, because they are all attributes of one person, *e.g.* it may be rightly said that 'the Son of man came down from heaven,' and that 'the Son of God was crucified and buried.' (This transference of attributes has been called by theologians *communicatio idiomatum*.)

The council arranged by Dioscorus met at Ephesus in August 449. He presided over about 130 bishops. The proceedings were violent, and lamentably unfair. Protests were disregarded. Leo's Tome was ignored. First Eutyches was absolved, then Flavian and Eusebius were condemned. This was the signal for a general outburst of passion. A mob of armed soldiers and frantic monks rushed in; a free fight ensued, and Flavian was brutally kicked and died shortly afterwards. With the exception of one of the delegates of Rome the members of the council seemed completely terrified by the overbearing violence of the president, and even signed a blank paper at his bidding, on which the sentence on the opponents of Eutyches was to be recorded. So ended this so-called council which Leo of Rome styled 'Latrocinium,' or 'Council of highway robbers.' Its work was shortly to be undone, but it inflicted irreparable harm on the Church. The East was divided Egypt, Thrace, and Palestine were with Dioscorus; Syria, Pontus, and Asia were against him. And he had still Leo to deal with, the greatest man as yet who had sat on the papal throne

For two years Dioscorus seemed to have triumphed. In 450, however, came the fall of his patron, Chrysaphius, and the sudden death of Theodosius II. The Emperor's sister Pulcheria succeeded him, with her consort Marcian. She was a woman of great ability, and both she and her husband were on the side of Leo and orthodoxy. A change was soon apparent—exiled bishops were allowed at once to return. Flavian's successor, Anatolius, condemned Eutyches in a local council. Then in the name of Marcian, and Valentinian III., Emperor of the West, was summoned the Fourth General Council, not in Italy, as Leo had wished, but at Nicaea; the place being afterwards changed to Chalcedon. On Oct. 8, 451, Chalcedon saw the gathering of 630 bishops. The council was undoubtedly presided over by the three legates of Leo. The Tome was read in a Greek translation and pronounced to contain the true faith. The proceedings of the Latrocinium were declared null and void. Dioscorus was condemned and deposed; the papal legates pronouncing sentence on him in the name of the Bishop of Rome and the council. A committee of bishops drew up a statement concerning the points in dispute, from which the following extract may be quoted: 'We confess one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognised in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation—the property of each nature being preserved and combining into one person: not as it were parted or divided into two persons, but one and the self-same Son, Only-begotten, God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ.' This was presented to the council along with the Creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople—the latter being the enlarged form (identical with the Creed of Jerusalem) which is now called the Nicene Creed; the first time that this form was authoritatively put forward, though usually attributed to Constantinople (*see* p. 250). The council exclaimed, 'This is the Faith of the fathers; the Faith of the Apostles; we all follow it!'

Another interesting event at the council was the reconciliation of Theodoret, the learned commentator on the Scriptures and Church historian, who, in his fear of Apollinarianism

and his intense dislike of S. Cyril, had been under the shadow of complicity with Nestorius for more than twenty years. He had no difficulty in proving his orthodoxy; but the council insisted also on his personally condemning Nestorius, which, after considerable pressure, he consented to do.

The council also passed twenty-eight canons, the most remarkable of which concerns the ecclesiastical position of Constantinople. It was decreed that this see, having been by the Second General Council declared next after Rome, should not only have this position of honour, but should have equal privileges in her own sphere, *i.e.* should be second in jurisdiction also, having authority to consecrate the metropolitans of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace. The reason given for Rome's primacy, however, was not that it was the see of Peter, but simply because Rome was the imperial city. Constantinople, being, as it was said, 'new Rome,' was to have a similar primacy in the East. The papal delegates were absent when this canon was passed, and protested against it, as did Leo himself. But the canon was retained, and is still part of the law of the Eastern Church.

Though it remained for two further councils to define still more exactly the orthodox faith as to the Incarnation, the main questions had been settled, and we may regard the faith of the Catholic Church as now clearly set forth and safeguarded. The so-called Nicene or Constantinopolitan Creed, now ratified by Chalcedon, was henceforth the common Creed of Christendom. No changes of importance have been made in it except the addition in the West of the famous *Filioque* stating that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father. This addition, probably made in Spain in the sixth century, and only slowly adopted in the West, was never ratified by a general council, and has always been repudiated in the East, though it seems in harmony with Scripture and with the teaching of S. Cyril.

A remarkable statement of orthodox doctrine, as compared with the different errors which these four councils repudiated



is seen in the *Quicumque vult*, a Latin hymn of Western origin, sometimes called the Athanasian Creed, though it is a canticle rather than a creed, and was simply styled *The Faith of S. Athanasius* in honour of the *Quicumque*, great hero of the faith, without any intention of ascribing the authorship to him. It was never referred to at Chalcedon, and may have been later than 451. It is first quoted in the writings of Caesarius of Arles, in the first half of the sixth century. Nevertheless, many scholars are for assigning to it an earlier date, in the early part of the fifth century, and regard it as a protest against Apollinarianism and the Priscillianists. As to authorship, if the early date is adopted, it is probable that the *Quicumque* proceeded from the monastery of Lerins, perhaps from the pen of the famous S. Vincent himself.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Who was Nestorius, and what theological error is associated with his name?
2. What is the meaning and importance of the title 'Theotokos'?
3. What was the work of S. Cyril of Alexandria in this controversy?
4. Describe the Council of Ephesus.
5. How was the influence of Nestorius seen after his deposition?
6. What error arose through reaction against Nestorianism?
7. How did the Bishop of Rome distinguish himself in this controversy?
8. What was the Latrocinium?
9. What were the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon?
10. Summarise the results of the four first General Councils.
11. What is the probable origin and the importance of *Quicumque vult*?

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. Nestorius.  
Bethune-Baker. *Nestorius and His Teaching*.  
'Nestorius' in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.  
Bright. *History of the Church*.
2. The position of S. Mary the Virgin in Christian Theology.  
'Mary' in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* and in Arnold and Scannell's  
*Catholic Dictionary*.
3. The Nestorian Churches—  
'Nestorians' in Schaff-Herzog's *Encyclopædia*.  
Harnack. *History of Dogma*.
4. The 'Tome' of S. Leo.  
Latin in Heurtley's *De Fide et Symbolo*.  
English translation in 'S. Leo' in Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.
5. The Theology of the first four Councils.  
Hooker. *Eccl. Pol.*, v. li.-iv.  
Temple. 'The Divinity of Christ' in *Foundations*.  
Wilberforce. *Doctrine of the Incarnation*.
6. The *Quicumque Vult*.  
Burn. *The Athanasian Creed and Introduction to the Creeds*.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE : RISE OF THE PAPACY

AMIDST a strife in which sincerity and party spirit were strangely mingled, the definition of Christian doctrine proceeded in the Eastern part of the Church. Meanwhile, momentous changes were happening in the West. The first half of the fifth century saw the greatest catastrophe of history, the overthrow of the Roman Empire.

The immediate cause was the irruption of the semi-barbarous nations of the North. For long a gradual movement had been proceeding among them, starting far away in Asia. **The menace of the barbarians.** As early as the third century the Goths had threatened the boundary of the Empire, but had been kept in check by good generalship or by compromise. The Emperor Valens had allowed them to cross the Danube and settle in the Balkans. His defeat by them at Adrianople was the greatest disaster which had befallen the Roman arms since Cannae. It might well have shown what was coming, had not Roman statesmanship been possessed with the false idea that the gravest peril to the Empire was threatened by Persia. The Roman armies were largely recruited from the Goths ; they were growing to the sense of their power, and they were taking the measure of Rome. With the death of Theodosius the deluge began.

The Empire itself was growing ripe for dissolution. Its social order rested on the rotten basis of a vast system of slavery. The centralising policy of the Emperors was failing ; **Decay of the Empire.** and there were no representative institutions to maintain unity and common interests. The poorer classes in the greatest cities were pauperised by the ever-increasing doles of food. The middle classes were being crushed by taxation and officialdom. The very soldiers were growing effeminate.

The successors of Theodosius, Arcadius and Honorius, were weak puppets managed by eunuchs and court favourites. The time had come for younger and stronger races to overthrow it all, and to build up again a new society and a new civilisation. If there are any breaks in history, this moment was the end of the ancient world and the beginning of modern history.

Christianity had already reached the earliest of the new invaders. The Goths, though Arians, as taught by Ulfilas, **Alaric takes** had a profound respect for Christianity, and they **Rome.** were to some extent permeated by Roman civilisation. But the Goths were followed by other waves of invasion. After them came the Arian Vandals and heathen Huns, who were more truly barbarians. The first attack on Rome after the death of Theodosius was made by the great Alaric, king of the West Goths. For some years he was kept in check by one of the ablest of Rome's last great generals, the Vandal, Stilicho. He withdrew the armies from the distant provinces, *e.g.* from Britain, and concentrated them on the defence of Italy. But Stilicho was an object of suspicion to all parties; he was plotted against at court, and murdered in 408. The natural result followed, though to the men of that day it seemed unbelievable. In 410 Alaric took and sacked Rome, sparing, however, the Christian churches and those who took sanctuary in them, a fact which furnished S. Augustine with an impressive opening for his *De Civitate Dei*.

Neither the Goths nor the other barbarians who now began to surge into the Empire seem to have aimed at the actual **Barbarian** overthrow of Rome. The spell of her great name **advance.** was too strong upon them. They preferred rather to keep the Emperor of the West in their own power, and make new kingdoms for themselves under his nominal headship. After the death of Alaric, which occurred very shortly, the West Goths abandoned Italy, and settled in Gaul and Spain, driving out the Vandals who had previously invaded Spain. The latter crossed into Africa, led by the crafty and pitiless Genseric. He made himself master of North Africa, laying waste the whole of that fertile and Christian region. And by thus cutting off

the corn supply of Italy, he gained control of the Mediterranean and was able in 455 to inflict his most terrible blow, by sailing up the Tiber, taking and sacking Rome, and stripping the golden city of her treasures.

Besides the Goths and the Vandals, there were other new races, seeking and making conquests, such as the Burgundians and the Franks, and the English who began now to occupy Britain, driving the native Christians **Attila.** into Wales and Cornwall. But a much more terrible foe of civilisation and Christianity appeared towards the middle of the century in the shape of Attila, and his vast hordes of Huns, resembling the Tartars or the Scythians. In 451 he 'burst with the speed and terror of a tempest' across central Europe. His onset was stopped at the great battle of Chalons, where Aetius, the Roman general, fought him for three days, in such a battle as the world had hardly seen before. Attila retraced his steps, and after destroying Aquileia (whose survivors were the founders of Venice) and laying waste northern Italy, he pressed towards Rome. But here an adversary of another order barred his path. Pope Leo I. went out to meet him at the head of an embassy; his majestic figure, and, it is said, the apparition of S. Peter and S. Paul, so strangely impressed the barbarian that he consented to be bought off and retire. His own death followed shortly, and the terror of the Huns was over.

Meanwhile, the last stage in the Western Empire was reached. The barbarians were making and remaking Emperors. Ricimer, the Sueve, made himself master of Italy: his soldiers **End of the** took and sacked Rome for a third time in 472. **Western** In 476, the last Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was **Empire.** allowed to abdicate and retire to the villa of Lucullus at Misenum. Odoacer, the Herule, chief of the armies of Italy, sent the insignia of empire to Zeno, the Eastern Emperor at Constantinople. He himself became the first of a line of what were practically kings of Italy, though only bearing the title of 'Patricians.' He was defeated and succeeded in 489 by a remarkable ruler, Theoderic. His people were the Ostrogoths or East Goths, into

whose dominion the much contested land of Italy now passed. He had been trained at Constantinople, and was a statesman as well as a warrior. He tried to found a real homogeneous and Christian kingdom of Italy, though it was not yet to be. At his court we catch the last glimmers of the lamp of classical learning in the West, in the philosopher Boethius, and Cassiodorus the historian.

