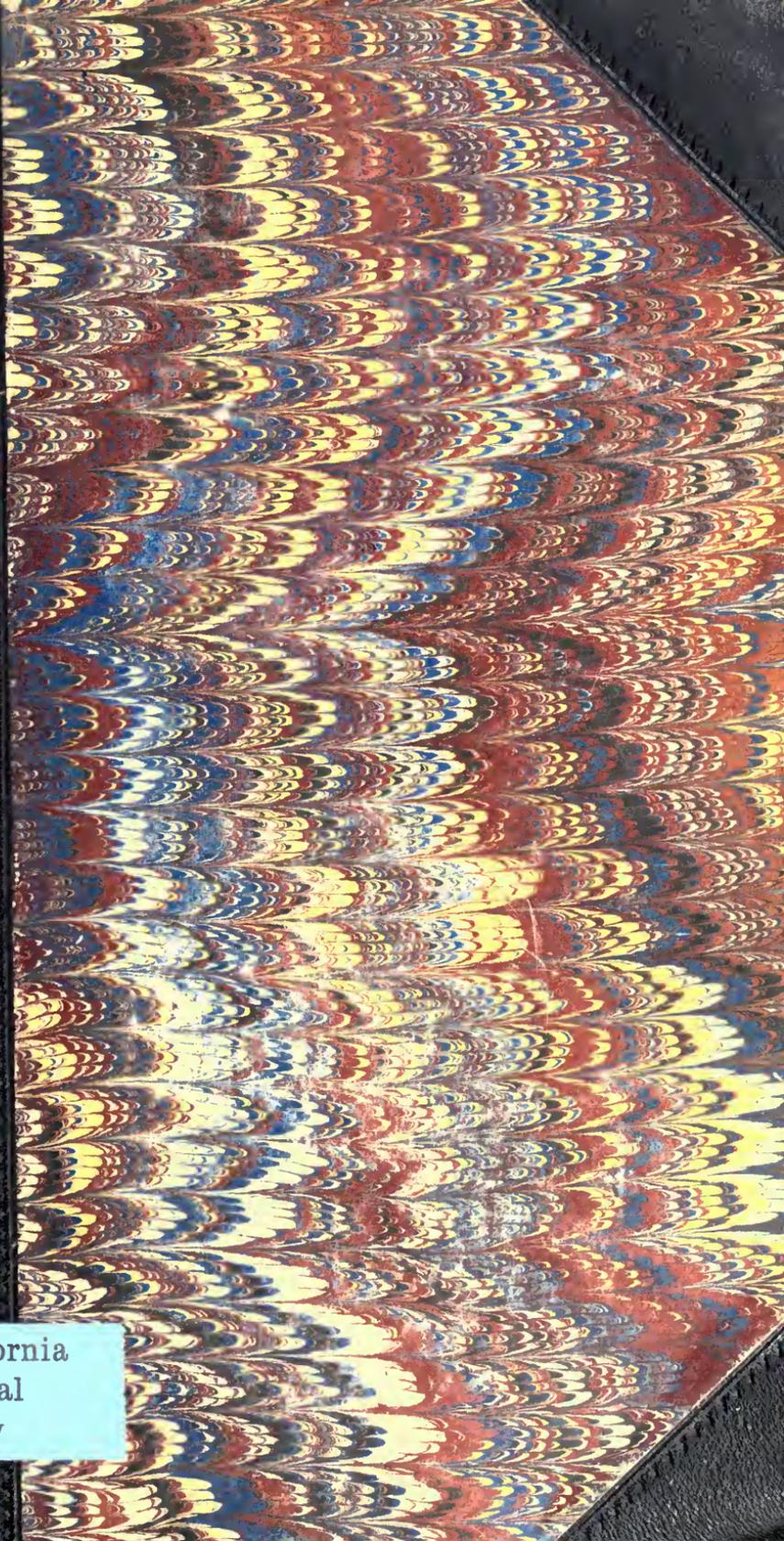


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THE  
*Theological and Miscellaneous*  
**WORKS,**  
*ſc.*  
OF  
JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S. &c.

WITH  
*NOTES,*  
BY THE EDITOR.



**VOLUME VIII.**  
Containing  
*A GENERAL HISTORY*  
OF  
**THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,**  
TO THE  
FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.



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A  
General History  
OF  
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,  
TO THE  
FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

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ΕΝ ΕΙΣΗΘΕΙΑΣ ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ ΤΑΣ ΕΙΣΑΦΕΙΣ, ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΠΙ ΤΕΙΟΙΣ ΣΕΦΑΝΗΣ ΤΙΣ ΑΙΩΝΙΑΝ ΜΕΤΡΑΝ  
ΑΙ ΑΚΡΟΤΗΤΩΝ.

EUSEBIUS.

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## SAMUEL SHORE, ESQ.



DEAR SIR,

I DO not think that I can dedicate a history of the Christian Church to any person with so much propriety, as to one whose conduct, like yours, has long proved him to be a steady friend of Christianity, and whose object it has been to preserve it as unmixed as possible with every thing that has a tendency to corrupt and debase it.

Every Christian must rejoice in reviewing the rise of his religion, and the progress which, notwithstanding the opposition it met with from all the power and policy of man, it made in the world; as it affords the strongest conviction of the solidity of the ground on which it rests, and thereby confirms to us the most valuable of all human prospects, that of a resurrection to immortal life, a prospect which nothing but the gospel can give us.

Also, a review of the glorious sufferings of the ancient martyrs, which evidences the firmness of their faith, in circumstances in which they had the best opportunity of satisfying themselves concerning the foundation of it, cannot fail both to strengthen our faith, and to animate our zeal, and thereby lead us to feel, and, if there should be occasion, to act, as they did, who, through the hope of a better life, cheerfully endured all that men could inflict upon them in this. Compared with what they did and suffered, what is all that we can sacrifice in the same cause? How zealous then should we be to compensate by active services, for the want of more meritorious passive ones?

As an active friend of religious liberty, you, Sir, will rejoice to see the progress that Christianity made while it was left to its own energy, unfettered by that fatal *alliance* which it afterwards unhappily formed with the powers of this world; when the zeal of its friends supplied its ministers

with every thing that they wanted, without any compulsion and when all, with one heart, devoted themselves to the cause of truth and virtue.

But you will likewise, in this period of the history, see the commencement of that most unnatural *alliance*, which has been the source of such dreadful abuses, and which continues to this day, when the *State*, instead of receiving the spirit of the Christian *church*, a spirit of meekness, temperance, heavenly-mindedness, and universal charity, imparted to the ministers of the church, its own corrupt principles and manners, inflaming them with a thirst for wealth and power, and even directing them of the principles of humanity and compassion, whenever any obstacle opposed their ambitious views; so that at length the persecution of Christians by Christians became as bloody and unrelenting, as that of the pagan emperors.

Even in this reformed country, and with all the pretensions of modern times to liberality of sentiment, the ministers of Christ, *whose kingdom was not of this world*, deceived by the flattering consequences of this alliance, and in these instances departing from the precepts of equal justice, and the example of their great Master, too frequently become advocates for such measures of government as would subject their fellow-Christians to heavy civil penalties; and are led to urge the continuance of laws which deprive acknowledged good subjects of the common rights of citizens, merely on account of a difference respecting religious doctrines or forms of worship.

This state of things should excite the temperate, but steady and unremitted, efforts of every true friend to the rights of mankind, to oppose all ecclesiastical, as well as civil tyranny; and there can be no doubt but that, as this spirit diffuses itself, all opposition must in time give way before it, and an end be put to all usurpations on the consciences of men. And when we shall see every claim to antichristian power actually yielded to general conviction, and perceive the weak supports on which that power has hitherto rested, many will wonder that humanity could ever have submitted to it, and our posterity will want the evidence of history to be convinced of its existence.

It is a real satisfaction, though at the first aspect, of a melancholy kind, to trace the progress of those superstitions, and those corruptions, in doctrine and discipline, by which Christianity has been so much debased, and the natural

influence of it diminished, now that, by the force of its own principles, it has, in a great measure, recovered itself from the deplorable state into which it had sunk. This circumstance furnishes an additional evidence of its truth and importance, and affords a sure prospect that, in due time, it will purge itself from every thing that has hitherto defiled it, and become once more what it was at its first promulgation. And it may well be presumed that the knowledge we now have of those corruptions, and of the causes which produced them, will effectually prevent a relapse into any similar state, for the future.

We may therefore consider ourselves as in a better situation than that of the primitive Christians, as theirs may be compared to that of Adam in Paradise, innocent, indeed, but without the knowledge of evil, and therefore insecure; whereas, ours is a state of equal purity, but superior knowledge, and consequently of greater security; so that, without the fear of any more corruptions, we may enjoy, by anticipation, the prospect of the certain, if not speedy, downfall of all error, before the increasing light of truth, and of every power, temporal or spiritual, that opposes itself to *the kingdom of God and of Christ*; which the sure word of prophecy informs us, is to establish itself in the world, and to continue till time shall be no more. We every day see signs of the nearer approach of those glorious times, in which truth, virtue and liberty, will diffuse themselves over the whole earth, and when error, vice and tyranny, will in every country fall before them.

You will rejoice with me that there is now one country in the world, and one of growing extent and importance, in which Christianity subsists without any alliance with the state;\* and that the eyes of a neighbouring kingdom, for-

\* Lord Corke conjectured in 1755, (*Letter from Italy*, XI.), that "the ball of empire may hereafter roll westward, and may stop in *America*; a world unknown when *Greece* was in its meridian glory; a world that may save the tears of some future *Alexander*. Yet it is far more agreeable to contemplate, with Washington, "the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government" as "staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people." See the President's Speech to the Congress, April 30, 1789. *N. Am. Rep.* X. p. 108.

Bishop Berkeley anticipated, as early as 1726, *the rise of empire and of arts in a country*,

"Where men shall not impose for truth and sense  
The pedantry of courts and schools."

See Verses on the Prospect of planting Arts and Learning in America. *Miscellany*, by the Bishop of Cloyne, 1752, p. 186, and *Biog. Brit.* II. p. 255.

Yet, though the general government of the United States is wisely silent on religion, as being no article of civil coercion, the separate states have not been uniformly

merly the seat of a most grievous persecution, are now so far opened as to see the folly of depriving men of their civil rights on account of their religious opinions, that their freedom will probably be much more complete than ours; \* and, with all the friends of liberty, you will indulge the pleasing prospect, that so glorious an example will be followed by other countries.

In the mean time, let us not fail to do our part to promote this great cause. Be it our study to understand the genuine principles of the gospel we profess, and to be assiduous in propagating them, by enlightening the minds of all to whom we have access.

Partaking, I hope, in your just feelings on this important subject,

I am, dear Sir,

Your friend and fellow-christ. :

J. PRIESTLEY

*Birmingham, Jan. 1, 1790.*

and liberal upon this subject. It is remarkable that the fullest and most satisfactory assertion of *religious freedom*, in the "Act passed in the Assembly of Virginia, in 1786," being a country where was once exhibited, as Mr. Day remarked, that truly *ridiculous scene*, a "patriot, signing articles of independence with the one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his afflicted slaves."

They argue in the preamble to the act, that "our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry;" and proceed to enact, "that no man shall be compelled to support any religious worship, place, or ministers whatsoever, nor shall be forced, restrained, molested or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, or account, this religious freedom is established, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of Religion; and that the same shall in no wise be legally called in question, or affect the civil capacities." See Gordon's *Hist. of the Revolution*, v. IV, pp. 399, 400.

\* See *Declaration of Rights*, No. X, and the "Speech of *Richard M. Smith*, Esq., before the National Assembly, Aug. 27, 1779, on the resolution, "Whether any person ought either to be molested on account of his religious opinions, or debarred from his allegiance to the State, on the worship of whom he does not approve." The speech is well preserved in the *Journal*, and suggests the idea of *privy*, which regulates the dignity of man's civil liberty, as it is to be the same, in every part of all the world. Vol. 19, *Rev. X*, pp. 277, 278, 279. The established Presbyterian church in *Scotland*, became a victim to the bloody depredations of *heresoprosperity*, 1778.

THE

## PREFACE.



THE idea of writing this history was first suggested by the attention that I have lately given to the ecclesiastical writers of the four or five first centuries, in order to determine what was the faith of the primitive church concerning the person of Christ. Seeing that this opinion, and others connected with it, had been greatly misconceived, and misrepresented, by all the ecclesiastical historians, I was willing to exhibit the original doctrine, and the gradual deviations from it, in a regular history of every thing relating to the christian church. For want of an ecclesiastical history written on these just principles, persons were under a necessity of forming wrong conceptions on this important subject from every history that could fall into their hands.

It also appeared to me, that there was no ecclesiastical history that was not either too voluminous to be generally read, or too concise to be of much use. Mosheim's, which is most read by Protestants, besides labouring under the great objection of mistating the important opinions above-mentioned, is much too short on many interesting articles; and his method, though he studied it perhaps too much, is by no means happy; as he divides his work (which, indeed, most others do,) into *centuries*, which is artificial and unnatural, and separates the *prosperous* from the *calamitous* events, which ought to be related in their natural connexion.

Considering how unfavourable an impression has been made upon many superficial thinkers by what Mr. Gibbon has advanced concerning the rise and progress of Christianity, I also wished to see a church history in which the facts should be so stated, as of themselves to supply an answer to his artful insinuations. This is the best defence of Christianity, shewing that, to establish itself as it actually did, it must necessarily have been founded in truth. To assist my younger readers, I have made many observations of this kind.

Besides demonstrating the truth of Christianity, in this the best of all methods, by a simple exhibition of facts, I wished to give young persons more especially an idea of the great value of Christianity, by shewing its influence on the minds of those who first received it, and how nobly it led them to think and to act, raising them above the world, and all the honours and emoluments of it, how, for the great *hope that it set before them*, they cheerfully submitted to *bear the loss of all things*, and made light of pain and death in every mode of torture. With this view I have been more particular than might have been expected from a history of this extent, in my account of the ancient martyrdoms, judging from myself, that no reading is so interesting, or so useful. In Mosheim there is nothing of this kind. He only enumerates the persecutions, without mentioning any of the particulars, and this will not interest the reader at all. But by dwelling a little on these particulars, I flatter myself that I have written such a history as may not only be consulted, but be read, especially by young persons. However, as I have not only divided the work into a great number of *periods*, but also into *sections*, the subjects of which are distinctly specified, any person may, without much trouble, select, or omit, whatever he pleases.

In composing this work, as well as my *History of Early Opinions concerning Christ*, I wrote immediately from original writers, and afterwards consulted the most respectable of the moderns, by which means I have been able to supply some articles which I had overlooked, especially such as are collected from works not professedly historical. The authors thus referred to, I have never failed to consult with respect to every thing of consequence, and when I did not think that necessary, I have quoted the writers I have actually made use of, which, it will be seen, has only been with respect to articles which no person in this age can be supposed to have any motive to misrepresent; such as the later accounts of the *Donatists*. So established is the character of Dr. Lardner, for diligence and fidelity, that I have made no scruple, on several occasions, to copy him, and make use of his translations. By this means I have relieved myself when I could, but I have spared no labour which I thought necessary to make my work useful and authentic.

I call this history a general one, and not particular, or critical. Whatever appeared to me to savour of fable I have commonly omitted, and without any discussion. The same I have done with respect to dates, giving those which

appeared to me to be nearest the truth, especially those supplied by Dr. Lardner. Not that I have any objection to the critical discussion of such subjects. On the contrary, I often think them of importance, and I sometimes take much pleasure in entering into them, as may appear from the dissertations prefixed to my *Harmony of the Gospels*, and my friendly controversy with the bishop of Waterford, concerning the duration of Christ's ministry. But this was not my object in the present work, which I wished to make interesting to the generality of readers.

I have brought the history to a very important period, comprehending the great controversies concerning the person of Christ, as settled by the four first general councils, and terminating with the removal of the power which stood in the way of that authority, temporal and spiritual, which was afterwards assumed by the bishops of Rome, the progress of which will be the great object of the next division of this work, if I continue it. But whether I shall pursue it any farther, I am wholly undetermined.

I have proceeded thus far, because I thought that I was able to throw new and important light upon the subject. With respect to what follows, I do not know that I shall be able to do so much; but it may be pleasing to some if I should do no more than select, and arrange, what has been already well done, so as to make a suitable continuation of this work to the reformation by Luther. If this should appear to be the wish of many of my readers, I shall probably undertake it; and then, if I should find myself at leisure, I may in the same manner, write the history of the Reformation itself, and even continue it to the present century. In the mean time, what I have now done I apprehend to be sufficiently complete of itself.

It is generally observed that *old age is narrative*. And certainly of all the kinds of composition, history best suits the later periods of life, the powers of invention diminishing, and those of reflection, at least a disposition to reflect, increasing. If I should find this to be the case with myself, I shall be happy to have so pleasing, and so useful, an employment in prospect. For of all history, that of the mind of man, in the progress of opinions, and their consequences, which is most conspicuous in what relates to Christianity, will please me best. As we approach nearer to another state, every thing that has any reference to it naturally proves more interesting.