This vast catastrophe, which to those who experienced it seemed like nothing less than the end of the world, was for the **Stedfastness of the Church.** Church of the West not only her great testing time, but her great opportunity. The Church was the one institution which remained firm and formed the link between the old and the new. She had lost something—Britain, Africa, and several countries overrun by Arians; but she had gained by the final extinction of Roman paganism; Alaric had demolished the temples while he spared the churches. The invading peoples were better than the outworn civilisation they had overthrown; they had within them new possibilities of reverence and moral and spiritual growth. Consequently after the fall of the Empire came a great burst of missionary activity, directed to both Arians and heathen. The 'City of God,' whose ideal S. Augustine portrayed in his great book, vindicated herself as something that could not be shaken, and, amidst general ruin, had alone the secret of recovery.

By the end of the fifth century the movement of the nations was with one exception practically ended. Indeed for a few brief years in the next century it seemed as if the Emperors of the East were again to assert themselves as lords of the West. Justinian won back Italy from the East Goths, and Africa from the Vandals. But these conquests were nearly all lost again by the invasion of the Langobardi or Lombards. For two hundred years more these Arian terrors occupied most of Italy, devastating the country and persecuting the Church. But they failed to establish a lasting dominion or to unite with the previous inhabitants. The political future of West Europe was to be neither with them, nor the Goths, nor the Caesars of Constantinople, but with the Franks.

The three dominant factors in the gradual settlement and development of the new world of the West were the rise and conversion of the Franks, the great revival and spread of monasticism which began with S. Benedict, and the consolidation of the papacy.

The Franks do not become very prominent in history until 481, when Clovis (Clodvig, or Lewis) became their king, and determined to establish an empire for himself in Gaul. During a period of conquest, extending **Clovis.** over some thirty years, he extinguished the remains of Roman authority, crippled the Burgundians, and drove out the West Goths into Spain. In 496, Clovis was converted to Catholic Christianity. In that year, when hard pressed on the field of battle by the Alemanni, he vowed himself to Christ, if he might have the victory. He won his fight and kept his word. He was baptized by S. Remigius, Bishop of Rheims, who addressed him on the occasion with the memorable words, 'Bow thine head, burn what thou hast adored, and adore what thou hast burned.' It is one of the turning points of history. Clovis, the founder of the future French nation, became thus 'the eldest son of the Church,' and for the time the ~~only~~ Catholic sovereign in the world, for the Eastern Emperor, Anastasius, was under the cloud of heresy.

The Goths in Spain, after a severe struggle, relinquished their Arianism under King Recared I. (586-601). Early in the seventh century the Lombards also became converted to Catholicism.

Nevertheless, the Catholic Church in the West would never have exercised the influence it did but for the bishopric of Rome. This centre of unity and organisation preserved the Church from becoming a mere tribal or national institution, or the vassal of the secular ruler, like the Eastern Church. The founder of the greatness of the papacy, that mysterious institution which was the real successor of the Empire and established its throne of spiritual influence over all the nations of the West, was Leo I. (440-461). And his work was taken up and consolidated by Gregory I. (590-604).

Leo I., styled rightly 'the great,' has already come before us at two striking moments of his career, his confronting of the terrible Attila, and his intervention in the Eutycharian controversy. Both are typical of the man, of his courage, his strength, and his wisdom. Throughout his pontificate he is the dominating figure both in Church and state, he made himself felt not only in Italy and the West, but in Constantinople, Antioch, and Egypt. The prevailing notes of his world-wide policy were unity, authority, firmness in discipline, orthodoxy in doctrine. He is practically the first Bishop of Rome who definitely and consistently acted as one who was commissioned to guide and rule the whole Church as the successor of S. Peter, although the claim had often been made before. And we cannot deny the conscientiousness of his belief in this, nor that he acted in what he thought the interests of the Church, rather than for any personal ambition or aggrandisement. Whether he was justified in his claims or not, he was the man of the hour, and in the face of the break up of society and the failing of men's hearts in the West, as well as the perpetual quarrels and intrigues of the East, he established ecclesiastical Rome as the centre of unity, as the rock of refuge in the midst of the troubled seas. His claim as Peter's successor was, however, more as the ruler of the Church than as the fountain of infallible teaching. In the Eutycharian controversy he based his judgment upon Scripture and the authority of the Church; and his Tome was ratified at Chalcedon as in accordance with these, not as the final expression of an infallible Rome. And although his claim to rule the whole Church was largely accepted (due no doubt to the circumstances of the age), the position he claimed for his see was never really admitted in the East—witness its persistence in maintaining the canon as to the position of Constantinople (p. 292). Leo was guilty on occasion of overbearing harshness, as, for example, in his treatment of S. Hilary of Arles, who opposed the efforts of Leo to dominate the Church of Gaul. Yet, like the strong man that he was, he knew when to give way. In 444 he deferred to the decision of Alexandria as to the correct date for Easter, in order



to prevent the scandal of a divided Christendom. Similarly he gave way to the judgment of the Emperor as to the holding of the council on the Eutychian dispute, in the East, rather than in Italy, as he himself desired.

In addition to Leo's doctrinal writings and his sermons, he contributed to the liturgical development of the Western Church. It seems probable that the 'collect,' the characteristic form of prayer in the West, with its dignity, brevity, and theological exactness, was the creation of S. Leo. Several of the Collects in the English Prayer Book are translations from the Sacramentary that bears his name. One in particular seems to reflect both the troubled times he lived in, and his calm sense of the Divine background: 'Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness' (fifth Sunday after Trinity).

Leo's successors did not forget the type he had set. Similar claims to his were made by such popes as his immediate successor Hilarus (one of the papal legates at the Latrocinium), **Gregory the Great** by Simplicius (468-83), and by Gelasius (492-96). The conquests of Justinian and the scandalous career of Pope Vigilius brought the papacy under a temporary cloud; but at the accession of Gregory I. in 590, the position of the pope was very strong and combined many dignities. He was, to begin with, bishop of the city of Rome, with its mother-church, the Lateran, and, in spite of all disasters, Rome still retained much of her ancient prestige; he was metropolitan of the seven ancient bishoprics that bordered on the city; he had a patriarchal oversight of the 'suburban' provinces, *i.e.* middle and south Italy, with Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica; and whatever objections might be raised in the East to his claim to rule the universal Church as S. Peter's successor, he possessed an indefinite but very general authority over all the West. This had been strengthened by imperial edicts, notably that of Valentinian III., given at the request of Leo I. in 445, which laid down that nothing was to be attempted 'contrary to ancient custom, either by the Gallican bishops or by the bishops of other provinces, without the authority of the

venerable man, the pope of the eternal city, but whatever the authority of the apostolic see has sanctioned or shall sanction, let that be held by them and by all for a law.' On these foundations Gregory I., aided by circumstances and the force of his own personality, was to build up the power which dominated the West all through the Middle Ages.

Gregory, like his great predecessor Leo, came to the papal chair amidst the darkest troubles, secular and ecclesiastical.

**His difficulties.** Italy had not yet recovered from the frightful struggle in which Justinian had overthrown the East Gothic kingdom. In the course of that struggle Rome had for a fourth time been taken by the Goths and sacked (546). The land was out of cultivation, and suffering from the exactions of the imperial exarchs who ruled for the Emperor. And now across the Alps had come the swarms of Arian Lombards once more laying waste the land, and treating its people with pitiless cruelty. Outside Italy, in spite of the comfort to be derived from the conversion of the Goths in Spain, there was much to distress a churchman. In Africa, where the Emperor had nominally restored Catholicism, rose up again the irreconcilable Donatists. In Gaul, the kingdom of Clovis was going to pieces under his degenerate successors. The clergy generally were deteriorating, becoming worldly and immoral; the bishops were warriors and temporal lords, who aimed at their children succeeding to their office. Nothing could make head against these corruptions but the restored monasticism of the West (to be described in a later chapter), and a revival of strength and centralisation in the see of Rome. These two forces met in S. Gregory, who, though born of a noble Roman family, and once even *praetor urbanus*, was a Benedictine monk, who continued to live under his monastic rule, even when called to the papacy.

Among his first efforts is to be noted his zeal for the reformation both of monks and clergy, and for the abolition of simony.

**Mission to the English.** But he was more than a reformer; he had the greatness of outlook which makes a missionary and a builder. He devoted himself at once to make peace with and

convert the Lombards. In this he was successful in 599, mainly through his influence with their Queen Theodolinda. His most notable missionary achievement was the foundation of the English Church. Ever since his diaconate he had been eager for the conversion of the English, when, as the story goes, he had seen in the slave-market of Rome the fair-haired captives whom he thought more like angels than 'Angli,' from the northern kingdom of Deira, and had recognised in the name a prophecy of the deliverance '*de ira*'—from the wrath of God, and in that of their king, Aella, a hope that 'Alleluia' might some day there be sung. He had himself even started on the mission, but was brought back by the Pope at the outcry of the Roman populace. In 597 his hopes began to be realised by the arrival in England of S. Augustine and his band of monks, who preached before King Ethelbert and his Christian queen, Bertha. Though comparatively little in extent was achieved by this mission, it was a real beginning. The king was converted, and Canterbury, as the see of Augustine, became the nucleus of the future Church of the English. Gregory's instructions to Augustine regarding the organisation of the new Church show not only his zeal and love, but his width of mind, liberality, and statesmanlike grasp of the possibilities of the future. He had no desire to impose Roman customs on the English; he was content with such as would be suitable to the national temper, and help to an amalgamation with the relics of British Christianity. Augustine, a narrower spirit than his master, failed indeed to conciliate the British Church, or to extend far his mission beyond its first centre. The conversion of the larger part of England had to be accomplished by missionaries who owed little to Rome. Nevertheless to Gregory belongs the honour of laying the foundation; and to an English churchman he must always be held, in the words of Bede, 'Gregory our father, who sent us baptism.'

To return to Gregory's work in the already existing Church, he carried on the policy of S. Leo in riveting the authority of his see over the bishops of the West. In Africa, Gaul, and Spain he established his influence by connecting specially with

himself various bishops whom he called his 'vicars,' and by bestowing on them the 'pallium.' The careful and charitable administration of the papal estates, the *patrimonia Petri*, bestowed on his see by various Emperors, also gave him the opportunity of drawing together the people of many countries, both in East and West, in allegiance to Rome.

And in the city of Rome itself, Gregory must be accounted the founder of that papal sovereignty which was to endure till the nineteenth century. In the early years of his pontificate the exarch at Ravenna was powerless against the Lombards, and Gregory himself was the protector and practical king of Rome, keeping the Lombards at bay, and supporting the destitute out of his carefully managed papal revenues.

Gregory seems to have made comparatively little attempt to dominate the Eastern Church. But his controversies with **Gregory and John of Constantinople** are noteworthy. In 593, **the East.** he protested against John's treatment of two presbyters, heard their case in Rome, and reversed the decision of Constantinople. Two years later he had again to write to John, in indignation at his having assumed the title of 'universal bishop.' Probably this was only intended as a title of honour and not intended to assume authority over the Church generally; but Gregory felt it as a slur on the primacy of Rome, and apparently also he sincerely considered it as a title unbecoming in itself. He used the strongest language against it as irreverent and blasphemous and a sign of the approach of Antichrist, and, what is the more remarkable in view of the popes that were to be, he repudiated it for himself, and chose rather to style himself 'servant of the servants of God.'

Gregory was not only a great ruler; he was a theological writer, a preacher, and especially a reorganiser of the worship and the music of the Church. He established a choir school in Rome; he did something (though how much is a matter of dispute) towards purifying and arranging the 'plain-song' music which came to be called by his name; and he made some additions and improvements in the service of the Mass. It is impossible to say at this date how much or how little S. Gregory

did personally in this direction. But it seems certain that in addition to his reforming, missionary, ruling, and organising talents, he had a liturgical gift, and used it to enhance that splendour and dignity of the ritual and worship of the Western Church which have played no small part in its influence in history.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What causes, internal and external, led to the downfall of the Roman Empire in the West.
2. What was the effect of this catastrophe on the Church?
3. What was the importance of the influence and the work of S. Leo at this crisis?
4. Describe the consolidation of the Papacy by S. Gregory.
5. What was the missionary work of S. Gregory.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The barbarian invaders of the Empire.  
Kingsley. *Roman and Teuton*.  
Hodgkin. *Italy and Her Invaders*.
2. S. Gregory the Great.  
Milman. *History of Latin Christianity*, ii.  
'Gregorius I.' *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.
3. The foundation of the English Church.  
Bright. *Early English Church History*.  
Wakeman. *History of the Church of England*.

The chief original authority is the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bede.

## CHAPTER XXIV. MONASTICISM

ONE of the greatest factors in the conversion of Europe, as well as in regenerating the Church of the West after the fall of the Empire, was the revival and spread of Monasticism.

**Asceticism.**

Monasticism must not be confused with asceticism. The ascetic is one who lays upon himself a rigorous law of self-discipline, denying himself as far as possible the natural pleasures of human life, in order that his flesh may be subdued, and his spirit set free. There is nothing essentially Christian in this, and other religions have encouraged such efforts after detachment and personal holiness, often to very extravagant lengths. But early Christianity, while it differed from the heathen ascetics on a vital point, regarding the body and material things as not evil in themselves, and capable of being consecrated by the Incarnation, yet attached great honour to the ascetic life. Many Christians set themselves to abjure marriage, and all the indulgences of life beyond the barest necessities. It is remarkable how most of the greatest men of the Church in the early centuries came under the spell of this ascetic ideal: S. Athanasius, the two Gregories, S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, to mention no others, lived the ascetic life, and in some cases ruined their health by their austerities.

It is difficult for the modern mind to appreciate the ascetic ideal. It was no doubt to some extent a reaction from the self-indulgence and the low moral standard of heathen society. It sometimes came dangerously near Manichaeism. Nor can it be denied that the ascetic in his renunciation of marriage ignored the charity and self-discipline which are fostered by the new spirit which Christianity infused into the married life. Some of the treatises of the fathers on virginity are painful reading from this point of view, and the writers may well be

accused of spiritual selfishness. Nevertheless, Christian asceticism did an important work: it had the notes of sincerity and earnestness; it prevented Christianity from lapsing into a mere comfortable profession. It showed that men were ready to take the Gospel seriously, and to lose their lives that they might save them.

The monk was naturally an ascetic, but he was more. He was one who set himself, either singly or in community, to seek Christian perfection by carrying out the precepts of the Gospel, in a life entirely separated from worldly society and affairs. The mere ascetic might live in the world, and practise at home, as S. Chrysostom did, his rule of severity by himself. The monk went out of the world. Christian monasticism began in Egypt in the third century. S. Anthony is looked upon as its founder. But he and his imitators did not live in religious communities but in separate cells—at first entirely apart from one another, and later in settlements, where the monks might indeed meet for worship, but maintained in other respects their isolation, living, if not absolutely alone, in the company of not more than one or two others. The greatest of these settlements was in a gloomy district, called Nitria, in the desert south of Alexandria, and its founder was Amoun. This colony grew and became famous; at a later date it numbered more than 5000, who occupied themselves in prayer and manual labour.

An important development was due to Pacomius in the early fourth century. He founded, in the district called the Thebaid, the community life, of monks living together and subject to a common discipline. From Egypt the monastic life spread to Palestine and Syria, and to Asia Minor, where its development under S. Basil has already been noticed (p. 240). The holiness of the monks, their simplicity of life, their visions and their miracles, attracted many pilgrims and admirers from all parts. And by the end of the fourth century monasticism was established in the West, S. Athanasius during his exile made it popular in Rome, and it had the support of such men as S. Ambrose, S. Martin, and

S. Augustine. Among those who had visited and studied the monks of Egypt was John Cassianus, who is usually regarded as the founder of Western monasticism. He established two communities near Marseilles for men and women; and his book *De Institutis* became a standard text-book for the life of those who thus renounced the world. Another monastery of great note was founded in the island of Lerins, early in the fifth century by S. Honoratus, from which sprang a long list of famous men, such as were S. Vincent, S. Hilary of Arles, S. Lupus the opponent of Pelagianism, S. Caesarius, and S. Patrick the Apostle of Ireland.

The monasticism of the West was from the first more sober and practical than that of the East: less controversial and more useful to the Church. The monks of the East were the true children of the desert: it has been said that 'from that rude school issued forth both great men and mad men,' and the two were never perhaps very far apart. Even by the fifth century Eastern monasticism was degenerating into two extreme types, the one of extravagant asceticism, like S. Simeon Stylites and his imitators; the other of wild and riotous controversialism, now on the side of orthodoxy, as in the Nestorian controversy, now on that of heresy, as in the case of Eutychianism. The monks of Alexandria and Constantinople were often terrors. 'Monks commit many crimes,' Theodosius said to S. Ambrose, and with some justice. The murderers of Hypatia were strange representatives of the life of Christian perfection. From such extravagances the monks of the West were free. But the inroads of the barbarians and the overthrow of society made havoc of the monastic institutions, except in Ireland, which was untouched by invasion as it had been untouched by Roman conquest. Elsewhere monasteries were pillaged and destroyed, the monks scattered, and often secularised. A great restorer came in the beginning of the sixth century in the person of S. Benedict.

Benedict (480-543) sprang from a noble family of Nursia in the old Sabine territory. Sent by his parents to be educated at Rome, he fled from the world at the age of fourteen, and



lived three years as a hermit in a cave near Subiaco. The fame of his sanctity drew disciples to him in spite of himself; these he formed into little communities of twelve with an abbot or 'father' over them, in imitation of **S. Benedict.** our Lord and His disciples. He gave them precepts by which to live and work and pray, and so formed out of the very necessities of the case what came to be the famous Benedictine Rule. In 529 he was compelled by the persecution of his neighbours to seek another home for his own brotherhood, which he found farther south among the Apennines at Monte Cassino. This place became the centre and mother-house of the Benedictine order; destroyed by the Lombards in 580, and several times afterwards, it was as often rebuilt. The founder himself died in 543, a few weeks after his twin sister, S. Scholastica, who had herself founded a convent for women not far from her brother. The Order and the Rule spread rapidly over the West, and became the groundwork of many subsequent monastic developments and reformations, such as that of the Cluniacs in the tenth century, and the Cistercians in the twelfth.

The Rule of S. Benedict was not altogether new; much of it had existed before in the earlier monastic communities. But S. Benedict's compilation shows the influence of **The Rule.** a master-mind, which combined religious enthusiasm with a deep knowledge of human nature, a practical sense of the changes that different conditions and climates require in a rule of life, and a painstaking accuracy in details. Its leading precepts were those of all monastic life, the three rules of poverty, chastity, and obedience; the last being the peculiar and primary virtue of a monk. The opening words of the Rule lay stress on this. 'Hear, my son, the precepts of the Master, and incline the ear of thine heart; and receive willingly and fulfil completely the admonition of thy father: in order that by the toil of obedience, thou mayest return to Him from whom by the sloth of disobedience thou hadst departed. To thee therefore is my speech now directed, whosoever thou art, who, renouncing thine own wishes, and desiring to fight for the Lord Christ, the true king, takest up the mighty and glorious

weapons of obedience.' There was to be no idleness in the Benedictine brotherhood: each day was strictly mapped out, so many hours for prayer, so many for sleep and recreation, and so many for labour. It was this insistence on work which distinguished S. Benedict's creation from the spirit of Eastern monasticism. The work was at first only manual labour, chiefly agriculture; but study was also admitted, and the monasteries became centres of learning, those who were qualified being allowed to devote their labour to reading, transcribing, and composition. The early Benedictines became the great power of their age for strengthening and extending the Christianity of the West. The Rule proved singularly attractive and drew into the communities not merely the weak and helpless and the disappointed, in a hard and cruel time, but the best, the strongest, and the most intellectual.

What were the secrets of monastic power? No doubt, first, the spirituality of the early monks. They realised intensely **Monastic** the supernatural and the unseen. In the midst **influence.** of a society where might was right, they set themselves deliberately to follow Christ and put His teaching into action with simplicity and sincerity. Again, the monks had the strength which comes from a common life and a common rule. In such an age the individual tended to be crushed and lost. The community of twelve monks had a much greater influence on the society around them than twelve individuals would have had. They had by combination a strength and a freedom which could not have been theirs otherwise. Each community had in addition the sense that it was part of a widespread organisation, living the same life, with the same aims. And the Benedictines were loyal servants of the Papacy; and thus the two great powers worked together for unity and common influence for Christ.

And monasticism justified itself, for it set before the disordered world, as a realised fact, the Christian life in actual working. The monks showed to a society wild and undisciplined, which had almost lost the sense of law, the beauty and worth of a life of obedience and self-sacrifice for the common good.

Even more remarkable than that, they taught the forgotten lesson of the dignity of labour. This had long been lost sight of. The later Roman Empire had seen the disappearance, at any rate in Italy, of the free agriculturist. His place had been taken by a huge system of slaves who cultivated the great estates (*latifundia*) which, as the proverb went, had been the ruin of Italy. And the long years of desolating war and one invasion after another had thrown much of the land altogether out of cultivation. The monk, labouring in the fields his seven hours a day, changed the face of the earth. And, once more, the monks taught in practice, what is indeed a deduction from the Christian religion, though Christians were slow to learn it, the essential equality of souls. Under the Benedictine cowl, noble and peasant were equal. The only ranks were that of the abbot and those officials appointed by him. Hence monasticism proved one of the most important factors in the gradual abolition of serfdom and slavery.

Monasticism grew in power by its own successes. To it was due the great missionary enterprises of the centuries that followed the fall of the Empire. And wherever **Monastic** the monks came as missionaries, they secured their **missionaries** conquests by planting new monasteries, centres of teaching, civilisation and industry, as well as of faith and prayer. It is almost impossible to over-estimate what the nations of Europe owed to the early monks, not only for their Christian faith, but for their education in the arts of peace, in farming, in manufactures, in architecture, and in literature.

It must not be forgotten that, though the Benedictine rule eventually absorbed the other monastic types of the West, there was another notable line of missionary monks who at first had no connection with it, and comparatively little with Rome. These were the Celtic monks of Ireland and Scotland. In Ireland, as already noted, Christianity and the monastic institutions took rapid root. The island was covered with churches and monasteries. From Ireland came the great S. Columba in 563, and founded off the Scottish coast the religious settlement of Iona, destined to become one of the most famous

nurseries of saints and missionaries. And a new Iona sprang up off the Northumbrian coast in the island of Lindisfarne—still called Holy Island; founded by S. Aidan, and under the patronage of the royal saint, Oswald, king of Northumbria. It was to this source that most of the English owed their conversion.

Indeed, the history of the beginnings of the English Church illustrates remarkably the Christian influences of the time:

**The English Church.** the stream from Ireland and the north of the freer, less organised Celtic missionaries; from

another direction the stream whose source was Rome, and which was destined to draw into its stronger current all the tributaries. At first it seemed as if Rome was to accomplish little in England. The mission of Augustine touched only Kent and Essex. In the next generation indeed Kent sent a notable missionary to the north in the person of Paulinus, who converted King Edwin of Northumbria, and did a great work in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. On the death of Edwin, however, Paulinus was compelled to retire before a new advance of victorious heathenism under Penda the Mercian king. Christianity in the north was in danger of total extinction; but it was saved and renewed by the valour and piety of the great S. Oswald, now king of Northumbria. He, after defeating the ally of Penda at Heavenfield, under the banner of the cross, sent to Iona where he himself had been educated, for a leader of a new mission to his people. The first monk who was sent retired, disgusted at what he thought the barbarism of Northumbria. But he was followed by a gentler and larger-minded saint, Aidan, one of the most beautiful characters of the early Church. He established himself at Lindisfarne, opposite the spot on the mainland where Oswald had his royal fortress of Bamborough; and from this centre, the monk and the king made their missionary journeys, devoting themselves with wonderful simplicity and zeal to the work of converting the northerners. A check seemed to come in 642, when Oswald fell in battle before the heathen Penda. But Penda himself was defeated and killed in 655, and the heathen reaction ended with him.