I am far from expecting that I, who have found errors in

others, should have escaped them myself. If any be pointed out to me, I shall be ready to rectify them in future editions of the work.



Since this was written it has pleased Divine Providence to remove me to a situation, in which I have had abundant leisure to continue this history even to the present time. The continuation is comprised in four volumes 8vo., and dedicated to Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States of America.

*Northumberland, 1803.*



THE  
I N T R O D U C T I O N .



IF we judge of the importance of events by the greatness of their effects, and their influence on the well-being of mankind, we must conclude that no history whatever can be so interesting as that of the rise and progress of Christianity. The change which it has occasioned in the world is unspeakably more wonderful in its nature, than that which was brought about by the establishment of any empire, from the beginning of the world to the present day; the Roman empire itself, which was of the greatest extent, and the longest duration of any of them, not excepted. While they all, in their turns, have gone to decay and ruin, the kingdom of Christ is still extending itself; so that we cannot doubt but that it will at length embrace all mankind, and continue to the end of time. With respect to the value of Christianity, it may with truth be said, that it raises man above man, even in his most civilized state, unspeakably more than men are by nature raised above brute animals. It forms them to true dignity of conduct in this life, and thus prepares them for that glorious and immortal life after death, with which it brings us acquainted.

This history is the more interesting, as it exhibits this greatest of all changes in the state of the world, taking its rise from the smallest beginnings, and triumphing, without the aid of external force, over all the powers that man could oppose to it.

Christianity, though founded on mere opinion, viz. the belief of certain facts, such as the miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the miracles performed by the apostles after him, produced visible and most extraordinary effects, both with respect to religion, and even civil government: and the evidence of the facts was so clear and striking, that the doctrines which were confirmed by it prevailed over every opposite system of opinions, even those which had taken the deepest root, and which had, from time immemorial,

been connected with practices to which mankind had the greatest attachment, both from the fascinating nature of the things themselves, and the belief that the welfare of states absolutely depended upon the observance of them.

The religious worship of all the heathen world was what is properly termed mere *superstition*, being altogether founded on an ignorance of the true causes of things; and consequently, it led men to pursue certain ends by means which had no connexion with them; and it is not probable that any knowledge that they would ever have acquired of the real laws of nature would have been sufficient to cure that superstition. It was either to the influence of the sun, moon and stars, the earth and other visible parts of nature, or to that of dead men (whose powers they imagined to be continued and enlarged after death) to which they had ascribed all the good and evil which they could not otherwise account for; and, accordingly, these were the objects to which their religious worship had been directed. And being of course left to their own imaginations with respect to the methods of securing the favour of those deities, and naturally enough supposing that they were pleased with such things as pleased themselves, it is no wonder (the fancies of men being infinitely various), that among other methods they had recourse to acts, the object of which is to gratify sensuality or revenge, passions by which themselves were chiefly swayed. Accordingly, some of their religious rites and ceremonies were of an expensive and painful, and others of an alluring nature, consisting in the gratification of their sensual appetites; but purity of morals had never been the object of any religion of the heathens, and the little knowledge they had of a future state, which had, no doubt, been derived from the tradition of some early revelation, miserably corrupted, was sufficient to have no influence on the conduct of even the lower classes of men, and was wholly disregarded by the higher.

The Jews, a people of considerable worth with respect to numbers, power, or extent of territory, (who, after being a flourishing and independent nation, had been held in subjection by all the great monarchies of antiquity, from the Babylonians to the Romans) had alone the benefit of a religion instituted by God himself, and proved to be so, by such interpositions of Divine Providence in their favour, especially at the promulgation of it, as the moderate obstinacy and incredulity of that people had not been able to resist, and to which, after they relapsed into idolatry, they were, in the time of our

Saviour, most firmly attached. To the peculiar rites of their religion, the generality of the nation, who were of the sect of the Pharisees, had added many observances of their own invention, and on these they laid as much stress as on things of divine institution; while a few of the richer sort were of the sect of the Sadducees, who not only rejected the traditions of the Pharisees, but disbelieved the doctrine of the resurrection.

The Jewish nation had been favoured with an almost uninterrupted succession of prophets, from the time of Moses to that of Malachi, a period of more than a thousand years; but from that time there had been no prophets, nor any pretension to prophecy, for the space of more than four hundred years, when Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, immediately preceded by John the Baptist, rose among them.

About the time of his appearance there was a general expectation among the Jews of the coming of their *Messiah*, a person announced by the prophet Daniel under that title, which signifies one who is anointed, or appointed by God to an office of great dignity. But though it was expressly said that the Messiah was to be *cut off*, the Jews seem to have given no attention to this circumstance, but applied to him all that is said of their future *prince of the house of David*, who is to reign over them when they shall be restored to their own country, and be the most distinguished nation upon earth. They therefore imagined that, as they were then in subjection to the Romans, their Messiah would deliver them from that state of servitude, and extend his conquests over the neighbouring countries, as David had done. The history of the Jews shews this expectation in the strongest light, and our Saviour's conduct (and, as we may say, that of Divine Providence) was very much guided by it. For had Jesus been from the first announced in the character of the Messiah, the Jews immediately connecting with it the idea of a temporal prince, and a conqueror (which he was not to be), much inconvenience would have arisen from it, especially with respect to the Romans, who, being masters in the country, would have been jealous of such a person.

Accordingly, when John, the forerunner of Jesus, made his appearance, his commission went no farther than to announce the speedy approach of another person much greater than himself. Like many other prophets, he called upon his hearers to repent, and as a token, it should seem, of a solemn promise to amend their lives, he by divine

appointment required them to be baptized. Though John worked no miracles, he had, in his manner and dress so much the appearance of one of the ancient Jewish prophets, and the austerity and sanctity of his life gave such a credit to what he taught, that he was generally received in the character of a prophet; insomuch, that though the rulers of the nation, and the teachers of the law, whose hypocrisy and immoralities he inveighed against, took umbrage at his popularity, and had no faith in his divine mission, they durst not openly avow their opinion.

The scene of John's preaching was at first in the wilderness of Judea, which was under the government of the Romans, but afterwards in the country beyond Jordan, which was in the dominion of Herod,\* who respected him greatly. But the prophet having, with the liberty which became his character, reproved him for taking Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, and who had eloped from him, Herod, on what pretence does not appear, put him in prison; and Herodias, being highly incensed against him, induced her husband to give orders for his execution, taking advantage of a rash promise which he had made, to give her daughter (who had pleased him by dancing at a public entertainment) whatever she should ask, and prompting her to ask the head of John. The preaching of John began in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, in the year 28 of our present era, and he was put to death in the year following.

\* Strictly speaking, the whole country was under the paramount government of the Romans, deputed either to a Roman officer or a native tributary prince.



## PERIOD I.

FROM THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS TO THE DEATH  
OF NERO. A. D. 68.



### SECTION I.

*From the public Appearance of Jesus to his Ascension.*  
A. D. 29.

AT the death of John, Jesus had preached some weeks, and had a considerable number of followers, out of whom he had just before appointed twelve to be his constant attendants; and from being commissioned to preach his religion in distant countries, he gave them the appellation of apostles. His public ministry commenced soon after his being baptized by John, which was immediately followed by a remarkable appearance of something like the descent of a dove upon him, \* accompanied with an audible voice, saying, *This is my beloved Son*; and this was the first intimation that John had who the person was whom he was sent to announce.

After his baptism Jesus was led by the spirit of God into the wilderness, where he continued forty days, as Moses had done in the mount, without eating or drinking; and in this time it is probable that he received his instructions what to preach, and how to conduct himself in his important mission. After this followed what is called his *temptation*, which was probably a vision, representing the various trials to which he would be exposed during the course of his ministry, guarding him particularly against ostentation, ambition, and a distrust of Providence. After

\* See the author's *Note* on Matt. iii. 16. Le Clerc, rejecting the vulgar notion of an appearance in the *shape* of a dove, says, "La maniere, dont le feu descendit, étoit semblable à celle dont les colombes descendent à terre." *Le Nouv. Test.* 1753, p. 16.

these scenes, he lived for some time pretty much retired, as he had done before, though no doubt employed in deep meditation on the subject of his important office, and preparing his mind for it by that fervent devotion, by which he was ever distinguished.

Though, in consequence of John's announcing him to be his superior, a few of his disciples attached themselves to Jesus, and occasionally attended him, we have no account of any thing of consequence being done by him (except the miracle of changing water into wine at a private marriage feast, and this was probably in the autumn preceding till after the passover which followed his baptism. But on his return to Galilee after this passover, he gave his whole time to the instruction of all who came in his way, and performed the most illustrious miracles, particularly omitting no opportunity of shewing his own benevolence, as well as proving his divine mission, by healing all the sick that were brought to him. Thus, after publicly preaching in a synagogue at Capernaum on the sabbath-day, he cured a demoniac who was present on the occasion, and on the same day Peter's wife's mother, who was ill of a fever, and in the evening a multitude of persons, afflicted with diseases of various kinds.

These cures brought about him so great a concourse of people, that early the next morning he left the town in a private manner, and went into the mountainous part of the country; and the people still flocking to him, from all the places in the neighbourhood, he gave them most excellent instructions on the subject of morals, insisting chiefly on good dispositions of heart, upright intentions, and universal benevolence, even to those who should hate and persecute them; and being well apprized of the general expectation of his countrymen, concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the ambitious prospects they entertained on that account, he enlarged particularly on the virtues of meekness, humility, and heavenly mindedness, as the most essential qualifications for that *kingdom of God* for the establishment of which they were looking. Knowing also the deference they had for the scribes, the public teachers of the law, he strongly guarded them against the abuses and corruptions which they had introduced into it by their traditions.

The doctrine which he taught with the greatest distinctness and emphasis was that of a future resurrection to immortal life, as that which he was more especially commissioned to republish with additional evidence informing

his hearers that he himself was appointed of God to come again, after his death and resurrection, to raise all the dead, and to judge the world. This most important of all doctrines was probably the original revelation of God to man; but not being explicitly contained in the writings of Moses, whose commission had another object, the record of it was lost;\* and in consequence of this, though the belief of it was retained by the body of the Jewish nation, it was disbelieved by some, and much corrupted by others; the Pharisees particularly, imagining that men were to have wives in a future state, and to live in other respects as they had done here. Besides correcting this mistake, and informing us that, in the future world, men are to be as the angels of God, and to live without propagating their species, Jesus taught no peculiar articles of faith. In every thing that was of importance, such as the unity of God, and the placability of his nature, the Jews had been sufficiently instructed by Moses and the prophets. These, therefore, he assumed as fixed principles; and in all his discourses and parables, which were admirably calculated to strike the imagination, and to impress the memory and the heart, the truth of them was taken for granted, as what would be admitted by all his hearers. The pure morality that he taught was uniformly exemplified in his own life, which was a pattern of the greatest moderation, benevolence and piety. He declined no labour, in continually going about doing good; he made no ostentatious display of his miraculous powers; he spent much of his time in humble prayer; and upon all occasions testified his entire submission to the will of God.

It is not a little remarkable that, though Jesus plainly and repeatedly informed his disciples that he should be put to death, and rise again on the third day, they did not

\* We find the belief of a resurrection among the Jews in the time of our Saviour, and in that of the Maccabees long before him, so that it was probably the faith of that nation in all former times, as it continues to be so to this day. Our Saviour only corrected some mistakes concerning it. Now this is a doctrine of so extraordinary a nature, that it could never have been discovered, or even imagined, by men, and therefore must have been derived from some revelation. And as we have no account of such a revelation in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, it must have been prior to the writing of any of those books; though, being well known to the writers, and to the nation in general, it has so happened that they have not mentioned it. Had a discovery of so great importance been made to mankind after the time of Moses, or indeed after the flood, and before the Babylonish captivity, we should certainly have had some account of it in the Old Testament; this being of infinitely more moment than any thing recorded there.

On this subject I refer my readers to a dissertation of mine, on the knowledge that the ancient Hebrews had, of a future state. (P.) See Vol. II. pp. 348—345.

understand him; still supposing that, as he was the Messiah, he would soon appear in the character of a king; and they were more than once disputing among themselves who should enjoy the chief places of honour and power in his kingdom. But as he was used to speak to them in a figurative manner, they probably thought that by death he meant some scenes of difficulty and trial, and that his surmounting them was all that was meant by his resurrection. For when he was apprehended, and put to death, they gave up all their expectations from him, never supposing that they should see him any more; and when he did appear to them, after his resurrection, they could hardly believe the interesting fact on the evidence of their own senses.

The miracles of Jesus were chiefly of a benevolent nature, consisting of healing diseases, and especially such as were seldom known to be relieved by medicine, at least in a short space of time, as blindness, leprosy, palsy and insanity, which in that age was usually ascribed to the influence of demons; and there are three accounts of his raising persons from the dead. To relieve the wants of his auditors, in a place where no provisions were to be had, he twice fed a great multitude with a small quantity of bread and fishes, more being left than there was when he began to distribute.

A few of his miracles seem to have had no other object than to shew the power that was given him over the laws of nature; as his stilling a tempest, and walking on the sea, as well as his changing water into wine, mentioned before. Miracles of this kind, however, would tend to inspire his disciples with the greatest confidence in the divine power which attended him, and encourage them in preaching his religion, notwithstanding all the dangers to which they should be exposed: persuaded that, if they were not delivered from any particular distress, it was because the interest of the religion they taught made their sufferings more expedient. And their Master had always forewarned them that they were not to expect their reward in this world. On the contrary, he plainly told them that none would be considered as his disciples, who would not be ready to give up their lives rather than renounce their religion; and that if any person should deny him, or be ashamed of him, in any circumstances, he would deny him to be his disciple when he should come in his glory.

Besides the voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus, he had a more express divine attestation of the same kind

upon a mountain in Galilee, in the presence of three of his apostles, Peter, James and John; when he appeared in great glory, surrounded by that bright cloud which was the symbol of the divine presence in the time of Moses, accompanied by Moses himself and Elias, who discoursed with him about his future sufferings, probably to encourage him to go through a scene so painful and humiliating, and at the same time so singular in its kind; as he was to exemplify in his own person the doctrine which he taught, viz. of a resurrection to immortal life, being, as he is called, *the first-fruits from the dead*. This remarkable scene was closed with a repetition of the voice from heaven, Matt. xvii. 5, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Also a few days before his death, when being in the temple, in the presence of a great number of people, and praying, he had said, "Father, glorify thy name," John xii. 28; "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." This voice was so loud, that some of the people who were not near enough to distinguish the words, thought that it thundered, but others, perceiving the sounds to be articulate, said that an angel spake to him.

Notwithstanding the splendour of his miracles, Jesus was far from arrogating any thing to himself, but always ascribed his extraordinary works to his God and Father, who sent him, and acted by him, and to whose will he was at all times perfectly resigned. Together with sentiments of the most genuine piety, he discovered evident marks of great sensibility of mind, and of a tender, compassionate disposition; feeling for his disciples and others, and attending to them much more than to himself. Thus when he accompanied the friends of Lazarus to his grave, and saw them in tears, he wept also, though he was just going to raise him from the dead. When little children were brought to him, he not only blessed them, but took them up in his arms to do it. Foretelling the ruin that was to come upon his nation, and especially the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, (which, as a prophet, he had particularly described,) and viewing it from some distance, he wept over it; and as he was led to crucifixion, he bid the women who accompanied him, and lamented over him, not to weep for him, but for themselves, and for their children, on account of the calamities that would certainly befall them.

Notwithstanding the great and benevolent works continually performed by Jesus, and his popularity with the

common people on that account; yet, as he paid no court to the leading men of the nation, but, on the contrary, omitted no opportunity of exposing their ambition and other vices, and frequently upbraided them before the people, whose good opinion they affected, he incurred their utmost indignation. Their prejudices would not suffer them to believe that such a person could be their promised Messiah, and they ascribed the most wonderful of his works, that of curing demoniacs (and probably the rest also) to the power of Satan. Thus blinded by their passions, after many consultations what to do, they determined to put him to death, and at length resolved to do it by a public trial and execution. As this must have been effected by the Roman power, they could not doubt but the same power, if they could engage its interference in the case, would support them in the measure, and carry them through it in all its consequences.

This purpose of theirs was favoured by the base treachery of Judas Iscariot, one of his apostles, who had been offended at a reproof which Jesus gave him, when he had complained of the expense of a quantity of valuable ointment, which Mary, the sister of Lazarus, had poured upon his head, at the last entertainment at which he was present. Judas had perhaps given up all idea of Jesus being a king, or, at least, of any great advantage accruing to himself from adhering to him, and in a fit of resentment (which, however, lasted some days,) he agreed with the chief rulers, for a sum of money, to shew them how they might apprehend him without alarming the multitude, and by night; so that, however disposed, the common people would have no opportunity of interfering in his behalf. It was accordingly done about midnight, in a garden, at a small distance from the city, whither Jesus, distinctly foreseeing all that was coming upon him, had retired to pass the dreadful interval in prayer. Feeling like a man under the fullest view of his approaching painful death, and all the ignominious circumstances attending it, he was for a time in an agony of distress; through the whole of which he however preserved a purpose, never for a moment to be shaken, of absolute resignation to the will of God; and after this he perfectly recovered the composure of his mind, and it never quitted him to the last.