Other great workers whose inspiration came from Celtic Christianity were Cedd, who laboured among the East Saxons, and Ceadda or Chad in the Midlands. A still greater name is that of S. Cuthbert, of Melrose, the apostle of the lowlands of Scotland, abbot of Lindisfarne and Bishop of Hexham, who died a lonely hermit on the island of Farne (686).

Meanwhile, Wessex had been converted by a missionary from Rome, S. Birinus, sent by Pope Honorius I. in 634. But still the great bulk of English Christianity was Celtic in origin and methods. Leaving out of account the relics of the earlier British Church in Wales, Cornwall, and Strathclyde, which never did anything for the conversion of the English invader, the new Christianity of England owed no allegiance to Canterbury, and little to Rome. It was doubtless for its advantage that it soon came under the unifying and centralising influence of Rome, and thus came into touch with continental Christianity. The Celtic monks and missionaries made marvellous apostles, but they could not apparently have organised and kept together a lasting Church. At the synod of Whitby in 664, the customs of Rome were adopted in preference to those of Iona and Lindisfarne, and the process of amalgamation of the two types of Christianity began, under the rule of Rome. This process was consolidated by the work of the great Archbishop of Canterbury, Theodore, the Greek of Tarsus, who was chosen for that office and consecrated personally by the Pope (668). In the next century the Celtic Church in Wales also fell into line, and accepted the ways of Rome.

**Amalgama-  
tion of  
Celtic and  
Roman  
Missions.**

The same strength and weakness of Celtic missionary work are seen in the career of the great S. Columbanus (543-615), who came from the monastery of Bangor in Ireland, instituted a rule which seemed at one time as if it would rival that of S. Benedict, and achieved great missionary works in Gaul and Switzerland and North Italy. But his institutions and successors soon merged in the Benedictine and Roman rule. Monks from Scotland and Ireland, such as were Fridolin in the sixth century and Kilian in the

**The Conver-  
sion of  
Europe.**

seventh, laboured at the conversion of the heathen tribes of Germany. But again, the greatest and most permanent work in this region was done by S. Boniface, an Englishman by birth (680-755), who had his mission from Rome. He spent most of a long life labouring among the German savages; he established a monastic centre at Fulda, and himself became Bishop of Mainz. He suffered martyrdom in his old age at the hands of the Frisians.

Thus it will be seen that, whatever may be our judgment as to either the monastic ideal or the claims of the papacy, it was certainly due to monks and monasteries that much of the conversion of the West was effected; and their work was rendered stable and permanent by the centralising and unifying genius of the see of Rome.

To summarise briefly other missionary works of the early Middle Ages:—Sweden and Denmark owed the beginnings of their conversion largely to a monk, Anskar (801-865). Norway, on the other hand, was more forcibly converted by two Christian kings, Olaf Trygvesson and Olaf II. (S. Olaf), at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries. One of the last strongholds of heathenism (as it remains still to-day!) was the region of the Prussi, who, after resisting various efforts, were finally partly converted and partly exterminated by the Teutonic Knights, a military religious order, in the thirteenth century.

The Eastern Church did not spend all her energies in controversy. Great missionary works were accomplished by her in the ninth and tenth centuries among the Slavonic and Turanian races; notably by S. Cyril and S. Methodius, to whom Bulgaria and Moravia owe their conversion. Later followed Bohemia and Poland; and at the end of the tenth century Russia, largely through the influence of her king, Vladimir.

## QUESTIONS.

1. What is meant by 'Monasticism'?
2. Trace the beginnings of it in the Church.
3. Describe the work of S. Benedict.
4. What was the influence of the monks on Western Europe after the fall of the Empire?
5. Show from the early history of the English Church (1) the missionary power of monasticism; (2) the influence of the Papacy.
6. Summarise the history of the conversion of Europe to Christianity.

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

## 1. Monastic influence.

Kingsley. *Roman and Teuton*.

Montalembert. *Monks of the West*, i.

Duchesne. *Early History of the Church*, ii.

## 2. The Conversion of Europe.

Schaff. *History of the Church (Mediaeval)*, vol. i.

Robinson. *How the Gospel Spread through Europe*, S.P.C.K.

## CHAPTER XXV. THE EAST AFTER CHALCEDON

THE Council of Chalcedon had endeavoured to quiet the spirit of controversy as to the Person of Christ by affirming the two **Opposition** natures in the unity of the one Person, and **to Chalcedon.** refusing to allow that either the Divinity or humanity in Christ is impaired by their union. It had simply stated both sides of the Incarnation clearly and fully, and refrained from giving a philosophical explanation of how they are united. It was a good method as far as it went, and probably men had been wise to have gone no further. That Christ is at once perfectly God and perfectly man, and that He is not two but one, is in harmony with Scripture; and the simple believer in all ages has found it a sufficient statement of his faith.

Unhappily the theological ferment of the East was not appeased by this settlement. Dioscorus, the patron of Eutyches, had a large following, and it was easy to represent the decision of Chalcedon as being really Nestorianism. Moreover, the question was complicated by political quarrels. The council appeared to have been dominated by the Emperor; and there was the continual jealousy of Constantinople.

Chalcedon, instead of being the end, was but the beginning of a long and disastrous controversy. The opposition became **Monophysitism.** known as Monophysitism. Its principles were stated variously, in more or less extreme forms, and the crude mistakes of Eutyches were somewhat refined upon. But the persistent tenet was that in the Incarnation there is but 'one nature.' To teach this seemed to the Monophysite the only way of safeguarding the unity of Christ's Person. 'Two natures' seemed to him to be the error of Nestorius. Without saying, like Eutyches, that the manhood was swallowed up in the Godhead, the Monophysite apparently



made the human side of Christ to cease to be truly human, because of its union with His Divinity: he imagined it to be in some way *mixed* with his Divinity and so losing its distinctness. In his eagerness to maintain that Christ is *one*, he impaired the reality of Christ's human example, and made it impossible to conceive of Him as a true mediator. The manhood of the Monophysite Christ was different in kind from ours.

The controversy ran its course through many weary years, and many violent outbursts of rage and intrigue, at Alexandria, Antioch, and elsewhere. As usual in the East, **Schism of the Emperor** intervened as a theological authority. **East and West.** In 482, Zeno attempted to conciliate all parties by publishing a document called the *Henoticon*, in which he compromised by condemning both Nestorius and Eutyches, by declaring the Creed of Nicaea and Constantinople to be sufficient, and by setting forth a statement of the Incarnation which, while quite orthodox in its positive statements, skilfully avoided the point at issue! This document was probably the work of Acacius of Constantinople. It had little effect in restoring peace, and its sequel was the excommunication of Acacius by Felix of Rome. Hence a schism began between East and West that lasted for thirty-five years (484-519); and the whole Eastern Church came under the suspicion of being Monophysite. The Emperor who succeeded Zeno, Anastasius, was certainly a favourer of the heresy; and all attempts to heal the schism failed until the reign of Justin, when the East as a whole, with the exception of Egypt, agreed to accept the decision of Chalcedon.

But still the quarrel was far from ended, as indeed it is not ended to this very day. Justin was succeeded in 527 by his nephew Justinian, one of the most powerful and **Justinian:** remarkable of all the Emperors. A man of vast **Conquests.** ambitions and great achievements, with the gift of choosing and employing associates of ability, he was himself inscrutable and mysterious, 'neither beloved in his life, nor regretted in his death' (Gibbon). He set himself to the huge task of recovering the lost territories of the Empire in the West; and

at the cost of vast bloodshed and many years of struggle, he almost succeeded, though the conquest proved futile and short-lived. In 534, his great general, Belisarius, won back Africa from the Vandals. Catholicism was once more established but it was too late to save the glories of the church of Cyprian and Augustine. Invasion, heresy, and religious strife had left of it but a 'shadow of a shade.' In 553, the eunuch Narses drove the Goths out of Italy, completing the long and terrible struggle which Belisarius had begun in 535. Italy suffered more probably in this attempt to win her back to the Empire than even in the invasions which had torn her from it. And fifteen years later came the Lombards, and the Western dominion of Constantinople was ended for ever.

Justinian's works of peace were more lasting. He was a great builder; and his Cathedral of S. Sophia at Constantinople is a worthier monument of him than the devastations of Italy. But his greatest secular work was the codification of the Roman Law: a work that makes an epoch in history. He brought together and unified the whole of the vast mass of scattered legislation of the past; the statutes of the far-off days of the republic, the annual edicts of the praetors, the rescripts and edicts of the Emperors, the *responsa prudentum*, i.e. the various opinions of learned legists which had gained the force of law. And all this was brought into harmony with the changed religion of the Empire. The introduction to the Institutes incorporates the creeds and the decisions of the first four general councils with the law of Rome. And this is followed by a *corpus juris ecclesiastici*, the laws made by the Church, but sanctioned and authorised by the Emperor.

Justinian, even more thoroughly than past Emperors, acted as a lay pope, a fount of theological learning and an arbiter and authority in religious disputes. In the early part of his reign he was an eager supporter of orthodoxy and the decisions of Chalcedon; an active persecutor of heretics and non-Christians. He endeavoured to force baptism on all his subjects, and rigorously attacked the relics of paganism. He was no respecter of old institutions if they

did not fall in with his own views, or with Christianity. An example of this is his suppression of the schools of philosophy at Athens, where heathen professors still lectured, and Christianity was ignored.

But there was another influence at the court, as powerful as the Emperor himself, and more unscrupulous. Justinian had married a woman from the stage, of infamous character, but of great beauty and ability, and an inordinate lover of power, And this Empress

**Theodora  
and the  
Papacy.**

Theodora was a strong adherent of the Monophysites. She aimed at attacking orthodoxy in its greatest stronghold, the papacy. She tried in vain to persuade Pope Sylverius to fall in with her wishes, and admit the condemned Monophysites to communion. She then decided on his deposition, and accomplished it through Belisarius, on a false charge that he had tried to betray Rome to the Goths. Her own candidate was ready, the Archdeacon Vigilius, whom she is said to have bribed with 700 pounds of gold and the offer of the papacy, if he would admit the Monophysites and endeavour to overthrow Chalcedon.

The career of Vigilius (537-555) is one of the most amazing episodes in the history even of the papacy: a pope who gained his election by simony, who vacillated between one side and another on a great doctrinal issue, and was actually condemned by a general council. He did not prove at first the obedient tool that Theodora had paid her money to obtain; and he was summoned to Constantinople, where he was kept for seven years in practical custody.

The pretext for this was supplied by a new effort of Justinian to reunite the Monophysites with the Church. He prepared a treatise for the signature of the bishops which gave rise to the famous controversy of the Three Chapters. This was an attack on Nestorianism, and an insinuation that in some points the Council of Chalcedon had erred. The 'Three Chapters' were the writings of three men who were all dead, Theodore of Mopsuestia, who, though the real founder of Nestorianism, had hitherto escaped formal condemnation; Theodoret, who had attacked S. Cyril; and Ibas, Bishop of

Edessa, who had written a letter to the same effect to Maris, a Persian bishop. Both Theodoret and Ibas had been acquitted of heresy at Chalcedon and restored to communion.

The bishops of the East were ready to fall in with the Emperor's wishes and condemn the three; but those of the West were strongly opposed to this course, not as either favouring Theodore, or desiring to condemn the theology of Cyril, but simply in loyalty to the Council of Chalcedon, which seemed to be attacked.

Pope Vigilius arrived at Constantinople in 547, where at first he showed himself quite unbending, and refused to condemn the Three Chapters, even breaking off communion with Mennas, the Bishop of Constantinople. But this attitude soon changed; he published a *Judicatum* in which he condemned all the three, though maintaining the authority of Chalcedon. The West was furious, and an African council excommunicated the Pope. Vigilius withdrew his *Judicatum* and asked for a general council. But again he stiffened himself, and defied the Emperor by excommunicating again Mennas and Theodore of Caesarea. The Pope now had to flee for his life: first he took refuge in the basilica of S. Peter, whence an attempt was made to drag him out by violence; then to Chalcedon, which he refused to leave, and remained at hostility with the Emperor until the proposed general council actually met.

This council, considered oecumenical, the Second Council of Constantinople, met in May 553. Vigilius refused to attend, as it was composed almost entirely of Eastern bishops. (There were 139 from the East and only six from the West.) He issued, however, a new statement called the *Constitutum*, in which he now refused to condemn the Chapters, 'by the authority of the Apostolic See.' The council ignored this protest, condemned both the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the writer himself. As to Theodoret and Ibas, it merely condemned the actual writings to which exception had been taken by the Emperor. And it excommunicated Vigilius, who was now banished by the Emperor. After six months of exile, he again veered round, and surrendered

to the decision of the council. He was allowed to return to Rome, but died in Sicily on his way thither (555).

The most important work of the Fifth General Council, however, was the confirmation of the four previous councils, and the solemn condemnation of the error of Eutyches and of all Monophysitism. Its decisions were embodied in fourteen Anathemas ; and it is remarkable that in the eleventh of these not only Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Apollinaris, Nestorius, and Eutyches are condemned, but also the great Origen. There are also in existence fifteen Anathemas dealing with the actual teaching of Origen, though it is a matter of controversy whether these were actually the work of this council or not. The council had practically followed the lead of the Emperor, though its confirmation of Chalcedon took the sting out of its condemnation of the Chapters. The Anathema on Origen was probably due also to the influence of Justinian.

As might be expected, it was long before this council was accepted in the West as oecumenical ; but it was ultimately received, when the feelings aroused at the time had died away, and it was recognised as being a real condemnation of Monophysitism.

The result in the East was the general separation of the Monophysites from the Church, and a schism was originated, various branches of which have endured to the present day. This schism would probably have perished under the persecution of Justinian, had not a Monophysite hero and saint appeared in the person of Jacobus, a monk consecrated Bishop of Edessa about 541. By his extraordinary missionary zeal and untiring labours, he reorganised and strengthened the Monophysite remnant, ordaining a vast number of bishops and clergy, and building up a widespread Monophysite communion, in defiance of the Emperor. From him the Monophysites gained their later name of Jacobites. They exist still in the form of the Jacobite Church of Syria and Mesopotamia and the Coptic Church of Egypt, under the Monophysite patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria respectively ; the Armenian Church ; and the Abyssinian Church.

**Survival  
of the Mono-  
physites.**

In his later years Justinian himself is said to have become a Monophysite, of the extreme sect called the Aphthartodocetists, who taught that the Lord's body was in itself incorruptible, and differed from the bodies of men not only in sinlessness, but in the absence of all human infirmities.

A further controversy, arising out of Monophysitism, arose in the early seventh century, and continued to agitate the **Monotheli-** whole Church until it, in turn, was settled by a **tism.** general council. This new error is known as Monothelitism; it is a logical deduction from that of the Monophysites, teaching that in Christ there is but one will. It was adopted by some even who had conformed to the Fifth Council and recognised the two natures in Christ. They considered that the will is indissolubly bound up with personality, and that as Christ is one person He can have but one will, or 'energy,' as it was expressed. How or when Monothelitism first appeared is doubtful; but it sprang partly out of a Monophysite desire to save the situation to that extent at least, and partly out of purely political influences. As usual in the controversies of the East, the Emperors played a prominent part in its course. The Emperor Heraclius found his Empire in imminent peril first from the Persians, and then from the Arabs, inspired by the teaching of their new prophet, Mahomet. From 611 to 622 the Persians had advanced steadily westwards, occupying Syria and most of Asia Minor, and even threatening Constantinople. Heraclius invaded Persia, and in six brilliant campaigns broke its strength, regained its conquests, and restored to Jerusalem the relics of the true Cross in 629. But he felt that the continued opposition of the Monophysites in Syria, Armenia, and Egypt was a source of internal weakness. He was eager to conciliate them, and after consultation with Sergius of Constantinople and Cyrus, Bishop of Phasis and afterwards of Alexandria, a formula was proposed to the effect that in Christ there was 'one divine-human energy.' This was strenuously opposed by Sophronius, a monk, who became Bishop of Jerusalem in 633, and Maximus, a man of great ability and saintly character. But the Monothelites gained the support of Pope Honorius I.,

who wrote in approval of the heresy; and the Emperor published in 638 an edict called the *Ecthesis*, which endeavoured to end the controversy by prohibiting further discussion as to whether there are one or two 'energies,' but declared that there is only one 'will' in Christ.

But as Rome had been instrumental in supporting the error, its downfall came also from Rome. Pope Theodore, in 648, excommunicated Paul of Constantinople. And in **Condemned** the next year, Pope Martin I., in the first Lateran **by Pope** Council, attended by a large number of bishops, **Martin.** condemned Monothelitism, and issued a statement that as in Christ there are two natures human and divine, so there are two wills and two energies, in perfect harmony. There can be no doubt that this expresses the mind of the Catholic Church; and is not only in accordance with Scripture (*e.g.* 'Not my will but Thine be done'), but is necessary to the fulness of the Incarnation. A Christ without a human will would not be perfect man, nor a true mediator. He would be wanting in that faculty which in man has been the seat and instrument of sin, and needs redemption.

But the Pope had to suffer heavily for his courage. The Emperor, Constans II., was a bitterer upholder of heresy than his predecessor. In an edict called the *Type*, he had forbidden, under severe penalties, all discussion of the subject. He caused Martin to be arrested and imprisoned at Constantinople. But this Pope was made of sterner stuff than Vigilius. He persisted in his defiance, was treated with great cruelty, and finally banished to the Crimea, where he died (655). Maximus and two of his friends were also seized, tortured, mutilated and banished, Maximus dying by what was really a martyr's death in 662.

But Monothelitism had little inherent strength. A change of Emperors brought about its downfall. The Emperor Constantine IV. took the orthodox side and summoned the **The Sixth** Sixth General Council, the third of Constantinople, **Council.** 680-681. Here again a Pope was as influential as Leo I. had been at Chalcedon. The council not only condemned Mono-

thelitism, but issued a statement almost in the words of a letter of Pope Agatho. Among the heretics anathematised by the council was Pope Honorius I., a difficult problem for the upholders of Papal Infallibility. The Sixth Council was accepted by both East and West as oecumenical. The anathema was signed by the legates of Agatho, and confirmed by the next Pope, Leo II., who asserted that Honorius had 'endeavoured by profane betrayal to subvert the immaculate faith.' And the fact was actually recorded in the Roman Breviary until the sixteenth century.

In spite of this lapse from orthodoxy, the power and influence of the papacy continued to grow. After the Sixth Council

**Growing strength of the papacy.** the Popes generally assume the title of 'Universal Bishop,' against which Gregory the Great had protested. We have seen how the English Church in this century became united in its allegiance to Rome. The last bit of independent Italy, the exarchate of Ravenna, was by imperial rescript placed under the jurisdiction of Pope Leo II. in 683. Spain became closely united to the papacy. The Bishops of Africa had made their submission to Pope Theodore during the Monothelite controversy, acknowledging him as bishop of all bishops, and the fountain of truth. And the next attempt of the Emperors to intimidate a Pope met with signal failure. A council called Quinisextine, regarded as a continuation of the fifth and sixth, was held at Constantinople in 692, which passed a number of canons with a certain anti-Roman bias (*e.g.* the Bishop of Constantinople was put on an equality with him of Rome; and the ordination of married men was allowed, except in the case of bishops). The Emperor Justinian II. desired Pope Sergius to accept these canons. He refused, and the Emperor's attempt to arrest him and bring him to Constantinople came to nought.

During the next reign, that of Philippicus (711-713), imperial tyranny gave a brief triumph again to the Monothelites. The Sixth Council was declared null and void, and John, a Monothelite bishop, established at Constantinople. But the West refused to recognise any of this, and Pope Constantine ex-



communicated the Emperor. The next Emperor, Anastasius II., restored Catholicism. John abjured his heresy, and wrote penitently to Pope Constantine, professing his orthodoxy.

The only schism created by the Monothelite controversy was that of the Maronites of Mount Lebanon (so-called after their first bishop, John Maron). This was ended in 1182 by the union of the Maronites with Rome. They still retain some of their Eastern characteristics, *e.g.* a married clergy.

The controversy as to the Person of Christ was revived in the eighth century in Spain and Gaul. The new error became known as Adoptionism (not to be confused with **Adoptionism**—the 'Adoptionism' of the third century as taught by Paul of Samosata and others). Its leading supporters were Elipandus, Bishop of Toledo, and Felix, Bishop of Urgela. They taught what was really a more subtle form of Nestorianism, namely, that while Christ was in His Divine nature truly the Son of God, and also truly man by His Incarnation, He was in His human nature the *adopted* Son of God. This is practically to introduce a second person into the Incarnation, as it attributes a different sort of sonship to the humanity of Christ. The Catholic doctrine is that the manhood is indissolubly united to the Person of Christ, so that He is not two but one Christ. The Incarnate, God and man, is one Person, and that Person is the eternal Son of God. The error was denounced by Pope Hadrian in 785, and finally condemned by an important council at Frankfort in 794.

Here the problem rested as far as the conciliar action of the Church was concerned. It is one which theologians of to-day still regard as unsettled; but it is doubtful whether either reason or reverence can go further than the decisions of the councils which have already been described.

The controversies of the following centuries were busy with other problems, notably with those of Predestination, and the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

## QUESTIONS.

1. What was Monophysitism?
2. How did it cause dissension between East and West?
3. Sketch the work of the Emperor Justinian.
4. Describe the career of Pope Vigilius.
5. Explain what is meant by the Three Chapters.
6. What was the importance of the Fifth General Council?
7. What further development of the Monophysite controversy occurred in the seventh century?
8. How was it dealt with in East and West?
9. Who were the 'Adoptionists' of the eighth century?
10. Show the influence of the Papacy during this period.

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The Emperor Justinian.  
Hodgkin. *Italy and Her Invaders*.  
'Justinianus.' *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.
2. The bearing of the Monophysite controversies on Papal claims.  
Döllinger. *Fables respecting the Popes*.  
Puller. *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*.
3. The Monophysite Churches.  
Parry. *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery*.

## CHAPTER XXVI. MOHAMMEDANISM : ICONOCLASM

A FAR more terrible and lasting disaster came upon the civilisation and Christianity of the East and the South of the Empire in the seventh century, than anything which had befallen the West from the fifth century onwards. The agony of the West when Rome fell before the Goth was but the travail-pain of a new world. Out of it rose fresh young nations and a strengthened Church. But the watchman still waits vainly for a dawning to that night which descended on the East and on Africa when the conquering Mohammedans swept over them. With extraordinary suddenness this new religion propagated by the sword sprang up and developed. Mohammedanism or 'Islam,' like both Judaism and Christianity, arose from the Semitic stock. Destined to prove the most formidable rival that the Church has ever had to contend with, it originated among a people who hitherto had played little part in history, the wandering tribes of Arabia, 'the children of Ishmael,' afterwards known as Saracens ('desert-men').

Its founder, Mahomet or Muhammad, a man of noble birth, though a camel-driver and illiterate, was born at Mecca in 570. In his fortieth year he began to have revelations, to see visions and receive, as he believed, the inspiration of a prophet. He felt himself called to be a teacher of monotheism and a foe of idolatry in every shape. At first he met with little success, and was driven by persecutions to flee in 622 to Medina. This is the famous Hegira, the Flight of the Prophet, reckoned as the beginning of Mohammedan chronology. It was the turning point of his career. He began to

preach the new faith in a definite and authoritative form and to claim for it an absolute and universal acceptance. He marshalled his followers as a religious army, whose mission was to convert or subdue the world; a mission carried out with an enthusiasm and success unparalleled in history.