Being apprehended by an armed force, after shewing that it was in his power to have rescued himself, he submitted to be conducted to the house of the high-priest, and then before the Sanhedrim, the chief court of judicature in the country.

which was assembled for the purpose in the precincts of the temple. There, not knowing what charge to bring against him, on which they could sentence him to death, his judges hastily took up that of *blasphemy*, accusing him of speaking lightly of the temple, which they might think was most likely to destroy his interest with the common people. But not being able to prove this charge, the high-priest, who presided in the court, solemnly asked him whether he was the Messiah; and upon his acknowledging it, the majority of them voted his death, on the idea of his having arrogated to himself a high office from God which did not belong to him. On this Judas, who had betrayed him, was struck with such remorse, that he immediately went into the court, threw down the money that he had received as the reward of his services in apprehending him, saying, *I have betrayed innocent blood*, and then went and hanged himself.\* There could be no greater proof of the innocence of Jesus, and that his disciples, who were best acquainted with his conduct, knew of no evil in him.

Notwithstanding this condemnation, the Jews, being subject to the Romans, had not the power of executing their sentence, and therefore accused him to Pilate the Roman governor, of treason against the state, in assuming the character of a king, for such, in their opinion, the Messiah was. Pilate saw the malice of the Jews, and the perfect innocence of Jesus; but wishing to gain favour with the leading men of the nation, whom nothing less than the death of Jesus would satisfy, after doing every thing that he could to save him, (at least to express his persuasion of his innocence,) he gave orders for his crucifixion, which was the mode of death for which the Jews had been particularly clamorous, it being that to which the Romans had been used to sentence the most infamous criminals.

This scene of a painful and lingering death, preceded by a cruel scourging, and every mode of insult and abuse, both by the officers of the Jews, and the Roman soldiers, Jesus went through (as he had done both his trials) with the most perfect composure, and without expressing any resentment. And this is the more extraordinary, as his preceding agony in the garden shewed that he was possessed of the most exquisite sensibility. He had even the benevolence and presence of mind to pray for his executioners, that God would forgive them, since *they knew not what they did*, and only

\* See *Notes on the Evangelists*, Sect. lxxxiv., and Vol. II. p. 155. Note.

executed the orders of their superiors. When he hung upon the cross, with that affection to his friends of which he had given the greatest proofs in all his conversation with them on the evening before his death, and which never forsook him, he committed his mother to the care of his disciple John; and in his last words resigned his life into the hands of his God and Father, who, he was confident, would soon restore it to him again.

This tranquillity, with which he submitted to death, is an evidence of his firm assurance of rising again: and as the history of his life, and especially of the last scenes of it, clearly proved that he was no enthusiast, it may be pronounced a tranquillity which could never have been attained by any man, in those circumstances, without the best-grounded persuasion of the truth of his divine mission. His whole behaviour shewed such dignity of sentiment, such benevolence and piety, as is incompatible with either a weak or a wicked mind. No enthusiast, or impostor, could have conducted himself as he did; and they must either have given no attention to the incidents, or be utter strangers to the feelings of human nature, who can suppose that he was either the one or the other.

The manner in which Jesus died was peculiarly favourable to the design of Providence, which was to make the most distinguished preacher of the doctrine of a resurrection, himself a proof of the fact. He died in public, and by the hands of his enemies, to whom he was delivered up for that purpose. The reality of his death therefore could not be questioned, and his resurrection was proved by the abundant evidence of those who best knew him, and who were therefore the best judges of the fact, and who had no more expectation of it than his adversaries, and accordingly expressed as much surprise at it as they could have done. On this most unexceptionable evidence is the great truth of the resurrection of Jesus most firmly established. The most difficult to be convinced of it were the apostles themselves. When they were informed that he had actually appeared to some very respectable women of their acquaintance, they treated the report as an idle tale, and did not believe it. One of them was so unreasonably incredulous, that the testimony of ten of his brother apostles would not satisfy him, nor any thing less than his own seeing and handling his risen Master.

Jesus continued after his resurrection to appear to his disciples, at intervals, for the space of forty days, so that there was sufficient time for them to recollect themselves and to

satisfy themselves with respect to the fact, in whatever manner they should think proper. His first appearances were made when they did not expect him, and therefore could not impose upon themselves by their vain hopes, and others were by express appointment, when they had sufficient opportunity for considering what would satisfy them, and of procuring that satisfaction at their full leisure; and the consequence was such a firm persuasion in them all, of the actual resurrection of their Master, and consequently of the truth of his promises concerning his second coming, to raise the dead and judge the world, (when they would again enjoy his society, in a state of happiness and glory which would have no end,) as carried them through difficulties and sufferings as great as he himself had experienced, and gave such an establishment to the Christian religion, as that nothing in the power of its most violent enemies, and of the world, could overturn it.

Jesus first shewed himself to Mary Magdalene, who was so far from expecting such an interview, that she was one of those who had been at great expense in purchasing spices to embalm him, and when she first saw him, took him to be the gardener. Before this, on finding the sepulchre open, she had run and told the apostles of such an unsuspected circumstance, and Peter and John had set out together to go to the place; when John, outrunning Peter, and going into the sepulchre, judged, from the manner in which he saw the grave clothes disposed of, that the body had not been carried away by force, but that there had been a real resurrection. Peter, however, does not seem to have been convinced of it till Jesus appeared to himself, which he did some time on that day, after he had first appeared to Mary Magdalene, and by her had sent a message to the apostles, informing them that he would give them the meeting in Galilee.

After this he appeared to two of the disciples as they were walking to a village in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The same evening he appeared, as unexpectedly, to all the apostles, except Thomas; the Sunday following to him with them, and some time after in Galilee to Peter, and others who were in a ship fishing, and then to more than five hundred of the disciples at once. He also appeared separately to James, but when or where is not certain. Lastly, he met the apostles, and many others, after their return to Jerusalem; and having conversed with them at leisure, and conducted them as far as the mount of Olives, he ascended above the clouds in their sight; two angels standing by, and

informing those who were present, that in the same manner in which they then saw Jesus going up to heaven, they would see him return again from heaven.

The enemies of Christianity frequently ask why Jesus did not appear to the leading men of the Jewish nation, after he was risen from the dead. But considering the part which they had acted, this would have had the appearance of an insult, unbecoming the dignity of our Lord's character; and the evidence of his resurrection, which, if they had been so disposed, they might easily have made themselves acquainted with, was sufficient to satisfy all who were truly unprejudiced. Besides, had such an appearance as unbelievers now demand actually convinced all the Jewish rulers, and the whole nation, so that they had all immediately become Christians, the story would have been less credible at this day, and in all future time. For it might then have been said, with great plausibility, that the whole might have been a fabrication of the Jews, and that the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus had never been rigorously examined at the time. But no such objection can now be made to this important part of the Christian history. It is now evident that it was the interest both of the friends and of the enemies of Christianity to examine most rigorously into the truth of the resurrection, and that the belief of it continued to gain ground notwithstanding. They who were then the enemies of Christianity would no doubt have refuted the story if it had been in their power; and being the leading men of the country, they had every advantage for so doing. On the other hand, the friends of Christianity would not have sacrificed their fortunes, their liberty, and their lives, for the truth of a fact, of which they had not had the most convincing evidence.

## SECTION II.

### *From the Ascension of Jesus to the Conversion of Paul.*

THE direction that Jesus gave to his disciples before his ascension was, that they should continue at Jerusalem till they should receive the gift of the holy spirit, and be thereby "endued with power from on high." In consequence of this, they associated together, to the number of about one hundred and twenty, and, at the motion of Peter, they, by prayer and casting of lots, chose Matthias to succeed Judas in the office of apostle, there being another candidate, whose name was Joseph called also Barsabas, and surnamed Justus.

The requisites to the office of apostle were their having attended Jesus from the beginning of his ministry till his ascension, and especially their having been *witnesses of his resurrection*. Acts i. 22.

On the day of pentecost, ten days after the ascension, the apostles and other disciples being assembled as usual in one room, pretty early in the morning, the promise of their Master was fulfilled, by what was called *the descent of the holy spirit* upon them all. There was the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, filling the whole house, and the appearance of fire upon the heads of all the company, followed by a power of speaking in languages which they had not learned, and so intelligibly, that a great number, of various nations, drawn together by the report, perfectly understood what they said; and were astonished above measure to hear persons who were well known to be Galileans, and unlearned, speak the praises of God in such a variety of languages.

Some of the crowd, who were probably ignorant of any language except their own, hearing voices that were unintelligible to them, said that the disciples were drunk. But Peter, who heard this remark, began to speak to the multitude, and observe, that what they had heard could not be the effect of drunkenness, because it was early in the day, when it was not customary for any persons to be intoxicated. This was a proper answer to those who did not understand the languages in which the disciples spoke. Others must have been abundantly convinced, that the effect of intoxication could not be the distinct speaking of languages which men had never learned.

After this, Peter, informing them that the scene at which they were present was an event foretold by the prophet Joel, began to assure them of the resurrection of Jesus, whom they had crucified, of which himself and all his company were witnesses; and that it was in fulfilment of his promise that, being now exalted at the right hand of God, he had imparted to them this gift of the holy spirit. In confirmation of their evidence of the resurrection, he likewise observed that it was agreeable to the Scriptures, that the Messiah should die and rise again. Of this event he said that they, who were the best acquainted with him, and had repeatedly seen and conversed with him, were the most proper witnesses; but as to his miracles whilst he was alive, and which proved him to be a prophet, (or as he expressed himself, "a man approved of God, by miracles and wonders, and signs which God, did by him,") he appealed to themselves, since

they had been wrought among them, and had never been questioned. After this he exhorted them to repent of their sins, and be baptized; assuring them that then they would receive the same gift of the holy spirit which had been imparted to himself and his companions.

Such an effect was produced by this extraordinary appearance, and the speech of Peter, appealing to their own perfect knowledge of the miracles of Jesus, that about three thousand persons openly joined them and were baptized, making one body with them; and to express their harmony and fellowship, the rich freely imparted of their superfluity to the poor, and many of them even sold their estates, to make a common stock for that benevolent purpose. From this time many miracles (though they are not particularly specified in the history) being wrought by the apostles, numbers were proselyted every day; and their behaviour was so irreproachable, that they were held in high esteem by those of the people who did not openly join them. Acts ii.

Nothing of this, it is easy to observe, could possibly have taken place, if it had been in the power of the chief rulers, and the enemies of Jesus, to have denied either his miracles, or those of the apostles, and especially if they could have refuted their account of his resurrection. That they would have done every thing that was in their power, to disprove all these, we cannot doubt, when we consider how inveterate they had just before shewn themselves against Jesus, carrying their rage so far as to cause him to be put to death, though they could prove nothing criminal against him. In these circumstances, the miracles of Jesus and of the apostles being unquestioned, and the testimony of such a number of persons, the most competent witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus, being unanimous, and uncontradicted, it is no wonder that new converts were continually made; and that the heads of the nation were for a time overawed, and made no opposition, though they were stung with mortification, and filled with rage. At the same time it must be observed, that the strong prejudice in favour of the Messiah being a temporal prince, affecting the common people as well as their rulers, nothing but the most irresistible evidence could have made them abandon so favourite an idea, and openly profess their faith in the messiahship of a man who had been crucified, and whom they could not expect to see any more in this world.

Some time after, as Peter and John were going to the temple, at the time of evening prayer, (for our three in the

afternoon,) a man known to have been a cripple from his birth, and who sat day after day at the gate of the temple to ask alms, begged their charity, as well as that of others who were entering into the temple. On this, Peter, looking earnestly on him, and feeling, no doubt, a divine impulse on his mind, said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk;"\* immediately on which the poor man finding that he had the perfect use of his limbs, leaped up, and stood upright; going with them into the temple, shewing the greatest agility, and praising God.

This being done in the presence of a great multitude, who well knew the condition he had been in, (for he was forty years old, and his disease such as was evidently incurable by any natural means,) and were therefore satisfied that a real miracle had been wrought, Peter improved the occasion to address them to the same purport as before, informing them that it was by no power of his own that the man who then stood before them had been healed, but by that power of God, by which he confirmed the divine mission of Jesus, whom they had killed, but whom God had raised to life; of which Peter again assured them that he and his brethren were witnesses: and that, this Jesus being now ascended into heaven, would continue there till the time of the restitution of all things. Many of the persons present were greatly impressed by his discourse, and made public profession of the Christian faith, so that then the number of the disciples, exclusive of the women among them, was about five thousand. Acts iv. 4.

The governor of the temple, and the Sadducees, seeing the crowds in the place, and being exceedingly mortified at these effects of the preaching of the apostles, could not restrain themselves any longer, and apprehended them. It being then evening, they were brought the next morning before the high-priest and the council, who asked them by what power, and by what name, they had cured this man. On this Peter boldly addressed the court, and told them that it was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead, that the cure had been effected; intimating that it was the

\* On "the Pope's being successor to Peter," there is the following anecdote. "Thomas Aquinas, coming to Innocent IV., whom he found surrounded with great heaps of gold, 'Lo! Thomas,' said the Pope, 'the church cannot now say, as of old, *silver and gold have I none*. No,' says the surly Doctor, 'nor can she say to the lame, *arise and walk*.'" Hist. of Popery, 1735, l. p. 9

power of God giving testimony to his divine mission and theirs.

The court seeing the boldness of Peter and John, whom they knew to be unlearned men, and not used to speak in public, and the miracle being unquestionable, (the man upon whom it had been wrought being present.) were a little disconcerted, and ordered the apostles to withdraw, while they conferred upon the subject. Not being able to deny the fact, they agreed upon nothing but to charge them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John having received this injunction, openly refused to pay any regard to it, and appealed to themselves, whether they ought not to obey God, by whose authority they preached, rather than man. Unable to make any reply to this, the judges only repeated their threats, without venturing to inflict any punishment upon them; being restrained by their fear of the people, who "glorified God for that which was done." Acts iv. 21.

Being thus dismissed, the apostles went to their brethren, and gave them an account of all that had passed, on which they joined in solemn prayer and thanksgiving to God, when, to encourage them the more, the room in which they were assembled was shaken again, as it had been on the day of pentecost, and they were all filled with the holy spirit as at the first; so that they preached the gospel, or the doctrine of the resurrection and messiahship of Jesus, with all boldness, notwithstanding the threats of the rulers, who at that time durst not put them in execution.

The infant church, enjoying this peace, went on increasing in numbers and in the exercise of every virtue, with an ardour peculiar to that new state of things, in which all who openly embraced Christianity, with very few exceptions, did it from principle, and with a determination to postpone every other consideration to that of their new profession. Considering themselves as heirs of future glory and immortality, they devoted all their time, talents, and fortune to the public cause. One instance in particular is mentioned, that of Barnabas, a Levite, and a native of Cyprus; who having an estate in that island, sold it, and gave the value of it to the apostles, to go to the common stock. Acts iv. 36, 37.

Notwithstanding the genuine zeal, uprightiness, and integrity, of the great body of Christians in this early period, we have in it an example of one man and his wife, viz. Ananias and Sapphira, who either with a view to acquire the reputation of disinterestedness, or on the pretence of

giving up their all, to avail themselves of the common fund, sold an estate, and bringing to the apostles part of the price, told them that it was the whole. As it was of great consequence that the Christian church should not at this time harbour any persons of such a character, it pleased the Divine Being to make a signal example of these persons, who had agreed in the intended fraud.

Ananias was first publicly called upon by Peter, to say whether the sum which he had brought in was the whole price of his estate; and upon his saying that it was, Peter (prompted no doubt by the spirit of God) charged him with hypocrisy, and attempting to deceive not only man, but God. He then expostulated with him on the uselessness of the lie he had told, as he had been under no necessity either to sell his estate, or to give any part of it after it was sold. Immediately upon this, Ananias fell down dead before the company. A little time after this, his wife coming in before she had been informed of any thing that had passed respecting her husband, was asked the same question that had been put to him, and, giving the same answer, she also fell down dead. A miracle of this awful kind could not fail to make a deep impression upon all. It would tend to convince all people that the profession of Christianity was a serious thing, and those who had any sinister views would be deterred from joining the body of Christians. Acts v.

At this time the ministry of the apostles was honoured in as distinguishing a manner as that of Jesus had been, many miracles being wrought by the apostles, and especially by Peter, who always took the lead among them. Such was the fame of his miracles, that persons "brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." Acts v. 15. Great numbers also came from towns in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, bringing their sick, and among them demoniacs; and none of them returned without a perfect cure.