Islam is professedly built upon the same foundation as Judaism and Christianity. It looks back to Abraham as the father of **Moham-** the faithful, and it regards Jesus with respect as a **medan** prophet. It was this combination of various **Theology.** elements from the earlier religions that has led Christians to speak of its founder as a 'heretic,' and the religion as a new form of Gnosticism. Its precepts are embodied in the *Koran*, a book believed to have been dictated to Mahomet by the angel Gabriel. Islam possesses the merits of simplicity and definiteness. The foundation principle is monotheism: there is one only God, identified with the God of Jew and Christian, but no Trinity of persons, and no Incarnation. Consequently the first duty is to wage war against idolatry—which was rife in Arabia, its centre being Mecca, with its Caaba, a black fetish stone. And the Christianity with which Mahomet was chiefly acquainted came under the same ban.

To this one God, revealed finally through His prophet Mahomet, there must be absolute obedience—not however a mere passive submission like that of the Buddhist, but an eager devotion. This obedience, it was taught, God would reward hereafter with a Paradise of sensual joy. And God has foreordained all that happens—a belief which developed into a stern fatalism which stiffened its followers both in doing and in suffering.

There was no priesthood, no sacrifice, no intermediary between God and man, though there was abundance of angels, both good and bad: no sense of sin, no atonement. Nor was there any separation between Church and State. Mahomet and the Caliphs who succeeded him were heads of the civil polity because they were heads of the religion.

Another source of strength in Islam was its almost cynical adaptation to the frailties of humanity. It set no high ideal

of unworldly perfection. It took men as they are, sensual and self-seeking, and offered them material rewards and punishments, in the world to come as well as in this. It gave them indeed a strict code of morals, but a morality of mere rules ; and while it forbade the use of wine, it allowed and encouraged polygamy. It fostered neither humility nor spirituality, and produced instead a perfectly satisfied self-righteousness. Those who kept its precepts and recited its prayers were sure of Paradise.

Hence naturally the new religion was entirely intolerant : and Mahomet and his followers regarded themselves as divinely commissioned to force it upon a disobedient world at the point of the sword. 'The sword is the key of heaven and hell.' The Saracen armies presented men with only three alternatives, conversion, slavery, or death. For idolaters there was no choice between the first and the third. For Jews, and to some extent for Christians, who possessed true but imperfect religions, there was the second possibility of submission and paying tribute.

Islam, without doubt, was an advance on the idolatries of the Arabs ; and it can hardly be doubted that it came as a well-deserved scourge upon the controversial and often degraded Christianity of the East. But it is an unprogressive religion, and so far from leading men to any higher or more spiritual faith and practice, it has been and still is the greatest foe to Christianity, and the least open of all the world-religions to the Christian appeal.

The progress of Islam was extraordinary. Mahomet died in 632, but under his next two successors, Abu-Bekr and Omar (632-651), a continual advance was made on the Roman Empire. While the Monothelite controversy was proceeding, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria were taken and transformed into Mohammedan cities. Constantinople itself was twice besieged, in 668 and 717, but as yet in vain. The invention of 'Greek fire,' an explosive which water could not extinguish, frustrated all efforts by sea. Africa yielded to Islam in 707. The African Church, long crippled,

**The advance  
of Moham-  
medanism.**

came utterly to an end. From Africa the Moslem armies crossed into Spain, conquered nearly the whole of the peninsula, and were not finally dislodged for nearly eight centuries. Persia was subdued in the ninth century, and the Persian dynasty and the Persian religion destroyed. A large part of India followed suit. The whole of Europe was threatened, but in 732 Charles Martel, grandfather of Charles the Great, inflicted a decisive defeat on the invaders at Tours. This and the steady resistance of the Emperors at Constantinople, assisted by inward dissensions among the Saracens themselves, saved European civilisation and Christianity. Saracen advance never went much farther than the Pyrenees in the West and Mount Taurus in the East. But a new Mohammedan power arose in the eleventh century, the Seljukian Turks, who at last in 1453 made themselves masters of Constantinople, overthrowing the Eastern Empire, and turning the glorious cathedral of S. Sophia into a mosque. Again Mohammedanism became a standing menace to Europe. Vienna was the next goal aimed at; but it was not to be; the Turks were finally repulsed from its walls in 1683.

It has already been seen how the Monothelite controversy was engineered by the Eastern Emperors as a means of uniting discordant Christians in the face of the new invaders.

**Iconoclasm.** Another direct result of the same peril is seen in the Iconoclastic disputes which disturbed the peace of the Church of the eighth century, and strained the relations between East and West. Iconoclasm ('the breaking of images') was an imperial attempt to abolish the Christian use of sacred pictures, no doubt with the idea of removing the Mohammedan reproach that Christians were really idolaters. The Eastern Church has never used 'graven images'; but pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mother and the Saints, were everywhere used as an aid to devotion, and were often treated with a veneration that was certainly superstitious, if not idolatrous. This practice was a growth of the period after Christianity had definitely triumphed over heathenism. For the first four centuries such pictures were rarely used and frequently objected to. It is true that *symbolic* pictures date from very early Christian times. The picture

of 'the good Shepherd,' representations of Christ as a 'lamb' or a 'fish,' are found on the walls of the Catacombs. But for long the desire to avoid any similarity to heathen practice prevented any attempts towards more direct representations. The Council of Illiberis in 305 forbade 'that which is an object of worship' to be painted on the walls of a church. Eusebius of Caesarea, a little later, rebuked at considerable length the Empress Constantia for desiring to have a picture of Christ. Nevertheless, such pictures were made: human instincts could not be suppressed, and by the fifth century pictures and mosaics had largely been introduced into the churches.

The opposition to such pictures in themselves gave place to protests against outward acts of reverence being offered them; as, for example, S. Augustine himself uttered warnings against such a practice, even though the worship was not offered to the picture, but to the reality signified. But as Nestorians and Monophysites were great opponents of sacred pictures, the use of them and the veneration of them by the orthodox tended ever to become more popular. The pictures, always 'the books of the unlearned,' were enshrined in the affections of the common people, and isolated protests were of no avail. But just as previously Emperors had endeavoured to adjudicate on creeds and controversies of faith, so now, in the face of Mohammedanism, Emperors endeavoured by a stroke of the pen to abolish all this fabric of popular sentiment and devotion.

Leo III., called 'the Isaurian' from his place of birth, a strong man and an able soldier, issued, in 726 and 730, edicts against 'the images,' the first forbidding any worship to be paid them, and the second ordering their complete destruction. These measures were strenuously opposed not only by the common people, but by the theologians, the most notable of whom was S. John of Damascus. Germanus of Constantinople refused to comply with the edicts, and was removed, or resigned. Pope Gregory II. contemptuously rejected the imperial authority in the matter, and he was seconded by the people of Italy, who had to be restrained by the Pope from electing an opposition Emperor. Leo remained obdurate and

**The  
Iconoclastic  
Emperors.**

retaliated on the next Pope, Gregory III., by confiscating the papal estates. But the opposition of the Italians helped to bring about the final downfall of imperial power in the West. The last possession of the Eastern Emperor in Italy, the exarchate of Ravenna, fell in 752 to the Lombards.

Leo was succeeded by Constantine v., who during his reign of thirty-four years carried on the iconoclastic policy with bitterness and cruelty. He showed himself a worthy successor of such persecuting Emperors as Constantius and Valens. In 754 he called a packed council at Constantinople, intended to be oecumenical, which denounced all religious pictures as idolatrous and even anathematised S. John of Damascus. Constantine proceeded to destroy all the pictures, even substituting in the churches pictures of scenes from the stage and the circus. He treated those who objected with outrageous severity, with imprisonment, mutilation, and death. But the pictures expelled from the churches still kept their hold on the hearts of the people. Nor did the character of Constantine support the idea that there was any real religious fervour in his policy. He was a man of evil life, and irreverent in his speech and attitude towards Christian beliefs and practices. 'He seems to have been one of the earliest instances of that free-thinking tendency which was the result of the contact between Christianity and Islamism' (Hodgkin).

A change came with the next reign. Leo IV. was indeed an iconoclast, but his wife Irene was a lover of the sacred pictures ; **The Seventh Council.** and when she became regent during the minority of her son Constantine VI., she definitely espoused their defence. In 787 she summoned what is recognised by both East and West as the Seventh Oecumenical Council, the second of Nicaea. It was attended by 350 bishops, and two legates of Pope Hadrian I. were present. This council annulled the previous one, and sanctioned not only the 'images' but the paying to them of outward acts of reverence, distinguishing however between *proskunesis* which was allowed, and *latreia*, or worship, which must be paid to God alone.

But the struggle lasted more than half a century longer.



The Emperors Leo v. and Theophilus carried on the same persecutions and cruelties as Constantine v. But again, a woman came to the rescue. The widow of Theophilus, Theodora, during the minority of Michael III. (the 'Drunkard') attacked and punished the iconoclasts, and a council at Constantinople (842) solemnly restored the 'images.' This final restoration has ever since been celebrated in the Eastern Church on the first Sunday in Lent, which received the name of the 'Sunday of Orthodoxy.' To this day in the Russian and Greek Churches the sacred 'icons' are universally used and venerated not only in church, but in every household.

Throughout this controversy the Popes were consistent supporters both of the pictures and their veneration. Among the Franks, however, a very moderate attitude prevailed. Charles the Great and Alcuin issued a treatise in 790, called 'the Caroline Books,' in which the Seventh Council was repudiated and all veneration of pictures forbidden. Their use was, however, allowed for purposes of ornament, and to awaken religious feeling. In 794 a council held at Frankfort condemned all worship of pictures and rejected the Seventh Council. The Popes, however, did not find it advisable to quarrel with the Franks and contented themselves with argument and protest.

It is notable that even historians who agree in principle with the condemnation of images as tending to superstition do not approve the methods of the iconoclastic Emperors. **Iconoclasm** Indeed the whole movement deserved to fail as **deserved** it did. It ignored contemptuously the feelings **to fail.** and traditions of popular piety, and attempted simply to crush in a high-handed manner what had been the growth of centuries. And iconoclasm was purely negative. It did not seek to instruct, or divert the thoughts of the worshipper from material things to spiritual realities; it merely destroyed. Moreover, its course was only the reflection of the imperial will, which bishops, monks, theologians and the simple Christian were expected humbly to accept.

Apart from these impolitic and irreligious methods, the iconoclastic spirit was really a misinterpretation of Christianity.

In trying to destroy what was thought to be idolatry and superstition, it ignored Scripture and theology, as was strongly pointed out by S. John of Damascus and others. The Second Commandment, so often appealed to by the iconoclasts, was clearly not intended to prohibit all use of art in divine worship ; for Tabernacle and Temple had their cherubim and other images in metal and embroidery. Further, the Incarnation has introduced an entirely new principle. God, as the orthodox Christian believes, has manifested Himself in a visible form : and it is not surprising that those who were heretical as to the Incarnation were also averse to pictures of our Lord and His mother. Nor can it be well denied that art, religion, and devotion would have been woefully the poorer during the progress of the Christian centuries had the iconoclasts triumphed, and statue and picture been forbidden in churches or in Christian worship.

S. John of Damascus has already been mentioned as the chief and the ablest of the defenders of the 'images.' He has been **S. John of** called the last of the Greek Fathers, and his **Damascus.** theological writings mark an epoch. He is the characteristic theologian of the later Eastern Church, and, like S. Thomas Aquinas in the West in the thirteenth century, he systematised and gave a permanent tone to Greek theology. His position was remarkable, for though born of a Christian family and the pupil of an Italian monk, Cosmas, he held high office at the court of the Saracen caliph of Damascus. Hence he was able with impunity to defy Leo the Isaurian, and to write his famous letters against the imperial edicts. Leo is said, however, to have endeavoured to destroy him by sending a forged letter to the caliph, in which John was represented as offering to betray Damascus to the Emperor. The caliph sentenced him to the loss of his right hand. But legend relates how the intercession of the Virgin restored his hand and won him back his favour with the caliph. In later years John sought the monastic life, and entered the monastery of S. Sabas near Jerusalem. Here he was put through a course of most rigorous discipline at the hands of an aged monk, who inflicted

on him severe penances and gave him humiliating and impossible tasks. But again the Blessed Virgin intervened, and John was allowed to return to his studies, his writing and his poetry. In these he spent the remaining years of his life, dying about 760.