This could not be done without exciting the rage of the rulers of the nation, whose prejudices were such as nothing could conciliate. They therefore caused the apostles to be apprehended, and put into the common prison. But this was the occasion of a new miracle, and of a most extraordinary kind. For an angel opened the prison doors, and leading them out, bade them go, and preach openly in the temple, the place of greatest concourse, as they had done

before. This accordingly they did not fail to do; and to the great surprise of their judges, when they were assembled the next morning, and had given orders for their prisoners to be brought before them, they were told that the very persons whom they had confined the day before, were at that very time teaching openly in the temple.

After this the judges could not think of attempting to take them any more by force. Indeed, the apostles were then so popular, that the officers would have been stoned if they had laid violent hands upon them. They therefore brought them without violence into the court, where being charged with acting contrary to the orders that had been given them, (viz. not to preach any more in the name of Jesus,) Peter replied, that he had obeyed God in what he had done, and again asserted the dignity of Jesus, whom they had crucified, as risen from the dead, and advanced to the right hand of God. He added, that not only were he and his brethren witnesses of the resurrection, but the spirit of God himself, in the miraculous powers which were imparted to all the believers.

Being provoked to the highest degree by this bold answer, the judges were thinking to put the apostles to death, as they had done Jesus; but Gamaliel, one of their body, and a celebrated teacher of the law, advised them (after the apostles were withdrawn) not to interfere in the business, saying, that if the thing was of God, it would be in vain for them to oppose it, and if it was not, it would soon come to nothing. It seems, however, that the judges thought it necessary not to dismiss them without doing something to enforce their authority. They therefore ordered them to be beaten, which was always done in open court. In this the apostles even rejoiced, and leaving the tribunal, they preached the gospel with as much zeal as ever, both publicly in the temple, and also in private houses. Acts v. 42.

The Jewish rulers, being probably confounded at this unexpected boldness of the apostles, and their own ineffectual attempts to restrain them, seem to have followed the advice of Gamaliel for some time, and to have suffered them to preach without molestation; and this was attended with a great increase of the disciples, not only in Jerusalem and Judea, but among Jews in distant countries. For we find the widows of *Greeks*, as well as of *Hebrews* (Acts vi. 1), applying for relief out of the common fund, and the former complaining that they were neglected out of respect

to the latter. On this the apostles, who, like Moses in a similar situation, had given their attention to every thing that concerned Christianity, and had even superintended this distribution, relieved themselves of that burden, by requesting that the society would choose seven men of reputation among them, to attend to this and other secular affairs, while they confined themselves to the business of preaching and instruction. This proposal being approved of, the following seven persons were chosen, viz. Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parnenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch. These were set apart for their office by prayer, and the apostles solemnly laying their hands upon them; an action which always seems to have accompanied praying for particular persons.

In this state of things the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly (Acts vi. 7), and the converts were not all of them of the meaner kind of people, but a great number of priests joined their society. In this state it is probable that things continued some time, perhaps from A. D. 29, in which Jesus died, to A. D. 33, when Christianity must have gotten a pretty firm establishment, so that its enemies, the Jewish rulers, must have perceived that their forbearance had not been at all favourable to them. They had, therefore, recourse once more to severity, taking occasion from the great zeal of Stephen, one of the seven deacons, who, not confining his attention to secular matters, but having exerted himself also in preaching (which was accompanied with many miracles), drew upon himself the peculiar indignation of the opposite party. They might also think that they should succeed better in the prosecution of him, who was an inferior person, than they had done in that of the apostles.

This fresh persecution could not have been carried on without the connivance of Pilate, the Roman governor; but as he had before abandoned Jesus to them, and his conduct in other respects had rendered him very unpopular, it is probable that, in hope of gaining them in some measure, and preventing their complaints of his mal-administration, he was willing to sacrifice to them the followers of Jesus, as he had done Jesus himself. Besides, he must by this time have seen that the Christians were a passive, inoffensive set of men, who were not likely to act openly against him, either by their complaints at Rome, or their opposition in the province.

The zealous Jews, having nothing to apprehend from the interference of the governor, now gave full scope to their rage in the persecution of the Christians; and Stephen happening to be engaged in a dispute with some zealous Jews, (among whom were some from Cilicia, and among them, probably, Saul of Tarsus,) and overpowering them with his arguments, they, knowing no other method of silencing him, and sensible that the Sanhedrim was in their favour, accused him before that court of the crime of *blasphemy* "against Moses and against God," suborning certain persons, who declared that they had heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the city of Jerusalem, and change the laws of Moses.

Instead of replying to this particular accusation, which was destitute of all proof, Stephen, with perfect presence of mind, and with a countenance so full of courage and zeal, that it was compared to that of an angel, in a speech of considerable length, recited the history of the Hebrew nation from the beginning; shewing his judges how apt they had always been to reject and ill-treat the messengers whom God had from time to time sent to them, and boldly telling them, they were now treading in the steps of their ancestors, by rejecting Jesus, in the murder of whom they had resisted God himself, who spake by him.

On hearing these keen but just reproaches, the members of the court, unable to contain themselves any longer, passed sentence of death upon him, as a blasphemer. But he, unmoved by this determination, and directing his eyes upwards, was favoured with a view of the glory of God, and of Jesus Christ sitting at his right hand. On his declaring this, they stopped their ears, as at the hearing of blasphemy, and with the most indecent haste and violence hurried him to a place out of the city, where he was stoned to death; while he, with perfect composure (according to the custom of dying persons addressing their nearest friends), said aloud (the vision he had had impressing his mind and occupying all his thoughts), "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," or last breath, adding in the temper of his dying master, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." After this, with as much apparent satisfaction and tranquillity as if he was falling asleep, he expired. His friends were permitted to carry him away, and bury him with the usual ceremonies of lamentation, which was very great. The chief actor in this tragedy was Saul of Tarsus in Cilicia, and at his feet the

persons who threw the stones laid their clothes, which they put off that they might not be incumbered in throwing them. Acts vii. 58.

The enemies of Christianity having succeeded in accomplishing the death of Stephen, were encouraged to persevere in the persecution of the disciples; and Saul, who was distinguished by his zeal for the laws of Moses against those whom he thought to infringe upon them, was the most active instrument of their violence, entering into private houses, and apprehending persons of all conditions; and without regard to the distinction of sex, he committed them promiscuously to prison. In consequence of this persecution, many Christians were dispersed into distant places, and by this means the knowledge of the gospel was extended farther than it would otherwise have been in the same time. But notwithstanding this danger, all the apostles chose to remain at Jerusalem; and their enemies perhaps thought that, as they had been delivered in a miraculous manner before, it would be in vain to attempt doing any thing against them.

Among other persons who were driven from Jerusalem by this persecution, Philip (whose name appears next to that of Stephen in the list of the seven deacons, or stewards) went and preached in Samaria, where the Jews had no power; and as his preaching was accompanied with the working of miracles, especially in the cure of persons afflicted with the palsy, some who were incurably lame, and some demoniacs, he made many converts, and there was a general joy in their chief city. Here he met with a man whose name is often mentioned by the early christian writers, viz. Simon, to which is commonly added the epithet of Magnus, on account of the magical arts to which he pretended. He was in reality a philosopher of what is usually called the oriental sect, the leading principle of which was, that from the Supreme Mind there sprung, by way of emanation, various intelligences, and from these, others of the same nature, but less perfect. The most exalted of these derived beings were supposed capable of the highest offices, even that of making worlds. It was also thought that they occasionally descended from the empyreal regions, which they usually occupied, and for great and good purposes animated the bodies of men, and other creatures, in the same manner as demons were supposed to take possession of men for bad purposes. The people of Samaria entertained a notion (encouraged, no doubt, by Simon himself)

that he was one of those superior intelligences: for, it is said, that they thought him to be the great power of God, and he kept up this high opinion of himself by various tricks and impositions, probably such as the Egyptian priests and magicians were famous for. Simon, however, seeing the miracles of Philip to be greatly superior to any thing that he could pretend to, became a convert to his doctrine, and was baptized.

The Christians at Jerusalem hearing of the many converts made at Samaria by the preaching of Philip, sent to them the apostles Peter and John, that by their prayers, and the laying on of their hands, those who had been baptized might receive the Holy Spirit, or be endued with the gift of speaking in languages which they had not learned; the conferring of this power being a privilege which it pleased Divine Providence to reserve for the apostles. Accordingly, by means of these apostles, the Samaritan converts did receive the Holy Spirit; and this appearing to Simon, as it naturally would, a thing of a more wonderful nature than any thing that he had seen before, observing also that it was peculiar to the apostles to impart this power, and thinking that they could bestow it upon others, he offered them a sum of money to share it with them. To this proposal Peter, with great indignation, replied, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." He moreover added, that he knew nothing of the profession that he had taken upon himself, and exhorted him to repent of his bad disposition and unworthy purpose. On this, Simon seemed to be affected with a just remorse, and entreated the apostle to pray for him, that the doom which he had announced might not be inflicted upon him.

It is probable, however, that this Simon afterwards deserted the profession of Christianity, and endeavoured to draw followers to himself, as before. For, according to the christian tradition, he every where opposed the spread of the gospel, and even held public disputations with Peter on the subject. But several of his disciples held the principles of his philosophy together with the profession of Christianity, and were distinguished by the appellation of *Gnostics*, from the boasts which they made of their superior knowledge. From these persons the apostles, as we shall see, met with great opposition; and many of them formed societies of their own, in consequence of which they had the appellation of *heretics*, or separatists. Being again

divided and sub-divided among themselves, they formed a great variety of sects, of which an account will be given in its proper place.

After this, Peter and John, having preached in several villages of the Samaritans, returned to Jerusalem; but Philip, who remained there, had a divine impulse to go to the south, into the desert through which lay the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. There he met with an eunuch, an officer of great authority under Candace, queen of Ethiopia,\* who being a Jew, or a proselyte, had been attending one of the public festivals at Jerusalem, and was then sitting in his chariot, and reading in the prophecy of Isaiah. Philip being ordered by the spirit of God to place himself in the way of the chariot, heard him reading, and took the liberty to ask him if he understood what he had read; and the eunuch, frankly acknowledging his want of an interpreter, desired Philip to get up into the chariot, and sit with him; which he readily did. The passage he had been reading was in the 53d chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet describes a person who "was led as a sheep to the slaughter," and who, "like a lamb dumb before his shearers, opened not his mouth." This character Philip applied to Jesus, and from this he took occasion to explain to him the doctrine of the divine mission, the death, and resurrection of Christ; adding, no doubt, that persons were initiated into his religion by baptism.

Afterwards, coming to a place where there was water, the eunuch expressed a desire of being baptized, to which Philip replied, that there could be no objection to it, if he was a believer in what he had informed him of. On this the eunuch declared his belief that Jesus was the Son of God, or the Messiah, which expressed all that was essential to a Christian, and therefore, both of them alighting from the chariot, Philip baptized him. The eunuch was farther confirmed in his faith by a miracle of an extraordinary nature. For after his baptism, Philip was taken from him by the spirit, or power of God, so that he disappeared from his sight: on which he pursued his journey with peculiar joy and satisfaction of mind. Philip found himself at Azotus, and preaching the gospel at that place, and all along the sea-coast, he came at length to Casarea. Acts viii.

\* Or *Meroe*. See the author's *Notes*, Acts viii. 27. Also *Le Clerc*, *Le Vie*. *Fest.*

## SECTION III.

*From the Conversion of Paul to the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles.*

FROM the death of Stephen (probably A. D. 33), to the accession of Caligula to the Roman empire, A. D. 37, the rulers of the Jews carried on an active and unrelenting persecution of the Christians, in which, to A. D. 35, Saul was their chief instrument; but then a stop was put to his furious career by a most extraordinary interposition of Divine Providence. Of his own accord, Saul had applied to the high-priest for orders to go to Damascus in search of Christians, that he might bring them from that city bound, to Jerusalem. For the severity of this persecution had driven christian preachers (and at that time every Christian might be said to be a preacher), to this city, and others still more distant from Judea, where, their zeal not abating, but being rather increased, they endeavoured to make as many proselytes as they could; and the report of those in Damascus brought Saul thither.

As Saul drew near the city, his rage, no doubt, increasing with the near prospect of his prey, he found himself surrounded by an extraordinary light from heaven, and falling to the ground, he heard a voice pronouncing these words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" To which, when he replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" (which shews that he was not divested of all presence of mind,) he received for answer, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad;" representing, by this familiar proverb, the impossibility of succeeding in his enterprise to extirpate Christianity. Astonished at this reply, and finding the fatal mistake he had been under, he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" To which he had this answer, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." With this the vision ended. The companions of Saul had all this time been present, and were, no doubt, greatly amazed, hearing the sound of a voice, though perhaps not being near enough; not distinguishing the words that were pronounced, and seeing no person from whom they could proceed. Saul, being risen from the ground, and finding himself unable to see, was conducted into the city, where he passed three days and nights without eating or drinking, as well as without sight.

In this interval of darkness and fasting, his mind would be sufficiently tranquillized, and his devotion (of the principle of which he was never divested) would be peculiarly ardent; and being then well assured of the resurrection of Jesus, by whom he had been accosted, and consequently of the truth of Christianity, he prayed for farther instruction, (agreeably to the promise that had been made him,) and no doubt also for the restoration of his sight. At this time Jesus also appeared to a disciple in Damascus, of the name of Ananias, and directing him to the place where Paul was, informed him that *he* also had been favoured with a vision, in which he was told that a person of the name of Ananias would visit him, and restore him to his sight. On this, Ananias, without refusing to obey, expressed his surprise at the commission, considering how great a persecutor of the Christians Saul had been, and with what views he was then come to Damascus. But Jesus replied, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, as well as the children of Israel;" adding that he should farther appear to him, and apprize him of all that he should suffer in his cause.

On this, without farther hesitation, Ananias went to the house where Saul was, and accosting him with the appellation of brother, put his hands upon him, and said, "The Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." With this, something like scales fell from his eyes, by which he recovered his sight. He was then baptized, and continued some time with his fellow-christians at Damascus; his former companions having probably soon left him, confounded at what they had seen, and probably without understanding much of the matter.

The same zeal which had prompted Saul to persecute the Christians, now led him to be as warm an advocate for their cause. Accordingly, he soon began to preach in the synagogues of Damascus, maintaining that Jesus was the Messiah; at which all who heard him were astonished, knowing his preceding character and conduct. But he persisted in his preaching, and by his arguments he confounded the bigoted Jews of that place, who would not fail to be highly provoked at the desertion of their former champion. They were so much enraged, that they formed a design to take away his life, and lay in wait at the gates of the city day and night for that purpose. But his friends being

apprized of it, contrived to let him down from the wall of the city in a basket, so that he escaped their pursuit.

Saul having thus escaped from the hands of his enemies, preached in the neighbouring country of Arabia a great part of three years, after which he returned to Damascus, and then went to Jerusalem. There the disciples were, very naturally, afraid of him, doubting the reality of his conversion: till Barnabas, who (being of Cyprus, an island not far from Tarsus, the native place of Saul) had probably some previous knowledge of him, and had by himself been acquainted with the more recent events of his life, had answered for the truth of his extraordinary narrative. By him he was introduced to the apostles Peter and James, and with them he continued fifteen days. At Jerusalem Saul preached with the same assiduity and boldness as he had done at Damascus, disputing particularly with those who, like himself, came from those countries in which the Greek language was spoken. But they being greatly exasperated against him, as the Jews of Damascus had been, endeavoured also to take his life; and here likewise his friends, being apprized of their intention, interposed and conducted him to Cæsarea, and thence he went to Tarsus. Acts ix. 30.

Saul had begun, and continued to preach, these three years without any communication with the apostles: and when they conversed with him they found that he was as well acquainted with the Christian doctrine as themselves. Jesus, who had appeared to him before his arrival at Damascus, and likewise in that town before he had recovered his sight, had probably, some time afterwards, appeared to him again, and for a longer time; to give him more satisfaction concerning the reality of his resurrection, and also to give him particular instructions concerning every thing that he was to teach in his name. By this he was qualified to be an apostle, as well as those who had been appointed to that high office before the death of Jesus; and his commission relating chiefly to the Gentiles, he obtained the peculiar title of the *apostle of the Gentiles*, in which character we shall soon find that he greatly distinguished himself, having carried the knowledge of the gospel farther than any other apostle, and having founded more churches in distant countries than perhaps all the other apostles besides.

About this time, viz. A. D. 37, the emperor Tiberius, in whose reign Jesus had been crucified, died, and was succeeded by Caligula, a mad and brutal tyrant, who, among other extravagancies, took into his head to be worshipped as

a god, by all the people in the empire. The Gentile nations having been accustomed to worship dead men, and the emperors J. Cæsar and Augustus having had divine honours decreed to them presently after their deaths, this worship of a living man would not to them appear so extraordinary a thing; though they might think this particular emperor, notwithstanding his power, unworthy of so great an honour: but to the Jews, the great object of whose religion it was to worship no other than the one true God, the maker of heaven and earth, the difficulty was of a most serious nature; and when Petronius governor of Syria, (to which the government of Judea was subordinate,) announced the orders he had received from Rome, and informed them that a statue of the emperor must absolutely be set up in the temple; and when they saw him at Tiberias at the head of an army, sufficient to enforce the order, many thousands of the Jews came, without arms, to entreat that he would not profane their temple, expressing their willingness to die rather than see the order executed. They even suspended the labours of agriculture, though it was then seed-time, to shew how indifferent they were about what might become of themselves, or their country, while a thing of such infinitely more moment was depending. The governor, moved by their submissive behaviour, suspended the execution of the order he had received, till he had given the emperor more particular information concerning his peculiar circumstances with respect to it; and by means of king Agrippa, (who had been sent to Rome to complain of the cruelties of Pilate, and who had cultivated the friendship of Caligula,) he was for the present diverted from his purpose; though it is probable that nothing but his death would have given the Jews any effectual relief in this case.\*

By Caligula, this Agrippa, (who was the grandson of Herod the Great, by Aristobulus,) was made king of the Tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, † who had died some time before without heirs, and his province of Trachonitis had

\* Josephus's Wars of the Jews, B. ii. Ch. ix. (P.) The transaction here related by Josephus was in the reign of Tiberius, when "Pilate sent by night those images of Cæsar, that are called ensigns, into Jerusalem." Sect. ii. Agrippa "came to Tiberius to accuse Herod the Tetrarch." At Rome he became intimate with Caius *Caligula*, whom he agreeably flattered with a prospect of the empire, a flattery which Tiberius punished by a close imprisonment. Sect. v. The circumstances which my author relates respecting Caligula's design, are detailed by Josephus, *Antiq.* B. xviii. Ch. viii.

† "He put a diadem about his head, and—changed his iron chain for a golden one of equal weight." *Ibid.* Ch. vi. Sect. x.

been annexed to that of Syria. Herodias, the profligate and ambitious wife of Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, who had procured the death of John the baptist, stung with envy to see the nephew of her husband honoured with the title of king, while *he* remained a simple tetrarch, could not rest till she had prevailed upon him to go to Rome to solicit the same title for himself. She accompanied him, but before their arrival the king had sent letters to Rome, accusing him of having conspired with the Parthians against the empire; in consequence of which, Caligula banished both Herod and his wife to Lyons in Gaul, and gave his tetrarchy to Agrippa.\* In the reign of this emperor Pilate did not escape the prosecution of the Jews, as he had done under Tiberius, but was banished to Vienne in Gaul, where, according to Eusebius, he, in despair, laid violent hands upon himself.†

It was probably owing to the apprehension which the Jews were under concerning the orders of Caligula, that, being wholly occupied about their own safety, they suspended the persecution of the Christians, in consequence of which the church enjoyed that “rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria,” which is mentioned, Acts ix. 31.‡ and which was attended with a great increase of the disciples. During this interval, Peter, being under no restraint from going wherever he pleased, visited the disciples at Lydda where he restored to health a person of the name of Eneas, who was paralytic, and had kept his bed eight years. He then went to Joppa, where he raised to life a christian woman of excellent character, and distinguished for her charity to the poor, and other virtues, of the name of Tabitha, (in Greek Dorcas). In this place Peter continued some time, residing with one Simon, a tanner. Acts ix. 43.

#### SECTION IV.

*From the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, to the Conversion of the Apostles at Jerusalem.*

IN all the preceding period, comprising the space of ten years after the death of Jesus, the apostles had confined the preaching of the gospel to the Jews, and they seem to have had no idea of extending it to the Gentiles, unless they should have first become proselytes to Judaism, so as to be

\* Josephus, *Antiq. Ch.* vii. *Passim*. † Hist. E. n. C. vii. p. 55. P.

‡ See on “the rest or peace of the churches,” *Londner*, l. pp. 97—100. N. pp. 237—239, 521, 537.

circumcised, and conform to the law of Moses. But a sufficient harvest, as we may say, of the Jews being now gathered in, it pleased the Divine Being to begin the greater harvest of the Gentile world; and Peter, who had been the first preacher of the gospel to the former, had also the honour of being first employed to preach to the latter.

Many of the Heathens residing in or near Judea, were at that time so much impressed with the superiority of the Jewish religion over that in which they had been educated, that though they did not choose to become proper proselytes, they were convinced of the absurdity of idolatry, and, in private, worshipped only the true God of the Jews, and many of these persons were remarkable for their devotion and benevolence. A person of this character, viz. Cornelius, a Roman centurion residing at Cæsarea, (the usual abode of the governors of the province,) one who is described, Acts x. 2, as "one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always," (by which is probably meant at all the usual hours at which the Jews offered their devotions,) was praying at the ninth hour (three in the afternoon with us), which was the time of evening sacrifice in the temple; when an angel appeared to him, informing him that his prayers and alms were accepted of God, and ordering him to send to Joppa for Peter, who would give him farther information. As the supernatural appearance to Paul was at mid-day, so this to Cornelius was not in the night, but at a time which can afford no suspicion of a man's being subject to any illusion. On this he sent two of his household servants, and also a devout soldier who attended upon his person, after he had given them an account of the important errand on which they were to go.

Before their arrival, Peter being at prayer on the housetop at noon, became very hungry; and while dinner was preparing for him, he had a trance, in which he saw a large sheet let down from heaven by its four corners, and in it all kinds of animals, clean and unclean, and he heard a voice saying to him, "rise Peter, kill and eat." To this he replied, that he had never eaten any thing which according to the law of Moses was unclean: but to this he received for answer, "What God hath cleansed, call not thou common." This vision, with all its circumstances, was repeated three times, and then the sheet seemed to be drawn up into heaven.

When Peter was recovered from his trance, and was con-

sidering with himself what it could mean, the three men dispatched by Cornelius knocked at the gate of the house, and the spirit of God informed him that they were inquiring for him, and bade him go along with them, for that he had sent them. The men, being introduced to Peter, delivered their message; and the next day Peter, accompanied by some disciples from Joppa, set out with them, and the day following being arrived at Cæsarea, they found Cornelius with many of his friends waiting for him.

On entering the room, Peter told them, that though it was not held lawful for a Jew to associate with Gentiles, he had been directed by God to consider no man as unclean, or unfit for his society; and therefore had come without hesitation when he was sent for. In return, Cornelius, in a distinct account of his vision, gave the reasons why he had sent for them; and Peter, not doubting but he was to give this company an account of the gospel, of which he was an apostle, recited to them the heads of the doctrine, the miracles, and especially the resurrection of Jesus, of which he said that himself and many others were witnesses; and as these Gentiles were not unacquainted with the Jewish religion, he moreover informed them that Christ was appointed to be the final judge of the world, and that the ancient prophets bore witness to him.

While Peter was giving this account of the Christian doctrine, (to which Cornelius and his friends, no doubt, gave the firmest assent, especially as Peter appealed to their own knowledge for the truth of many of the facts,) the spirit of God fell upon them, as it had done upon the Jewish disciples at the first, and they began to speak the praises of God in unknown tongues. This appearance greatly surprised Peter and his friends; and seeing that God had already evidently given them the seal of true disciples, Peter observed that there could be no impropriety in baptizing them. This being performed at their request, Peter and his companions continued some days longer with them.

Peter had, no doubt, expected that Cornelius and his friends were to have become proselytes to Judaism before they could be baptized, and received into the body of Christians; and the disciples at Jerusalem, having the same idea, and ~~now~~ having been informed of all the particulars which had led to the baptizing of Cornelius, but only that Peter had baptized persons who were uncircumcised, were much displeas'd with him for it. To satisfy them, Peter, when he was returned to Jerusalem, (which he pro-

ably had done to give the Christians there an account of so extraordinary an event,) related distinctly all that he had seen or done with relation to it; after which, as they could not but own that the hand of God was in it, they rejoiced, notwithstanding their former prejudices, that God had opened a door for the admission of Gentiles into the Christian church. Still, however, we shall find that many of the more zealous Jewish Christians were never thoroughly reconciled to the Gentile Christians, so far were they from believing the infallibility of an apostle as such. Acts xi. 1—18.

At this time the number of the disciples was much increased in the neighbourhood of Antioch, by the preaching of many persons who had been driven from Jerusalem by the persecution in which Stephen had been put to death; and the church at Jerusalem, hearing of this, sent Barnabas to Antioch; and he, being full of zeal, greatly encouraged them to persevere in the profession of the gospel. Having strengthened the disciples in that city, and added to the number of them, he went to seek Saul, who was at that time in his native city, Tarsus, in the neighbourhood of which he had been preaching; and having brought him to Antioch, they continued preaching there a whole year, and made many converts. These, bearing at that time a sensible proportion to the other inhabitants of the place, came now to be distinguished by the peculiar name of *Christians*, an appellation which, though probably given by their enemies, was cheerfully received by all the disciples of Christ.

At this time there came from Jerusalem to Antioch some Christians who had the gift of prophecy, and especially one Agabus, who was inspired to foretel a great famine through all the Roman empire, which happened in the reign of Claudius; and the disciples, on the apprehension of it, determined to send relief to their brethren in Judea. Accordingly, a collection being made for that benevolent purpose, it was sent to the elders of the church by Barnabas and Saul; Acts xi. 30. In this famine Helena, queen of Adiabene in Syria, bought corn at a great expense in Egypt, and distributed it to the Jews at Jerusalem.\*

It is something remarkable that, notwithstanding the admission of Cornelius and his friends into the number of disciples by baptism, and the approbation of Peter's conduct in this business by the church at Jerusalem, neither Peter himself, nor any other Christians, appear to have endeavoured

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iii. C. xiii. p. 60. (P.)

voURED to make any other converts among the Gentiles. Perhaps they waited for some more express authority for it. In the mean time, however, it seems that Paul (which was the name that Saul afterwards bore, and which I shall from this time give him), had preached to Gentiles in the neighbourhood of Tarsus and Antioch; and for this he had perhaps received from Christ in person, an express commission, either while he was preaching in Arabia, or on this particular occasion. Or, as it had been intimated to him at his baptism, that he was to be sent to the Gentiles, on hearing that Peter had baptized Cornelius, he might think himself sufficiently authorized, without receiving any particular commission for the purpose, to do what Peter (perhaps for fear of offending the Jews) had foreborne. What Paul had then done in this way, being in a country remote from Jerusalem, was not generally known there. But being sent thither upon this occasion, together with Barnabas, he informed the apostles, in confidence, of what he had done with respect to preaching the gospel to Gentiles; but he said nothing of it to the church at large. Gal. ii. 2.

Among other converts from the Gentiles was Titus, whom Paul took with him to Jerusalem, and, as he was not a Jew, he did not circumcise him; to which, as it should seem from Paul's account of this transaction, he had been advised; but he had peremptorily refused, lest it should be a precedent to enslave all future Gentile converts, by compelling them to observe the laws of Moses. Gal. ii. 3, 4. As to the chief of the apostles, Peter, James and John, when they heard the account that Paul gave, perceiving that he had a special commission to preach to the Gentiles, as Peter and the rest had to the Jews, they gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, wishing them the greatest success in their mission, only admonishing them to be mindful of the poor disciples at Jerusalem, and procure some contributions for them, which Paul himself had much at heart. Gal. ii. 9, 10.

On the death of Caligula, A. D. 41, his uncle Claudius was made emperor; and as the senate had been induced to proclaim him by the address of Agrippa, who was then at Rome, among other marks of his gratitude, he not only confirmed him in the kingdom which had been given him by Caligula, but added to his territories, Samaria and Judea, which had belonged to his grandfather. He also gave the kingdom of Chaldeis, in Syria, to his brother Herod, and to oblige him the more, the emperor made several decrees in favour of the Jews, allowing them the same privileges which

they had enjoyed through all the empire in the reign of Augustus.

Agrippa, who is also called Herod, on his arrival in Judea, did many things to ingratiate himself with his subjects; and to please them the more, he began a persecution against the Christians, in which he beheaded James the brother of John, and the son of Zebedee, who was the first of the apostles that suffered martyrdom. He also caused Peter to be apprehended, and committed him to the custody of two soldiers, one of them being chained to each of his hands, intending to have him executed after the passover; but it pleased God to deliver him from this danger, in the same manner in which he had been rescued on a former occasion. For in the night preceding the day on which he was to have been executed, an angel, attended with a great light, appeared in the prison, and Peter being asleep, he awakened him, and bade him rise and follow him; the chains at the same time falling from his hands. As they went, the gates of the prison opened to them of their own accord; and the angel leaving him, Peter found himself in the street alone. Then, but not before, Peter was satisfied that what had passed was no vision, but a reality. Going to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark the evangelist, he was received with great joy; and when he had told his friends in what manner he had been delivered from his imminent danger, he left the city. Herod disappointed in his views, ordered the soldiers who had been placed to guard Peter, to be put to death.

Afterwards, viz. A. D. 43, the same Herod Agrippa being at Cæsarea, a speech which he made there to some ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon was received with loud acclamations, and said to be the speech of a god, and not of a man. This fulsome adulation he had the vanity and impiety to receive; but he was presently seized with a mortal disease similar to that of which his grandfather died. For his body was in such a state that worms bred in it. Acts xii. 23.

This Agrippa left a son seventeen years of age, who succeeded his father; but being thought too young for the administration, it was given to Cuspius Fadus. After the death of his uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, Claudius gave Agrippa that kingdom. But in the thirteenth year of his reign he took it from him, and gave him, instead of it, those provinces which had formed the tetrarchy of Philip, viz. Batanea, Trachonitis and Abilene. Afterwards Nero gave him part of Galilee, including Tiberias and Julias beyond Jordan.

This persecutor of the Christians being removed, more converts were made, and Paul and Barnabas, having discharged their commission, returned to Antioch, taking with them Mark the evangelist. It was probably during this journey which Paul made to Jerusalem, fourteen years before he wrote the second Epistle to the Corinthians, that, being in the temple, he had a trance, in which he imagined that he was caught up to heaven; but what he heard there, he says, it was not lawful for him to declare. 2 Cor. xii. 4. And lest he should be exalted above measure, by so distinguishing an honour, he had from that time some affliction, which he calls "the messenger of Satan," from which he earnestly prayed to be relieved; but he only received for answer, that the power of God would be sufficient for him. What this affliction was he does not specify, but it was probably something that he apprehended would render his ministry less acceptable; and it is commonly thought to have been either an impediment in his speech, or something that rendered his personal appearance displeasing. During this vision, in which Christ appeared to him, he was ordered to make haste, and leave Jerusalem, because the Jews of that place would not receive his word, and he was told that he would be sent to a great distance, among the Gentiles. Acts xxii. 17—21.

This intimation of Jesus to Paul was soon verified. For in the year following, viz. A. D. 45, during the public worship at Antioch, it was intimated to one of the company who had the spirit of prophecy, that Barnabas and Paul should be set apart for some special commission. Accordingly, being recommended to the blessing of God, by fasting and prayer, they departed, and in the first place went to Cyprus, the native place of Barnabas. The Roman governor of the island at that time was Sergius Paulus, a man of prudence and moderation, who hearing of these two missionaries expressed a desire to converse with them; but one Elymas, a Jew, who, like Simon Magus, practised magical arts, endeavoured to give the governor bad impressions of Christianity; when Paul, moved no doubt by the spirit of God, after addressing him with great severity, told him that he would become blind for a season. This awful denunciation being immediately fulfilled, the governor was greatly struck with it, and declared himself a Christian. Acts xiii. 12.

Leaving Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas went to Perga in Pamphilia, and there Mark, discouraged, as Paul thought, with the prospect of the difficulties which were before them,

declined to accompany them any farther, and returned to Jerusalem. But they proceeded without him, and went to Antioch in Pisidia, where they began to preach in the Jewish synagogue. There Paul recited to his countrymen the promises of God to their fathers concerning the Messiah, shewing that those prophecies had been fulfilled in Jesus, who had been crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead. In consequence of this, many of the religious Jews and proselytes became converts, and some Gentiles who were present, expressing a wish to hear them again the next sabbath, almost the whole city crowded to them. This circumstance gave great offence to the zealous Jews, and by their interest with the leading men of the place, Paul and Barnabas were expelled from that country. Many converts, however, were made, especially among the Gentiles, and by them, others were converted in the neighbouring places. Acts xiii. 50.

Leaving Antioch, they went to Iconium, and here also they had many converts both of Jews and Greeks, and many miracles were wrought by them there. But the party of the unbelieving Jews prevailing, they were driven from that place, as they had been from Antioch, and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia.

The history of their preaching at Lystra is particularly remarkable. At the gates of the city there sat a man who had been lame from his birth, like him whom Peter had cured at the gate of the temple. Him Paul restored to the perfect use of his limbs; and the people, struck with the prodigy, immediately conceived that they must be two of their gods, who had visited the world in the form of men, taking Barnabas to be Jupiter, and Paul Mercury; and with this idea they brought oxen with garlands, and were preparing to offer sacrifice to them, so that it was with difficulty that Paul, by an excellent speech, in which he told them that they were only men like themselves, who had come to turn them from their idol worship to that God who made them and all things, diverted them from their purpose. Notwithstanding this extraordinary miracle, some zealous Jews from Antioch and Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas had been preaching before, arriving there, they induced the people to drive them from the place, and even to stone Paul, so that he was taken up for dead. They had probably been persuaded to think that they were dangerous people, possessed of the arts of magic, by which, though

they might do some good, they would probably do more mischief. Acts xiv. 8—19.