His greatest work is a compendium of Christian theology called *The Fountain of Knowledge*, in three parts, of which the third is the most important, 'on the Orthodox Faith.' In this he deals (1) with the nature of God, teaching the characteristic Greek doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone, but through the Son; (2) with creation and predestination; (3) with the Incarnation; (4) with miscellaneous subjects, among which naturally he discusses the Sacraments, of which he apparently recognises two only, Baptism and the Eucharist. As to the latter he teaches, as the Church has always done, that the bread and wine are by the Holy Spirit transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but he refrains from attempting to define the mystery further. Throughout the work he shows great knowledge of Aristotle, whose methods he follows, and of previous Christian writers, especially S. Gregory Nazianzen. In addition to attacking the Iconoclasts, he wrote against the Mohammedans, the Manichaeans, the Nestorians, the Monophysites, and the Monothelites. A number of his hymns have been preserved, some of which are familiar through translation, *e.g.* the two favourite Easter hymns, 'Come ye faithful, raise the strain,' and 'The Day of Resurrection.'

Writing as he did before the final separation between East and West, S. John of Damascus was recognised as an authority by both, and his influence over the West was considerable. In his method he is the forerunner of the great 'Schoolmen.'

## QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the rise and early progress of Mohammedanism.
2. Show how the teaching of Mahomet is irreconcilable with Christianity.
3. How can the rapid spread of Mohammedanism be explained?
4. What is the meaning of Iconoclasm?
5. How does the history of this controversy illustrate the domination of the Eastern Emperor over the Church?
6. How was the controversy settled?
7. Show the real inconsistency of Iconoclasm with Christianity.
8. Who was S. John of Damascus?

## SUBJECTS FOR STUDY:

The failure of the Church against Mohammedanism.

Stanley. *History of the Eastern Church.*

Trench. *Mediæval Church History.*

Schaff. *History of the Church* (Mediaeval, i.).

'The Problem of Islam,' in *Christ and Human Need*  
(Students' Missionary Union).

## CHAPTER XXVII. EAST AND WEST

THE iconoclastic controversy helped considerably to embitter the relations between the East and the West. Although, as we have seen, the Franks were inclined to compromise between the two parties, allowing 'images,' but not the veneration of them, the Popes and the people of Italy took the extreme side in the defence of both. And they were horrified by the high-handed interference of the Emperors in the practices of religion, and despised the time-serving prelates of the East, who veered with the wind of imperial prejudice.

**Growing  
hostility of  
Rome and  
Constanti-  
nople.**

The Popes gained thereby additional ground for repudiating altogether the authority which the Emperor at Constantinople still affected to claim over the West. In 741, Pope Zacharias was consecrated without the consent of the imperial representative, the exarch of Ravenna.

For long before this there had been omens of an approaching separation between the Church of the East and that of the West. The Monophysite controversy had caused a formal schism of thirty-five years. The heresy of Pope Honorius, on the other hand, had given the Easterns the pleasure of hearing a Pope anathematised by a general council. There were inevitably wide differences between the two sides of the Church: differences not only of geography, of political history, of Church customs and prejudices, but also of tone and spirit. And in the eighth century the Mohammedan conquests practically removed three out of the five great patriarchal sees. Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem were in the hands of the infidel, and the two ancient rivals Rome and Constantinople, old and new Rome as they were called, stood face to face, Rome inheriting the ancient traditions of Empire and orthodoxy, and ever tending

to widen her claim to universal ecclesiastical dominion; Constantinople, proud of being the seat of the actual Roman Emperor, and no longer content to be second in dignity.

The causes which widened this separation in feeling into a definite and permanent schism which is the standing reproach of the Christian Church were partly ecclesiastical and partly political.

There was the doctrinal difference, magnified as it has been out of all proportion to its merits, concerning the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. The *Filioque*. Easterns, perhaps more exactly, spoke of the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father through the Son, though S. Cyril of Alexandria was in practical agreement with the Westerns, who regarded Him as proceeding from both Father and Son. This difference in theological thought, or definition, became acute when the Westerns, without an appeal to a general council, added to the Nicene Creed the *Filioque* clause. This addition was perhaps made at the third Council of Toledo in 589. The Arian contest had been very severe in Spain, and the orthodox wished to emphasise as much as possible the equal Godhead of Father and Son. The offending clause only gradually made way in the West. Leo III. blamed it in the ninth century, and it was not definitely used by a Pope till Benedict VIII. in the eleventh century. But its use became a sort of test-question between East and West. The Easterns repudiated it as not only unauthorised but theologically wrong, and to this day regard it as involving the whole West in heresy, a charge which the Westerns have been quite ready to turn upon their opponents.

There were also a number of differences in practice which, unimportant for the most part in themselves, were a constant source of friction and misunderstanding. The *Differences in practice*. Westerns used unleavened bread in the Eucharist, which certainly has the merit of conforming exactly to the original institution; the Easterns used leavened bread, denying that the wafers of the West were true bread at all. The Western clergy had a different sort of tonsure from those of the East, and

they were compelled, theoretically at least, to be celibates, while the Eastern clergy married before ordination. There were differences too of fasting days and of ritual; and in the honour paid to the great saints of the past. The Westerns made too little, as it seemed, of S. Athanasius, and the Easterns of S. Augustine.

But the ecclesiastical cleavage went deeper than any of these things. It was the claims of the Bishops of Rome and the elaboration of the papal theory that ultimately The claims of Rome. made it impossible to bridge the gap. This, the greatest problem of Church history, was the rock on which union was wrecked. The Popes claimed, as the successors of S. Peter, a divine right to be supreme over all bishops and all controversies, so that those who denied it were held to be cutting themselves off from the Church. The ninth century was a critical period in the elaboration of this claim. Some time in the first half of that period appeared the famous 'Forged Decretals,' under the name of Isidore of Seville, who died in 636. These documents, purporting to be the letters and edicts of the early Popes, beginning with S. Clement, were accepted by an uncritical age as genuine, and were appealed to by the Popes and their supporters with undoubted sincerity; and they were not perceived to be forgeries till the middle of the fifteenth century. In these writings the Pope appears as 'supreme head, lawgiver, and judge of the Church'; moreover, in one of them, known as the 'Forged Donation,' it is asserted that the Emperor Constantine, when he removed the seat of Empire, handed over to Pope Sylvester and his successors the actual temporal rule of Italy and the West. These decretals appear first at Mainz in 843, and the first Pope to appeal to them was Nicholas I., the greatest Pope between Gregory I. and Gregory VII.

Nicholas I. is remarkable for his controversy with Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Both were great men and both in earnest, and their quarrel seems typical Nicholas I. and Photius. of the attitude of the Churches they represented. Photius was a theologian of great and varied learning. His

life extends over almost the whole of the ninth century. His accession in 858 to the great see of the East was hurried and uncanonical. His predecessor, Ignatius, had been deposed for a rebuke which he had dared to give to the immorality of Caesar Bardas, the uncle of the Emperor. In the eyes of the Church, Photius was only a usurper as long as Ignatius lived, and a schism ensued. Nicholas, curiously enough, was appealed to by Photius; he held a synod in 863, and deposed Photius and threatened him with excommunication. Photius in turn deposed the Pope! And then he issued an encyclical letter accusing the Westerns of heresy and schism, and arraying against them all the grievances which the Eastern Church had accumulated, including the *Filioque*. On a change of Emperors, Ignatius was restored and Photius was compelled to retire to a monastery, and in 869 was condemned by a great council at Constantinople, which the Westerns regard as oecumenical. But again the wheel of fortune turned. Photius was restored to his lost see on the death of Ignatius. He in turn held a council, considered by the East to be oecumenical, which anathematised the *Filioque*. Photius was himself anathematised after this by two Popes in succession, John VIII. and Martin II. He died in a monastery in 891, having once more been turned out of his see by imperial authority.

Photius stands out as the persistent champion of the Eastern Church against the Pope: he put into definite shape the articles of the quarrel between the two; and his own career illustrates the fundamental weakness of the Eastern Church in its dependence on imperial authority and favour. The Pope stood, rightly or wrongly, on the inherent spiritual powers of his see, as the chair of Peter; Photius was the creature and victim of the Emperors. Nicholas showed himself just as vigorous in the assertion of papal authority over his own proper field. He deposed the bishops both of Cologne and Trèves, for their acquiescence in the conduct of Lothair II., who had put away his lawful wife and married his mistress. The papacy under his administration stood out in its most splendid and admirable aspect as the one independent authority which championed



fearlessly Christian morals, and suffered neither king nor prelate to break the law of Christ.

Political causes combined with ecclesiastical to separate the West from the East. It has already been seen how much more the Eastern Church than the Western was bound up with the temporal authority of the Emperors. The eighth century saw the claim of the Emperor at Constantinople to rule the West reduced to a mere theory. And on the other hand, in the West men were casting about to find some new centre of unity for political government. In this movement the Popes were prime actors. The alienation from Constantinople, the odiousness of the Lombards to the Italians, and the general lack of good government combined to point to the Franks as the saviours of the West. Pepin, 'mayor of the Palace,' whose father, Charles Martel, had turned the tide of Saracen invasion at Tours, had usurped the throne of the degenerate successors of Clovis. He was solemnly crowned by Pope Gregory III. in 752, and given the title of 'Patricius,' properly an imperial gift. Between the years 752 and 755 Pepin defeated the Lombards, and bestowed a large part of North Italy on the Pope. This is the real origin of that 'temporal power' which the Middle Ages erroneously attributed to Constantine. In 774 Carl, the son of Pepin, completely overthrew the Lombards and made himself master of most of Italy. It was this Carl, better known as Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, who in the year 800 was crowned by the Pope as Roman Emperor of the West. It is unknown by what steps, or by whose instrumentality, this remarkable event came about. Its actual circumstances had almost the air of being unpremeditated. But men in the West had never ceased to believe in the imperishableness of the rule of Rome. The tradition of the 'Eternal City,' the mistress of the world, and the guarantee of settled and unified government, had survived all the changes of the last three centuries. The Caesars of Constantinople, though undoubtedly the real successors of the old imperial authority, had never gripped the imagination and the loyalty of the West.

It only wanted a favourable movement to restore the old Empire.

The occasion came just when the West was filled with disgust at the conduct of the Empress Irene, who had blinded and **The Corona-** deposed her son, Constantine VI. Carl, king of the **tion of Carl.** Franks, the greatest man of his age, was in Rome, where he had come with a victorious army to restore Pope Leo III., who had fled to him for refuge from the seditions of the city. On Christmas Day, 800, Carl was hearing Mass in the basilica of S. Peter. After the reading of the Gospel, the Pope rose from his throne and placed on the head of Carl, as he knelt before the high altar, the golden crown of Empire. The assembled multitude raised the cry of 'Life and victory to Carl "Augustus," the great and peace-making Emperor, whom God has crowned!' This momentous act was believed to be an actual transference of the line of Roman Emperors from the East to the West, and for a thousand years Carl and his successors were held to have inherited the throne of Augustus and Constantine and Justinian. This new Empire came to be called 'the Holy Roman Empire' to distinguish it from its old pagan exemplar; but all the ancient ideas of universality and permanence and Divine authority were transferred to it. The Emperor was held to be superior to all other sovereigns, to be God's representative on earth for the maintenance of good government and the championship of the Church. In theory the Emperor was in secular matters what the Pope claimed to be in spiritual things. These were said to be the 'two swords,' of which the Lord had said, 'It is enough.' But the centuries that followed were filled with the clashing of the two swords, as now an Emperor endeavoured to be supreme, like his Eastern brother, in things ecclesiastical, and now a Pope believed that as he gave the crown to the Emperor he himself was really the one supreme authority in State as well as in Church, until Boniface VIII., at the end of the thirteenth century, assumed both crown and sword, and announced himself to the Roman pilgrims as 'Imperator.'