From this place they went to Derbe, and having preached, and made many disciples, in that city, they proceeded no farther at this time, but returned by way of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia, confirming the disciples they had made, and exhorting them not to be discouraged at the afflictions they might be called to endure, since they would have an abundant recompense in the kingdom of heaven. They also appointed elders in every church, and recommending them by prayer to the divine blessing, they made a progress through Pisidia, Pamphilia, Perga, to Attalia, from which last place they went by sea to Antioch in Syria, from which they had set out, where they gave the church an account of the success of their ministry; and here they continued some time.

In this place I must be indulged in making a few reflections. In preaching to the Jews, the great object of the apostles was to convince them, from their own Scriptures, that Jesus was the Messiah. With respect to the proper fundamental doctrines of religion, such as the unity of God, his placability to returning sinners, and the resurrection of the dead, they had nothing to add to their knowledge, except that, the evidence of this last-mentioned doctrine having been lost, it was now abundantly confirmed by the death and resurrection of Christ, who also taught that the dead would be raised at his second glorious coming; that after the rising of the dead a change would take place in the living, that they would then be incorruptible, and continue to exist without any farther propagation of the species. With respect to the wicked we are taught to believe that they will rise again as well as the virtuous; but whether it will be to an immortal life, we are not so explicitly informed. \*

The Gentiles had much more to learn of the apostles. They were to be brought off from their idolatrous, fascinating rites, their licentious festivals, and a thousand absurd and debasing superstitions, to the belief of one God, infinitely powerful, wise and good, the maker and preserver of all things. They had to learn the maxims of his moral government, as also much of their duty in this life, as well as every thing concerning their expectations in another. To

\* See Vol. II. p. 103, and Note.

hear such doctrines as the apostles could teach them on these most important subjects, confirmed by the decisive authority of miracles, must have struck the more considerate and well-disposed among them in a manner, of which we, who have been brought up in the belief of Christianity, can hardly form an idea. To them the gospel would be indeed, what its name imports, viz. *good news*.

Heathens converted to Christianity would see themselves, and every thing around them, in a new and infinitely more important light; as under the moral government of God, and candidates for a happy immortality. With this persuasion, they would not value this life, or any thing that they could lose or suffer in it, whenever it should come into competition with their interest in another. Accordingly, we shall find, in the sequel of this history, that many, who had been accustomed to the elegancies and luxuries of life, eagerly ran to martyrdom, even though torture generally preceded death. It is no wonder that the magistrates, and other persons in the higher ranks of life, who gave little attention to the preaching of the gospel, and who would not give themselves the trouble even to look into any thing written by Christians, were astonished at this novelty, and considered the Christian converts as seized with madness. But so general an effect, upon the more sober and virtuous part of the community, in all countries the best subjects of the empire in all other respects, was a circumstance deserving of more attention than they were disposed to give to it.

On the other hand, it is no great wonder that, attached as many were to their ancient religion and rites, in which they had been educated, and which had been practised from time immemorial; imagining, as they did, that the welfare of the state depended upon the observance of them; ignorant as they were of the nature and evidences of Christianity; \* uninquisitive about it, and listening to idle and malicious slander against those who made profession of the new religion; so many persons in the higher ranks of life, and even men of letters, and philosophers, as well as of the lowest rabble, who will listen to nothing rational or serious, still continued bigoted Heathens.

\* See Vol. IV. pp. 486, 516, 517, and the references to *Lardner*

## SECTION V.

*From the Council of the Apostles to Paul's third Apostolical Journey.*

WHILE Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, Peter arrived at that city from Jerusalem; and finding many Gentile converts, he did not scruple to converse and communicate with them. But other Christians, pretending to have the authority of James (who seems to have had the chief influence at Jerusalem), insisted on the new converts being circumcised, and becoming in all respects proselytes to Judaism; and Peter, rather than displease these persons, abstained from communicating with the Gentile converts, and associated with the Jews only. This conduct in Peter gave just alarm and offence to Paul, who had been chiefly instrumental in spreading the gospel among the Gentiles, and who, on that account, was naturally more zealous for their liberty. He therefore freely and publicly expostulated with Peter on the impropriety and inconsistency of his conduct, and this excellent man did not persist in what he was convinced was wrong. Gal. ii. 11.

The more zealous Jewish Christians, however, unmoved by the remonstrances of Paul, or the acquiescence of Peter, still maintained that there was no salvation out of the Mosaic institutions, and insisted upon the Gentile converts conforming in all respects to them; and the church being much disturbed by this contention, they agreed to send Barnabas and Paul, who had been their messengers on a former occasion, to consult the whole body of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. These two missionaries gave an account of all that God had done by their means in Gentile countries to the Christian societies, in their journey through Phœnicia and Samaria, and by them the news was heard with great joy. But when they came to Jerusalem, they were not able to give the same satisfaction to their brethren there. Acts xv. 3-9.

However, on a day appointed to consider of the matter, after much contention, Peter stood up, and reminded them how God had some time before given his sanction to the admission of believing Gentiles into the Christian church, by imparting to them the gifts of the Spirit as he had done to themselves; and said that it was unreasonable to impose upon the Gentiles so heavy a yoke, as the observance of

the laws of Moses must be to them, when it would make no difference with respect to their final salvation.

This was followed by Paul and Barnabas giving a distinct account of the effect of their preaching to the Gentiles, and of the miracles with which it had been attended. On this, James recollected several passages of the ancient prophets, which he thought, implied that the Gentiles were to be admitted into the future kingdom of the Messiah, and gave it as his opinion, that the new converts should not be troubled with the observance of the whole law, but that it should be recommended to them to abstain from idols (meaning, probably, from partaking of the feasts in sacrificing to idols), from fornication, (to which the religion of the Heathens gave too much countenance, and of the criminality of which the Heathens in general made very light,) from things strangled, and from blood.

In this opinion the whole assembly acquiesced, and accordingly an epistle was drawn up, addressed to the Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, by whom Paul and Barnabas had been sent, to that purpose; assuring them that, notwithstanding what some had said, they had no authority from them to insist upon their being circumcised, or observing the laws of Moses. Along with this letter, and the bearers of it Paul and Barnabas, they sent Judas and Silas, who were probably elders at Jerusalem, to give them a farther account; and when it was delivered at Antioch, it gave the greatest satisfaction to the whole assembly. Judas and Silas continued in that city some time, encouraging the brethren; and when Judas returned to Jerusalem, Silas chose to remain at Antioch. Acts xv. 34.

This solemn assembly, or council, of the apostles, was probably held A. D. 49, and the year following, Paul and Barnabas resolved upon a second progress through those parts of Asia Minor, which they had visited in their former journey. But when Barnabas proposed to take Mark with them, Paul objected to him, on account of his having left them before; and not being able to agree, they took different routes, Barnabas being accompanied by Mark, and Paul by Silas; and as Barnabas chose to go to Cyprus, Paul took the road through Syria and Cilicia; each of them beginning his progress through those countries with which he was best acquainted. Acts xv. 41.

Of what Barnabas did in this progress, and to the end of his life, we are not informed; but Paul being attended in

a great measure by Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, we are happily well acquainted with his subsequent history: and as he laboured more than any of the apostles in the propagation of the gospel, and was more successful in it, especially in Gentile countries, and above all in Greece, the seat of learning and the arts, it is by far of the most importance for us to be informed of the particulars of his progress. We cannot, indeed, be without our wishes to know more of the history, public and private, of the rest of the apostles, and others who distinguished themselves by their early attachment to Christianity, but it is a curiosity which, for wise reasons, no doubt, it has not pleased Divine Providence to gratify. As to any honour which, from this circumstance, might have accrued to them, it is not probable that they had any desire or thought of the kind. It was esteemed enough by them to partake of that glory which will be revealed at the great day, when every man's virtues and exertions will be sufficiently known, and when merit will be better appreciated than it can be at present. Let this consideration lessen our desire for what is called immortality in this world, in having our names transmitted with applause to distant generations: extending our views to that which will commence when this world, and what is usually called time, shall be no more.

But, dropping these reflections, let us attend to the progress of Paul, and now we shall find him not contenting himself with visiting the churches which he had planted before, but greatly extending his circuit, and planting many new churches, and far more considerable ones, in the more distant parts of Asia Minor, and also in Greece. Having passed through Syria and Cilicia, he came to Derbe and Lystra, which he had visited in his former journey, and at the latter of these places he took Timothy to accompany him in his farther progress. This young man was one of the most distinguished of Paul's disciples, and though his father was a Greek, yet, as his mother was a Jewess, he caused him to be circumcised, which sufficiently shews that, notwithstanding Paul's zeal for the liberty of the Gentile Christians, he believed in the obligation of the laws of Moses upon all who were of Jewish extraction. Acts xvi. 3.

As in his former progress, Paul had visited only the southern and interior parts of Asia Minor, he now directed his course through the northern and western parts, going through Galatia and Phrygia: but being admonished by the

Spirit not to preach at that time in Asia Proper, or that province of which Ephesus was the capital, he went to Mysia; and wherever he came, he recited the epistle of the church at Jerusalem, which gave such satisfaction to the Gentile converts, that the churches formerly established were confirmed, and their numbers were increased. From Mysia, Paul had intended to go to Bythinia; but being directed by the spirit of God, he came to Troas, a city on the coast of the *Ægean* sea, over against Macedonia; and there he appears to have been joined by Luke, the writer of the history, as from this time he uses the plural number *we*, &c. That christian churches were every where established in all the places through which Paul had passed, appears from the subsequent history, though no mention is made of them in this concise account.

Paul was now come to the western extremity of Asia Minor, and his purpose to cross the sea, and visit Greece, was suggested to him by a vision, in which a man of Macedonia appeared to him, and entreated him to go and help them. Accordingly, he and his company went first to the island Samothrace, and then, landing on the continent at Neapolis, they proceeded to Philippi, the metropolis of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. Having waited a few days, they went on the sabbath to a place by the river side, whither, for want perhaps of a proper synagogue, the Jews used to resort for prayer. At this place the women particularly attended; and a convert being made of a woman whose name was Lydia, a seller of purple (which being a valuable commodity at that time, implies some degree of opulence in those who vended it), she prevailed upon Paul and his companions to go into her house, and entertained them some days. Acts xvi. 15.

In this place Paul brought himself and his companions into difficulty by a most benevolent miracle. An insane woman, thought to be possessed by a spirit which enabled her to tell fortunes, and who by that means had been the source of great gain to some persons whose slave she was, frequently shouting after Paul and his friends, and calling them (what she had probably heard of themselves, or others) the servants of the most high God, who were come to shew them the way of salvation; Paul (feeling, no doubt, a divine impulse) pronounced her cured in the name of Jesus Christ, on which she was instantly restored to her right mind. The gains of this poor slave's masters vanishing with her disorder, they were so provoked, that, seizing Paul

and Silas, and persuading the magistrates that, being Jews, they were introducing foreign customs, forbidden by the Roman laws, they procured an order to have them severely scourged, and put in prison.

So far was this unjust and cruel treatment from being felt as an affliction by Paul and his companion, that though they were not only confined by walls, but were farther secured by having their feet put in the stocks, they spent the night in singing praises to God. It pleased the Divine Being, however, to effect their deliverance in a miraculous manner, and by that means to procure great respect to the Christian cause in this city, the first in which the gospel had been preached on the continent of Greece. For at midnight there was a great earthquake, attended with the opening of the doors of the prison, and what was infinitely more extraordinary, the loosing of the bonds by which the prisoners were confined.

The keeper of the prison, awaked by the earthquake, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was going to kill himself, rather than suffer an ignominious death for the neglect of his duty, with which he, no doubt, apprehended that he should be charged; but Paul, perceiving his intention, called out to him aloud, telling him they were all safe. Thus encouraged, he got a light, and ran into the place; and being much terrified, though pleased to find that what Paul had said was true, he fell at their feet, and having probably heard them preach, and been somewhat impressed by their discourse, and being now convinced of the presence of God with them, he eagerly asked what he should do to be saved. Whether by salvation he meant the happiness of a future state or not, Paul understanding him in that sense, replied that, if he believed in Jesus Christ he would be saved. Being afterwards more at leisure in the house into which the jailer had taken his prisoners, they discoursed to him more at large concerning the Christian religion; and he and his family, being convinced of its truth, they were all baptized, and spent the remainder of the night in great joy.

When it was day, the magistrates, reflecting upon the violence and irregularity of their proceedings, sent orders to release their prisoners; but Paul, taking advantage of his privilege of a Roman citizen, which he inherited from his father, replied that, as they had acted contrary to the Roman law in scourging a citizen of Rome, he would not leave the place till they waited upon him themselves. At this the

magistrates were not a little alarmed, and having come, and made their acknowledgments, they prevailed upon them, after much entreaty, to go away. Accordingly, after paying another visit to Lydia, and encouraging the disciples they had made, they left Philippi, and passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there were Jews. Acts xvii. 1. The reason of their making no stay at either of the two other places, probably, was there being a few or no Jews in them; and at this time Paul always chose to address himself in the first place to the Jews. And it was a great convenience to the preachers of the gospel to find regular places of worship, to which a number of persons always resorted, and where they themselves could conscientiously attend. Also, besides Jews, curiosity generally brought some of the Gentiles to their synagogues.

At Thessalonica our missionaries were far from deriving any advantage from their countrymen. For after they had preached some time, and made some disciples, the unbelieving Jews insulted them in the grossest manner, assaulting the house of one Jason their friend, and endeavouring to excite the common people against them. Not finding them at the house of Jason, they took him and some of the disciples to the magistrates, accusing them of rebellion against the emperor, in consequence of setting up another king called Jesus. At this the rulers and the people were much disturbed; but not entering into all the violence of the prosecutors, they contented themselves with taking security of Jason and the other disciples, of that place, and then dismissed Paul and his companions. Apprehensive, however, of the malice of their enemies, they left the place by night, and came to Berea, where they found the Jews better disposed than in most other places; for they gave Paul a patient bearing; and, as he appealed to the Scriptures, they examined by them the truth of what he advanced: and here they made many converts, both of Jews and Greeks; and among them several women of condition.

But the Jews who had persecuted them at Thessalonica, hearing that they were received at Berea, incited the common people to insult them there also. In consequence of this, the disciples, after making preparations for sending away Paul by sea, conducted him by land to Athens, while Silas and Timothy continued at Berea, intending to follow him as soon as possible. Acts xvii. 14.

At Athens we find Paul in a situation considerably different from any that he had been in before; and they who have

formed a high opinion of the learning which was cultivated in that city, cannot but have their curiosity excited to know how he would conduct himself there. Far from being intimidated by the fame of the learning of the Athenians, Paul not only disputed with the Jews in their synagogues, as in other cities, but in places of public concourse with any person that came in his way.

After behaving in this manner for some time—some philosophers of the Epicurean and Stoic sects, (of whom the former made pleasure the great end of life, while the latter affected to act upon the maxims of the most rigid morality,) endeavoured to expose him to ridicule: calling him an idle prater. But that not silencing him, or answering their purpose, they brought against him a serious accusation of introducing new gods, because he preached about Jesus and the resurrection. In answer to this charge he was obliged to make his defence before the Areopagus, the most respectable court of judicature in that city, or in all Greece, and which had cognizance of all matters of religion. The judges of this court sat on benches of stone in the open air, and before them Paul was interrogated concerning the new doctrine which he was charged with preaching.

As it was a crime to introduce the worship of any new deity, without the authority of the state, Paul, with great address, took advantage of an inscription which he had seen on one of their altars, which was dedicated TO UNKNOWN GOD, to compliment the Athenians on the attention which they gave to the subject of religion: and said that the God which he preached to them, was he to whom they had paid worship, though without having sufficient knowledge of him, viz. the God who made the world and all things in it. This God, he said, unlike the other objects of their worship—did not dwell in temples made by men, or stand in need of any services which they could render him, since he was to all, the giver of life—and of every enjoyment. He added, that what one of their own poets had said of Jupiter, viz. that mankind are his offspring, was eminently true of this God: and hence he argued that, if men are the offspring of God, and resemble him, he could not be represented by such lifeless statues of gold, silver, or stone, as those to which they paid their devotions. He then informed them that though God had thought fit to permit this improper worship for a time, he now called upon all mankind to abandon it, and adopt a more rational service of him. He farther assured them, that God had fixed a day on which he

would judge all men according to their works, by Jesus Christ, whom he had appointed for that purpose, and that his divine mission was confirmed by his resurrection from the dead.

In this part of his discourse Paul was interrupted by some who laughed at the idea of a resurrection; but, as far as appears, without inquiring into the evidence that Paul could have adduced for it. Others, however, expressed a wish to hear him farther on this interesting subject, and he was probably dismissed without punishment, or censure. At Athens, Paul made some, though not many converts. Among them, however, was Dionysius, a member of the court before which he had pleaded, and a woman whose name was Damaris. Acts xvii. 34.

It is to the honour of Athens, that Paul met with no ill usage there, but that when he thought proper, after being joined by Timothy, he left that city, and came to Corinth, where he met with a Jew of the name of Aquila, and his wife Priscilla, who had left Rome in consequence of Claudius having banished all Jews from the metropolis of the empire.\* This man was a tent-maker, and Paul having been taught the same art, worked with him, and maintained himself by his labour. Here, as in other places, Paul attended in the synagogue every sabbath-day, and there laboured to convince both Jews and Greeks of the truth of the Christian religion, and that Jesus was the promised Messiah; and Silas and Timothy having joined him from Macedonia, he exerted himself still more, being animated by their society.

At length the unbelieving Jews were so much offended at Paul, and opposed him with so much violence, that perceiving they would hear no reason, he solemnly shook his garment in their place of public worship, saying, "Your

\* Suetonius, who mentions this banishment of the Jews from Rome, says it was on account of their continually making tumults at the instigation of Chrestus. Vit. Claudii. C. xxv. [*Judæos, impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes, Româ expulit.*] By this he probably meant Christ, and Dr. Benson supposes that the tumults he speaks of were such as were occasioned by their violent opposition to Christianity at its introduction into Rome, similar to those which they excited in other places on the same account. It is indeed probable that Christianity had been preached in Rome at this time; and that the zealous Jews opposed the introduction of it is equally probable: but as such tumults as these could hardly be so great as to give occasion to such a measure as the banishment of all Jews, Christians and others, I should rather think that Suetonius, in whose time the Christians made a considerable figure, and to whom Nero had ascribed the burning of Rome, imagined, without any reason for it, that this edict of Claudius had a similar cause. Josephus takes no notice of this edict; and it is evident from the subsequent history, that it was not of long continuance, whether it expired with the death of Claudius or not. (P.)

blood be upon your own heads, I am innocent of your ruin. I shall now preach to the Gentiles." Accordingly, quitting the synagogue, he from this time made use of the house of one Justus, a pious man, who lived near the place. He had not, however, preached in vain before; for Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, was converted, and many others with him. Farther, to encourage Paul, Christ appeared to him, and bade him continue to preach with all boldness, for that no person should hurt him, and that *he had much people in that city*. In consequence of this he continued there a year and six months.

In the mean time, the unbelieving Jews, disturbed, no doubt, at the many converts which Paul made, brought him before Gallio, the Roman governor of the province, accusing him of teaching men to worship God in a manner contrary to the laws of Moses. But when Gallio found that the charge related only to their religion, he declared that he would not interfere in any business of that kind, and dismissed them unheard. Acts xviii. 12—17.

During Paul's residence at Corinth, he wrote two epistles to the Christians at Thessalonica, from which place he had been driven by a persecution which had probably extended to his disciples: for Timothy having joined Paul at Athens, had by him been sent back to Thessalonica, to comfort them under their sufferings from the unbelieving Jews, and to confirm them in the faith of the gospel. 1 Thess. iii. 2. In the first of the epistles which he now wrote to them, besides having the same object with his message by Timothy, he gave them a more particular account of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, which some of them seem to have misapprehended. And happy it is for us that this apostle had such an occasion to explain himself so fully on this important subject, as well as in his epistle to the Corinthians afterwards; since by this means we are acquainted with some particulars concerning it, of which we must otherwise have been ignorant.

The first epistle to the Thessalonians, written A. D. 52, is the oldest writing now extant of any Christian, and being unquestionably authentic, and written not long after, but even during, the time of the transactions to which it alludes, it supplies the most indisputable evidence of several of those facts which are inseparably connected with, and necessarily imply, the truth of every thing that is essential in the Christian history.

The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written not

many months after the first, which appears to have been very favourably received; but Paul wrote this second in order to give the Christians of that place some farther admonitions, and also some information with respect to the mistakes which they were still under, especially as to the near approach of the day of judgment. Both these epistles abound with excellent moral precepts, expressed with great energy, which clearly shews that the great object of the preachers of the gospel had nothing of ambition or selfishness in it; but that it was intended to reform the world, and to prepare men by good dispositions and good conduct in this life, for the proper employment and happiness of another.

From Corinth also it is probable that Paul wrote the epistle to the churches of Galatia, which had been troubled by some Jewish converts, who had conceived, and endeavoured to propagatè, prejudices against his authority, and who had inculcated the necessity of the Gentile converts conforming to circumcision, and all the institutions of Moses. On this account Paul, in this epistle, enlarges on the evidence of his apostolical authority, as what he had received from Christ himself, and not from the other apostles. This he shews by a succinct account of his history; and he endeavours by a variety of arguments to keep those to whom he writes, firm in the profession and practice of the pure gospel of Christ, unadulterated with any mixture from the institutions of Moses, as they were not obligatory upon the Gentile converts. He concludes this, as well as his other epistles, with practical admonitions and exhortations.

If the epistle to Titus was written, as Dr. Lardner supposes, from Macedonia, in Paul's third journey, (A. D. 56.) it is probable that he visited Crete from Corinth at this time; as he does not appear ever to have been nearer to Crete than he was now, and to Titus he had committed the care of the churches in that island.

Paul continued at Corinth some time after this, and then thinking to return to Syria, he took Aquila and Priscilla with him; and having shaved his head at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, (for he had made some vow, and scrupulously conformed to the Jewish ritual with respect to it,) he took ship there, and sailed to Ephesus, where he left his two companions. As for himself, he, according to his custom, attended the synagogue worship in the place, and preached to the Jews who resorted to it. But though he was pressed to continue some time at Ephesus, he declined it, alleging that he must of necessity be at Jerusalem at the next festival:

and promising to return, if it pleased God, he left his friends there, and went by sea to Cæsarea. Having gone thence to Jerusalem, to shew his respect to the church there, he returned to Antioch from which he had set out. Acts xviii. 22.

This was a most important journey, as by means of it the knowledge of the gospel was much extended, Christian churches being now planted in the most considerable cities of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece; and from these cities, Christianity would soon spread itself to the neighbouring towns of less note, and from them to the villages. This brings the history of Christianity to A. D. 53.

## SECTION VI.

### *From Paul's third Journey to his Confinement at Jerusalem.*

PAUL having continued some time at Antioch, but probably not a whole year, set out upon his third apostolical journey, to preach the gospel in Asia and Greece; and having made a regular progress through Galatia and Phrygia, he came to Ephesus, where he had left Aquila and Priscilla, and where, in his absence, had been Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, very eloquent and well versed in the Scriptures, but only acquainted with the preaching and baptism of John, till by Aquila and Priscilla he was informed of the doctrine of Christ. Being disposed to pass into Achaia, the disciples recommended them to their brethren there, and he was of great use in that country, in strengthening the believers, and making converts among the Jews; convincing them from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. Apollos was at Corinth when Paul arrived at Ephesus.

Here Paul meeting with a company of twelve men, besides women, who like Apollos, had been baptized by John, but were unacquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he instructed them in it, and baptized them in the name of Christ. After this Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them, so that they spake with tongues, and prophesied. Acts xix. 6.

At Ephesus, Paul, as he had done at other places, began with resorting to the Jewish synagogue, and preaching there, which he now did for about three months; but this being attended with much wrangling, he quitted that place, and taught in the school of one Tyrannus, probably a heathen philosopher, and perhaps converted by him. Here Paul continued two years; and preaching in the neighbouring cities as well as at

Ephesus, all the country of Asia, properly so called, had an opportunity of being well acquainted with the principles of the Christian religion. It pleased the Divine Being also, upon this occasion, to add the sanction of miracles in a very distinguishing manner to the preaching of Paul: so that even when the handkerchiefs and aprons of sick persons were brought to him, their diseases were cured, and some of the persons relieved by him were demoniacs.

Some Jewish exorcists, seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, perceiving this, and thinking there must be some powerful charm in the invocation of the name of Jesus, repeated it over a demoniac, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." Acts xix. 13. But the madman, not being restored to his right mind, though distinguishing what they said, insulted them, and fell violently upon them, saying, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" And they did not escape without wounds. This event made much noise in the town and country, and the success of Paul and of these exorcists being so manifestly different, it brought a great accession of reputation to Paul, and was the means of gaining him many converts. At the same time the inefficacy and folly of all magical rites was so apparent, that great numbers brought their books containing such secrets, and burned them publicly; and though they might have been sold for fifty thousand pieces of silver, (equal probably to eight hundred pounds,) they chose to make this sacrifice, rather than contribute to the spread of such wicked and mischievous arts by the sale of them. Acts xix. 19.

At Ephesus, Paul was applied to by messengers from Corinth, where, as well as in Galatia, attempts had been made to lessen his authority; and where some persons distinguished by their eloquence, and boasting of their knowledge, had taught that the Christian resurrection was not a literal rising from the dead, but something else; either a change of life and conduct, or the emancipation of the soul from its confinement in the body. These persons, therefore, evidently held the Gnostic opinions, and this is the first time we meet with the mention of them among Christians. For the philosophers of that age, believing in the inherent evil nature of matter, and that the soul was only confined in the body for a time, thought it would be most consummately happy when it was discharged from its fleshly incumbrance.

On this account Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians, asserts at large the reality of a proper resurrection, in imita-

tion of that of Christ, on which the whole of the Christian scheme depended; assuring them that that which was committed to the grave would rise again, but changed in its nature and properties, from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible, from earthly to heavenly. He also answers a variety of questions which they had proposed to him relating to the Lord's supper, spiritual gifts, marriage, (which their Gnostic teachers had considered as a defilement,) abstaining from feasts in honour of idols, which some of them thought to be very innocent, and from fornication, which the religion of the Heathens countenanced on those occasions, and to which the inhabitants of the luxurious city of Corinth were remarkably addicted.

Paul's address to them on these and other subjects, shews that many of these first converts, though they were convinced of the truth of Christianity, were not immediately reformed by it, but continued addicted to the sensual gratifications in which they had indulged themselves before, and that it was not without difficulty that they were brought off from them. And we may easily believe that many persons of good sense, and competent judges of evidence, but whose lives and moral characters were far from being irreproachable, might be convinced of the truth of Christianity, but that it would be some time before it effected a reformation of their conduct.

In this epistle, Paul also asserts his own apostolical authority, and endeavours to make the Corinthian converts think less highly of the boasted eloquence of their new teachers, who seem, like the philosophers and rhetoricians of those times, to have received money for their harangues. He therefore shews the difference between his own conduct and theirs in that respect.

From Ephesus, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus before him into Macedonia, as he intended to go that way into Achaia, which he had done before. His farther view was to return to Jerusalem, and in another journey to go as far as Rome. But while he continued at Ephesus, in the absence of Timothy and Erastus, there was a great tumult in the city, occasioned by one Demetrius, and others who made what are called *silver shrines* for Diana, a goddess who was worshipped in a magnificent temple, and with great pomp, at Ephesus. These people, seeing the great progress that Paul and his companions made in converting the people to Christianity, and consequently bringing them off from the worship of Diana, clearly foresaw, if they did not already feel, a great diminution of their profits.

In this tumult two of Paul's friends, Gaius and Aristarchus, who were of Macedonia, were seized, and carried into the public theatre; and on this Alexander, a Jew, (being probably a good speaker, and a man of some influence in the place,) was brought by his brethren into the theatre, to endeavour to appease the multitude; but the authors of the tumult prevented him by incessantly shouting, as they had done some time before, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. However, the chief magistrate in the place insisting upon being heard, reprov'd the people for the disturbance that had been made, which he said was altogether unjustifiable, as they had no crime to lay to the charge of Paul or his friends; adding, that if they had any just accusation against them they should be heard in a regular assembly. By this means an end was put to the tumult, and presently after, Paul left Ephesus, and went, as he had proposed, to Macedonia, leaving Timothy, who had arrived before he set out. Acts xx. 1.

From Macedonia, Paul wrote his first epistle to Timothy, to whom he had intrusted the care of the church of Ephesus; and from this epistle it appears that this church was then infected with the Gnostic doctrines, by persons pretending to science and philosophy, who despised the plain preaching of Paul. He therefore urges Timothy strenuously to oppose the progress of those opinions, and he gives him many excellent advices, relating to the conduct of himself, and of the church which was committed to his care.

It is also supposed that Paul wrote at this time his epistle to Titus; and as it is very similar to the epistle to Timothy, it is evident that the churches in Crete must have been in the same state with that at Ephesus, Gnosticism having been introduced there, as well as into other churches. For that being the philosophy of the times, the converts who had made profession of it, would naturally be inclined to mix their peculiar tenets with the Christian doctrines. When Paul wrote to Titus, he proposed to pass the winter in Nicopolis, and urged him to come to him thither.\*

From Macedonia it is probable that Paul, at this time, passed into Illyricum, and that before he left this country, or Macedonia, he wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians. He had been very anxious about the reception of his former epistle, which had been sent by Titus, who was to have met

\* I am by no means satisfied about the time in which Paul wrote his epistle to Titus. (P.) See *supra*, p. 41, and *Lardner*, VI. pp. 320—324

him at Troas, after he left Ephesus, but who did not join him till he arrived in Macedonia. Here Titus gave Paul such an account of the situation of things at Corinth, and of the effect of his former epistle, as gave him great encouragement, though he saw sufficient reason to write a second epistle before he went to that city in person. This also was sent by Titus, who returned to Corinth, in order to promote a collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem. In this second epistle, Paul explains himself farther with respect to some subjects of which he had treated in the former. He also enforces his admonitions against the Gnostic teachers, by whom that church had been misled.

Paul, having preached with much assiduity, at length departed from these northern regions, and arrived in Greece properly so called, A. D. 58; his chief object being Corinth. Here he stayed three months, and finding himself at leisure, wrote a large epistle to the Christians at Rome. It does not appear who had preached Christianity in this city; but as there was a perpetual concourse of people, of all descriptions, from all parts of the empire to the metropolis, nothing could be transacted in the most distant provinces that would not soon be known there; and Christians, as well as others, having business in Rome, their zeal would naturally prompt them to communicate to others what they were acquainted with, and valued, themselves. Also, many persons being converted to Christianity at Rome, would make more converts on their return to those provinces to which they belonged. Thus the vast extent of the Roman empire, which comprehended almost all the civilized part of the world, was a circumstance exceedingly favourable to the speedy propagation of the gospel. It is also a circumstance peculiarly favourable to the evidence of Christianity, that it took the deepest root in the most civilized and learned, and consequently the most inquisitive, part of the world.

It appears from this epistle that they were Jews who were most active in preaching the gospel at Rome, and that there, as well as in other places they had incited their peculiar prejudices in conjunction with it. For they had endeavoured to impose the yoke of the Mosiac institutions upon the Gentile Christians there, and it was chiefly with a view to correct this error, that Paul, who justly considered himself as the apostle of the Gentiles, and consequently the assertor of their rights, wrote this epistle. For this is the great object of it. At the same time, however, he endeavoured

vours to give those to whom he writes a very high, but a strictly just idea of the value of Christianity, as opposed to the heathenish rites in which they had been educated, and in which the most unnatural vices had been practised. In opposition to every thing of this kind, he strongly inculcates the excellent moral precepts of Christianity.

At Corinth, as well as in other places, the unbelieving Jews did Paul every ill office in their power. At this time, they even laid wait for him, probably intending to murder him; but he escaped from them by going first to Macedonia, whereas they had imagined that he would go directly to Syria, and had, no doubt, laid their plan accordingly. In Macedonia, Paul was joined by Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy. There were also with him from Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. All these persons going before, waited for him (who was accompanied by Luke) at Troas, where he arrived, after spending the Easter at Philippi. Acts xx. 6.

At Troas, Paul and his company spent seven days, of which the last was the Lord's day; and as he was to depart on the morrow, he was led to prolong his discourse to the assembled church till midnight; in consequence of which, a young man of the name of Eutychus, who had seated himself in a higher part of the building, being overcome with sleep, fell down, and was taken up dead; but Paul praying over him, he was presently restored to life. After this interruption, Paul continued with the disciples till day-break, and having received the communion with them, he departed.

From Troas, Paul went on foot to Assos, where his friends who had gone thither by sea, took him in, and proceeded to Mytilene. When they were come to Miletus, Paul, who was determined not to make any stay in Asia, lest he should be prevented from arriving at Jerusalem at the time that he had fixed, sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus, and addressed them in a most affectionate and excellent speech; in which he recited the particulars of his own conduct among them, and exhorted them to imitate him in their care of the church. After concluding with prayer, they parted from each other with many tears, especially as Paul had told them, that they must not expect to see him any more. Acts xx. 38.

Paul and his company then proceeded on their voyage, and at length arrived at Tyre, whither the ship they were

in was bound. There they found Christians, with whom they stayed seven days; and here some who had the spirit of prophecy warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem. But without attending to the admonition, he took leave of them as he had done of the elders of Ephesus; and with every mark of affection, and with a great crowd of women and children, they accompanied him to the ship. They next proceeded to Ptolemais, where they stayed one day; and the day after they arrived at Casarea, where they were received by Philip the evangelist, the same who had converted the eunuch of Ethiopia. He had four daughters who were prophetesses.