This singular restoration of the Western Empire naturally

hardened the separation between East and West. Just as the real Roman Emperor at Constantinople was practically ignored, so the Eastern Church, his vassal, repudiating the claim of the papacy, was left out of account. Her existence and her protest did not square with the dominant theory of the Westerns. It needed little to convert this alienation in theology, in practice, in ideals, into a permanent schism. Still, as we have seen, the sense of Christian unity survived even the bitterness of the iconoclastic controversy and the quarrel of Nicholas and Photius. The irreparable end did not come till 1054. Michael Caerularius of Constantinople quarrelled with Pope Leo IX. chiefly on the question of the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist—the *Filioque* not being mentioned. Legates from Rome were sent to Constantinople, bringing counter-charges against the Easterns. Finally, the legates solemnly excommunicated Michael and all who censured the faith and practices of Rome. They placed on the altar of S. Sophia their sentence in writing with the words, 'May God look on it and judge.' What that ultimate judgment may be still lies hid in the secrets of time.

**Final Schism  
of East and  
West.**

During the ensuing centuries various attempts were made on both sides to heal the schism, but in vain. A notable occasion was that of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. The crusaders had established a Latin kingdom at Constantinople, and patriarchs in communion with Rome had been thrust into all the four great sees of the East. These were all present personally or by legates at the council; and in outward appearance the whole of Christendom was represented in a council under the presidency of the Pope. Innocent III. was at the summit of his power, and it seemed for the moment that his dreams of a united Church were realised. He practically dictated the canons which imposed submission on the Eastern Church, bidding her conform to Rome, and consent to her patriarchs receiving the pallium from the Pope. But it was only an illusion. The Eastern Empire reverted in 1261 to its legitimate rulers; the Eastern Church repudiated the forced submission.

**Attempts at  
Reunion.**

Again, in 1274, Gregory x. called a council at Lyons, at the suggestion of the restored Eastern Emperor, Michael Palaeologus, with a view to the reunion of the Church. But this was only a piece of political intrigue, though the council was a brilliant assemblage, and apparently successful. The Greek legates accepted the *Filioque*, and the Emperor tried to force it and the Latin customs upon the East. He nearly lost his throne in consequence, and his successor Andronicus reversed his acts.

Other attempts at reunion for political reasons were those of the Emperors Andronicus III., John Palaeologus, and John Cantacuzenus in the course of the fourteenth century. The Emperors desired alliance with the West, as a help against the ever-present Turkish menace; but their subjects would rather even be conquered by Mohammedans than submit to Rome.

In the next century, the Council of Basel began negotiations with the Greeks. Eugenius IV. met the Emperor, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and 500 Greek legates at Ferrara in 1438, whence the council was transferred to Florence. Here in 1439 a compromise was agreed to on four disputed points, the *Filioque*, the use of leaven, purgatory, and the supremacy of the Pope. And this was signed by all the Eastern representatives except Mark of Ephesus. Again the popular voice rejected the reconciliation. In 1443 the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem denounced the council, and soon after the Emperor himself repudiated the union.

On the eve of the final catastrophe, the last Emperor of the East, Constantine XII., in terror at the Turks, approached the Pope, and signed the decrees of Florence. But again his people would have none of it. The West did not intervene to save Constantinople, though a new crusade for that purpose might have done much to preserve Eastern Europe from the infidel.

The political reasons for desiring a reunion were no longer existent after the fall of Constantinople; but the representatives of the Eastern Church have always consistently refused all papal overtures: though they were invited to the Council of Trent, and to the Vatican Council of 1869-70, and were warmly

invited by Leo XIII. in 1894 in the encyclical *Omnibus principibus et populis*, to reconsider their position.

It is impossible perhaps to over-estimate the harm done to the progress of Christendom by this melancholy separation. The papacy was enabled to develop on its own lines, and to harden and define its theory into the form which made the Reformation inevitable. That which claimed to be the centre of unity had become a rock of offence.

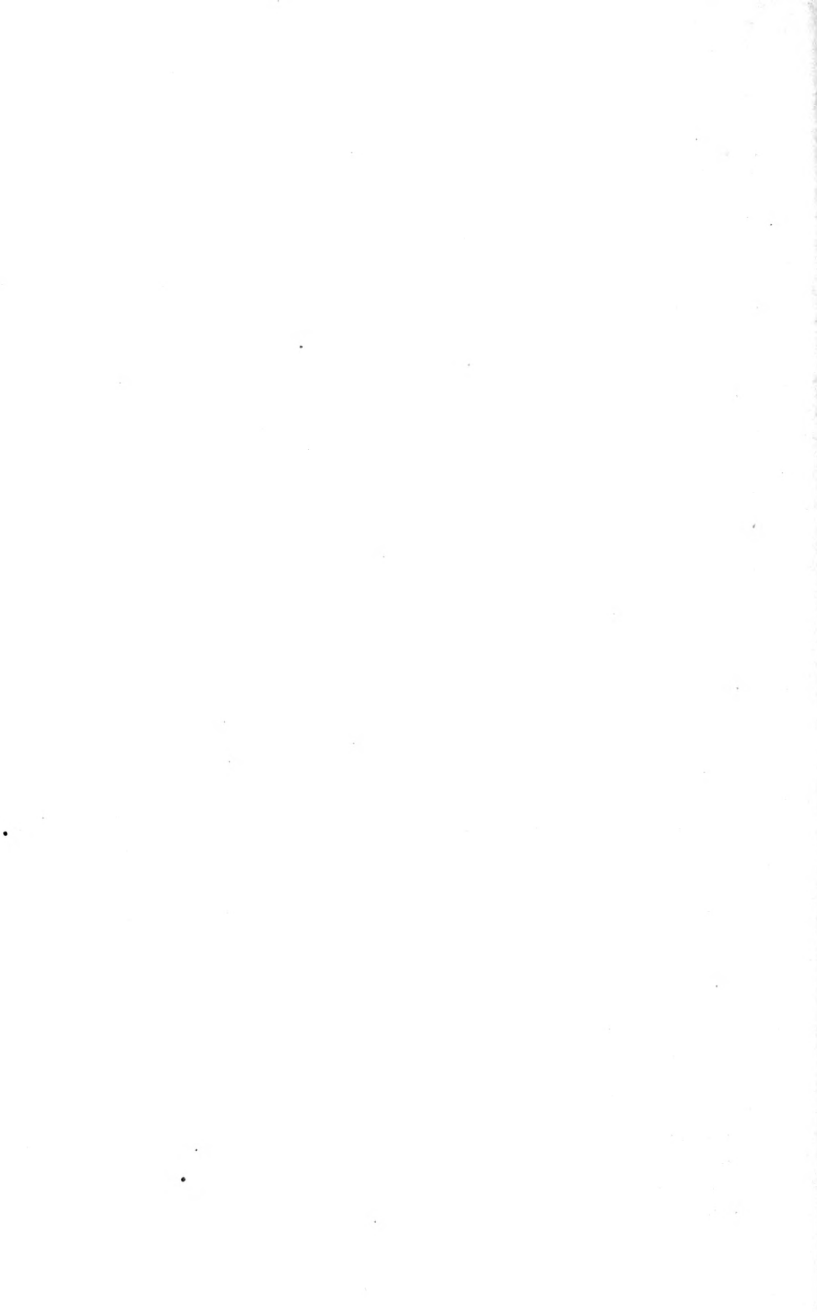
The reformed Church of England, that singular and unique product of the Reformation, has been looked upon by many as the possible mediator between East and West. Holding the Catholic faith, appealing on points of dispute to the judgments of the undivided ancient Church, and claiming to possess a valid succession in her ministry, she certainly has points of contact with both Rome and the East, and recent years have widened her sympathies with both.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Trace the causes of the alienation of the Eastern and Western Church.
2. Describe the controversy with Photius.
3. What was the Holy Roman Empire?
4. Describe the final separation of East and West.
5. What attempts have been made to heal the schism?
6. Estimate the evil brought about by this schism.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

1. The *Filioque* clause.  
 Ffoulkes. *Historical Account of the Addition of the Word 'Filioque.'*  
 Burn. *Introduction to the Creeds.*  
 Schaff. *Creeds.*
2. The character and influence of Charlemagne.  
 Bryce. *Holy Roman Empire.*  
 Schaff. *History of the Church* (Mediaeval, ii.).
3. The possible Reunion of Christendom.  
 Pusey. *Eirenicon.*  
 Döllinger. *Reunion of the Churches.*  
 Liddon. *Reports of Bonn Conferences.*  
 Riley. *Birkbeck and the Russian Church.*



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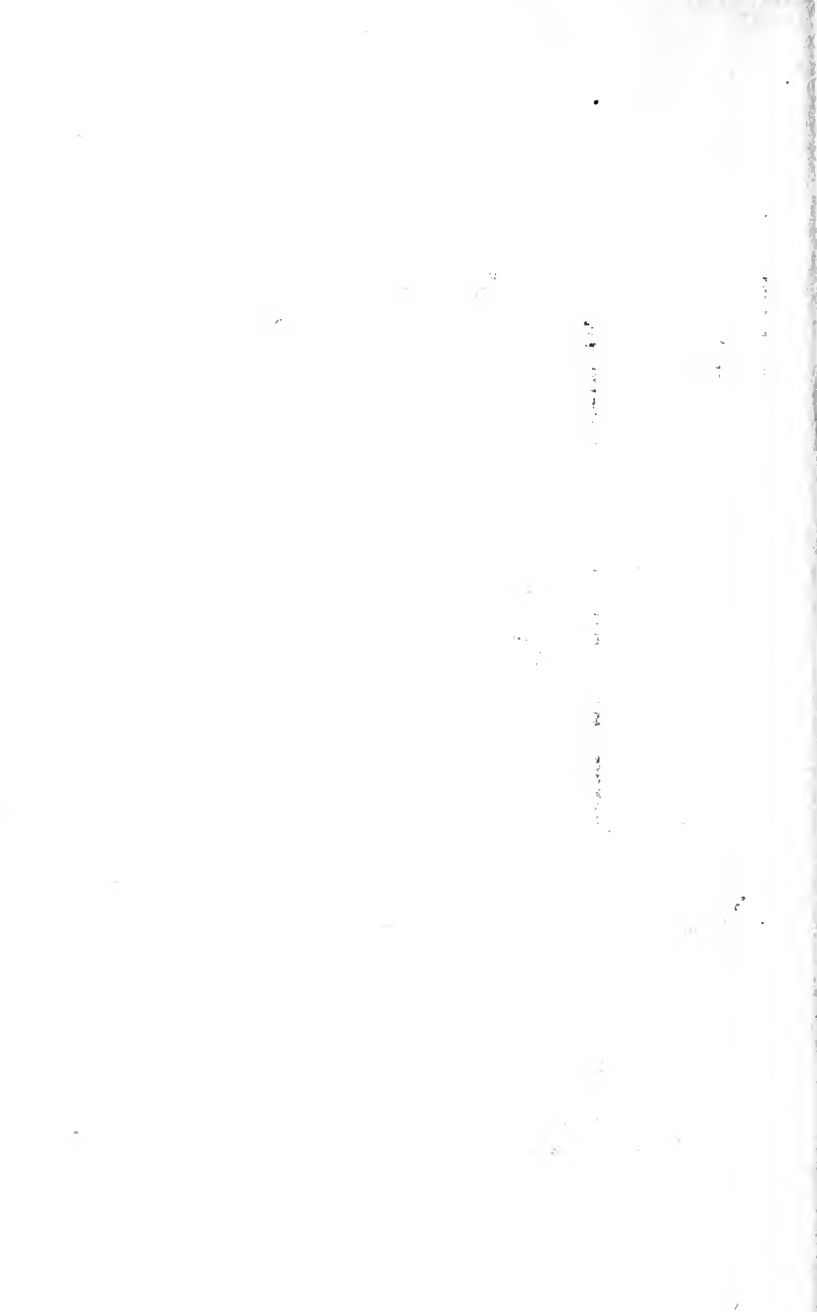
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