Here Paul and his friends continued some time, having it now in their power, without the uncertainty attending a passage by sea, to proceed to Jerusalem whenever they pleased; and while they continued here, there came from Jerusalem the same Agabus, who had foretold the famine in the time of Claudius. He, in imitation of the ancient prophets, who often expressed themselves by symbols, caused himself to be bound hand and foot with Paul's girdle, and said that, in the same manner, would the Jews of Jerusalem bind the owner of that girdle, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. On this all the company earnestly entreated Paul that he would not proceed to Jerusalem; but he, with a noble magnanimity, replied, that he was ready not only to be bound, but also to suffer death in Jerusalem in the cause of Christ. After this they used no farther entreaties, but, with the same resignation, said, The will of God be done. Then being joined by Mnason, an old disciple, of Cyprus, and other Christians of Casarea, they went together to Jerusalem; where their fellow-Christians received them with joy. Acts xxi. 17. This was at Pentecost, A. D. 48, eight years before the commencement of the famous Jewish war.

## SECTION VII.

*From Paul's Confinement at Jerusalem, to his Arrival at Rome, A. D. 61, and his Employment there.*

THE day after Paul's arrival at Jerusalem, he went to James, and the elders of the church; and when he had given them an account of his success in extending the knowledge of the gospel, they rejoiced at it, but informed him, that there were many thousands of the Jewish Chris-

tians at Jerusalem, exceedingly zealous for the observance of the law, who had heard that he had taught even the Jews in Gentile countries to abandon the institutions of Moses, and discontinue the circumcising of their children. In order to refute this calumny, they advised him to shew his conformity to the law by the public observance of some of its rites. Accordingly, he accompanied four men who had a vow on them, and purified himself along with them, by sacrifices and other ceremonies. This would have taken up seven days, but before they were expired, some Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, caused him to be apprehended in a tumultuous manner, alleging that wherever he had been, he had taught things contrary to the people of the Jews, the law, and the temple, and likewise that he had brought Greeks into the temple, and had thereby polluted that holy place. Acts xxi. 28. For they had seen him in the city accompanied by Trophimus, an Ephesian, and took it for granted that he had taken him into the temple.

In this tumult, in which a great part of the city was involved, Paul would have been destroyed, if Lysias, the Roman governor of the city had not rescued him. He thought it necessary, however, to secure him by binding him, and ordering him to be lodged in a castle adjoining to the temple. But the tumult still continuing, as they were carrying him away, Paul asked leave to speak to the people. On this, the governor, probably hearing him speak in Greek, expressed some surprise at it, having supposed that he might have been an Egyptian, who sometime before had made a rebellion in the country; but Paul told him that he was a Jew, and a citizen of Tarsus.

Having leave to speak, Paul addressed the multitude in Hebrew, and, in a speech of considerable length, gave them an account of his history and conversion to Christianity. But when he came to speak of his being sent to the Gentiles, his audience were not able to restrain themselves any longer, but exclaimed against him as a person not fit to live. Acts xxii. 22. On this, the governor commanded him to be brought into the castle, and was proceeding to examine him by torture, and had him bound for that purpose, when Paul informed them that, being a Roman citizen, they could not legally scourge him. This intimidated the governor, who therefore contented himself with bringing Paul, unbound, the next day before the Jewish Sanhedrim.

Twenty-three years had now elapsed since Paul had been in the confidence of the chief rulers of his country.

and employed by them in the persecution of the Christians, so that at this time many of them must have been unknown to him, and among these perhaps was the high-priest Ananias. For when, upon his declaring his innocence, this supreme magistrate irregularly and unjustly ordered a person to strike him; being provoked, but not intimidated, he replied, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commaundest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" And being reprov'd for it, as reviling God's high-priest, he said that he did not know that he was the high-priest. Acts xxiii. 3—5.

This intrepid behaviour of Paul might perhaps dispose his judges to respect him more than they had done. The court, however, appears to have been more composed after this irregular proceeding; and Paul, having the presence of mind to view his judges with attention, and recollecting many of them, perceived that some of them were Sadducees and others Pharisees; and hoping to divide them, and to avail himself of their difference of opinion, he cried out that he was a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee; and that it was for holding the doctrine of the Pharisees, viz. the resurrection of the dead, that he was brought before them. This produced the effect that he wished. For the Pharisees took his part, saying, it was possible that an angel or a spirit (the existence of which the Sadducees denied) might have spoken to him; and, perhaps, recollecting the advice of Gamaliel on a similar occasion, they said that they ought not to fight against God. The governor seeing this division, and the tumult which it produced, and fearing lest his prisoner should be torn in pieces among them, sent soldiers, and took him by force into the castle. The night following this, Jesus appeared to Paul, and encouraged him, telling him that as he had borne his testimony to him in Jerusalem, he should do the same in Rome. Acts xxiii. 11.

The next day, the unbelieving Jews being exceedingly exasperated against Paul, more than forty of them bound themselves with an oath, not to eat or drink till they had killed him. This, however, came to the knowledge of a son of Paul's sister, and he, by application to the governor, prevented the execution of their design. For Lysias immediately sent him under a strong guard to Casarea, the residence of the Roman prefect Felix, with a letter informing him of the reasons why he had sent him; that he did not perceive that he was charged with any offence of a civil nature, but that he had acquainted his accusers that they

might carry their complaints to his tribunal. Accordingly, Felix ordered him to be confined, till his accusers should appear against him. Acts xxiii. 35.

Five days after this, Ananias the high-priest himself, with other leading men of the Jews, came to Cæsarea, and employed an orator of the name of Tertullus to open the charge against Paul. It consisted of three articles, viz. that he was a mover of sedition through all the world, that he had profaned the temple, and that he was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. To this Paul replied, that with respect to the two first articles, they could not prove what they had alleged; that he had raised no tumult, that they had not even found him disputing with any person, and that in the temple he was performing the usual rites of purification together with other Jews from Asia; but he acknowledged that according to the sect which his enemies called *heresy*, he did worship the God of his fathers, believing especially the resurrection of the dead, in the faith of which he endeavoured to act with good conscience towards God and man. Felix, perceiving the malice of Paul's prosecutors, and the insufficiency of their proofs with respect to the article of sedition, which was all that he was concerned to inquire into, dismissed them till the arrival of Lysias. when he said he should have an opportunity of forming a better judgment in the case. In the mean time he committed Paul to the custody of a centurion, but with orders that all his friends should have free access to him. Acts xxiv. 23.

After some time Felix, accompanied by his wife Drusilla, (who was sister to king Agrippa, and a woman of loose character,) indulged his curiosity in inquiring of Paul concerning the Christian religion. But in explaining the principles of it Paul spake with so much force concerning the duties of temperance and justice, which had been shamefully violated by his hearers, and also concerning a future judgment, that Felix was sensibly moved by his discourse, and, dismissing him for the present, said, that he would send for him again when he should have more leisure to hear him.

Felix, being an avaricious man, was not without hope that Paul's friends, who he might perceive were very considerable, would have advanced money for his release; and with this view he often sent for him; but being disappointed in this expectation, and fearing the resentment of the Jews, to whom he had made himself very obnoxious, when he was succeeded in his government by Festus, he left Paul a prisoner. Acts xxiv. 27. Felix was a man of low extraction,

who had been advanced by the interest of his brother Pallas, a medical man, and favourite of the emperor Claudius; and when he was accused by the Jews before Nero, who was now emperor, he was condemned, but escaped punishment by the interest of Agrippina, Nero's mother.

Festus, on his arrival in Judæa, went directly to Jerusalem, where he found the high-priest and the leading men still violent against Paul, but he referred them to a public hearing at Cæsarea. Accordingly they went thither once more, and were, as before, loud in their accusations of Paul, but incapable of proving any thing on which a sentence could be passed upon him. The governor, however, willing to oblige the leading Jews on his arrival in his province, proposed to remove the prisoner to Jerusalem, and try him there. But Paul, tired with these delays, availed himself of his privilege of a Roman citizen, and appealed to the judgment of the emperor; and to this Festus consented. Acts xxv. 12.

Soon after this Festus was visited by king Agrippa the younger, who had succeeded his father, and by his sister Bernice.\* To these guests the governor related the case of his prisoner, which so much excited the enmity of Agrippa, that he expressed a wish to hear Paul himself. To this Festus consented the more willingly, as, being obliged to send Paul to Rome, and of course to give some account of him, he hoped that by means of this audience he should be able to draw up a more satisfactory account than at present he knew how to do.

Paul, being produced for this purpose, expressed much satisfaction in having an opportunity of explaining his principles before a Jewish prince, who was acquainted with those prophecies to which he should have occasion to appeal. He proceeded to give an account of himself, and especially of his memorable conversion to Christianity. Festus, who being a Hebræan, was not disposed to give much attention to accounts of miracles, and who probably entertained that contempt of the religion of the Jews which was common among persons of rank, who had made no inquiry concerning it, said that he was certainly out of his senses, and that much study had benumbed his mind; so that what he had related might either be passed for his imagination only. But Agrippa, who was a believer in miracles, could not so readily

\* This Bernice had been married to a Greek Hebræan of Cæsarea, and was in the first instance suspected of Jewish superstitions, and consequently with her brother she was banished into the great island of the emperor Tiber, being a woman of exquisite beauty. *R. S.* See Josephus, *Antiq.* B. xix. Ch. v. Sect. 1. B. xx. Ch. vii. Sect. iii.

deny this, and, no doubt, considering the circumstances of it, acknowledged that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. To this Paul with great presence of mind, and much politeness, replied, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether, such as I am, except these bonds." With this the conference closed; and it was agreed by them all, that he might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to the emperor. Acts xxvi. 32.

Paul, according to his sentence, was sent to Rome under the custody of a centurion named Julius, who behaved to him with great civility; giving him leave, when they came to Sidon, to land and see his friends. When they had proceeded as far as Crete, it was revealed to Paul, that if they went any farther, at that late season of the year, it would be with great risk, not only of the ship and of the lading, but also of their lives. However, the centurion chose to listen to the master and owner of the ship, and put to sea. But they were soon overtaken by a tempest, during which Paul told the crew, that the ship would be lost, but all their lives saved; and accordingly they with difficulty got to shore on the island of Malta, the ship being stranded and dashed to pieces. Acts xxvii. 44.

On this island the shipwrecked crew were received with great hospitality; and here it pleased God to distinguish Paul by some remarkable miracles. As he had got a bundle of sticks, and was laying them on the fire, a viper, which had not been perceived among them, feeling the heat, fastened on his hand; which led the natives to imagine that he was a murderer, who, though he had not perished in the shipwreck, was now overtaken by divine vengeance. But when he shook it off without receiving any harm, they concluded that he must be a god. What farther impression was made on their minds by this extraordinary circumstance does not appear; but it is probable that it drew much attention upon him. For the father of Publius, the governor of the island, being ill of a fever and a bloody flux, Paul (having probably been sent for on the occasion), prayed over him, and cured him; and upon this, other sick persons were brought to him and were cured.

Having wintered in Malta, Paul and his company proceeded early in the spring, (A. D. 61.) towards Rome, calling at Syracuse, Rhegium and Putcoli, at which last place Paul found some Christian brethren, and at "*Appii Forum* and the Three Taverns," he was met by some Christians from

Rome, and was by them accompanied thither. Being now arrived at the place of his destination, he was delivered by the centurion to the custody of a soldier, who was chained to him; but in other respects he was at his liberty, and thus he continued two whole years, in a house which he hired, and had no restraint put upon him with respect to seeing or receiving any body; a liberty which we cannot doubt he made use of in favour of the gospel.

When Paul had been in Rome three days, he sent for the chief men among the Jews, and gave them an account of himself, and of the cause of his being sent thither. On this a day was fixed for a public hearing of him; and the consequence of it was, that some of them, as in other places, became converts to Christianity, while the rest were obstinate in their unbelief; so that Paul informed them that, seeing no prospect of making any impression upon them, he should apply himself to the Gentiles.

We have no account of Paul's trial before the emperor; but it may be collected from the epistles which he wrote from Rome, that though his friends deserted him upon that occasion, he was enabled to deliver himself with great boldness; and that many persons, either from what he said on that occasion, or at other times, became converts to Christianity, and among them were some of the emperor's family. He was probably reserved for a farther hearing, and after two years he had his liberty given him.

At Rome, Paul, having leisure to write, as well as to preach, wrote several valuable epistles, as that to the Ephesians, a second to Timothy, to the Philippians, to the Colossians and to Philemon. He also wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, a little before, or soon after, his release. Considering the number of epistles which he wrote from Rome, it is rather remarkable that he did not write so much as one during his equally long confinement in Judæa, as it does not appear that he was not at liberty to write.

The object of the epistle to the Ephesians is to establish the Christians of Ephesus, to whom he had preached a long time, in the pure faith of the gospel, and to counteract the endeavours of the Jewish teachers to bring them into bondage to the law of Moses. But though it is probable, from the first epistle to Timothy, that these Jewish teachers were *Gnostics*, there is no direct reference to any peculiar Gnostic opinions in this epistle. What he chiefly labours is, to impress the minds of those to whom he wrote with a just sense of the value of the gospel, of the goodness of God in calling

the Gentiles to the privileges of it, and the importance of moral and relative duties.

There is a peculiar dignity and sublimity in this epistle, as well as evident marks of the strong affection that Paul bore to all his Christian converts; and the same has been observed with respect to all the epistles which he wrote from Rome. He probably knew that he was near the close of his life, and therefore he wrote with that energy with which a man naturally gives his last admonitions to those he loves.

It is most probable that the second epistle to Timothy was written not long after Paul's arrival at Rome, and in the spring or beginning of summer, as he presses him to come to him before winter; and in the other epistles from Rome, Timothy appears to have been with Paul; his name being joined with his own in his salutations from that place. The design of this epistle, besides urging Timothy to come to him, was to encourage him to persevere in preaching the gospel, notwithstanding the opposition he might meet with, the corruptions that would be introduced into it, and the degeneracy of many who bore the Christian name. In this epistle there are evident allusions to the Gnostic doctrines, as there also were in the first epistle to Timothy. It is probable, therefore, that the Gnostics were numerous at Ephesus, as well as at Corinth; though Paul might not choose to mention them in the epistle to the Ephesians themselves.

The Christians at Philippi were probably wealthy, and they were proportionably generous, as they contributed largely to the apostle's support, when other churches were inattentive to his circumstances. They had not been unmindful of his situation now that he was a prisoner at Rome, but had sent Epaphroditus, one of their body, with a liberal contribution for his relief. This he gratefully acknowledges in his epistle, the principal object of which, as of many others, is to exhort those to whom he writes to persevere in the purity of the gospel, and to resist the attempts of the Judaizing teachers to sow divisions among them, and especially to recommend their profession by a suitable life and conversation. The manner in which he speaks of his own situation, and the satisfaction he expresses in all that he had done and suffered for the sake of the gospel, is equally edifying. He appears, when he wrote this epistle, to have had hopes of being set at liberty; but as to himself, he says, it was a matter of indifference whether he lived or died, provided his life or death might be subservient, as he

was confident either of them would be, to the propagation of the gospel.

Colosse was a considerable city in Phrygia, where there appears to have been a Christian church pretty early, though it is not known by whom it was planted. Probably, however, it was by some of Paul's fellow-labourers during his long residence at Ephesus, or perhaps by himself. His epistle to the Christians at that place appears to have been written some time before the end of the year 69, and to have been sent along with that to Philemon, by Tychicus and Onesimus, when Paul had some prospect of his being released from his confinement. The general strain of it is so much the same with that to the Ephesians, that they are commonly called the two sister epistles. In both of them the object of the apostle was to establish those to whom they were addressed in the pure faith of the gospel, on the value of which he much enlarges, in opposition to the corruption of it by the Jewish Gnostics; and he strongly urges the practice of moral duties, which the Gnostics, too much occupied with matters of speculation, were generally charged with neglecting.

Philemon was a citizen of Colosse, whose slave Onesimus had run away from him, and probably robbed him; but coming to Rome while Paul was there, and hearing him preach, he not only became a convert to Christianity, but made himself useful to the apostle. Being, no doubt, convinced by him of the wrong that he had done his master, he was prevailed upon to return to him; and to make his reception the easier, Paul gave him this letter, which at the same time that it shews his just sense of moral obligation, discovers much polite address: from which it is evident that the apostle was no wild enthusiast, but one who was well acquainted with mankind and human nature.

Notwithstanding the epistle to the Hebrews does not bear the name of Paul, the critics, on my opinion, many internal marks of its being his; and it was probably written by him, if after he was a liberty, before he left Italy, A. D. 63. Like the epistle to the Romans, it is properly a treatise, the object of which is to lessen the excessive regard which the Jewish Christians of that age entertained for the institutions of Moses, which made them wish to impose them on the Gentile converts. With this view, the writer endeavours to shew the superiority of Christ to Moses, and of the Christian dispensation to the Jewish, in a variety of respects; asserting that whatever there was that was most esteemed in the institu-

tions of Moses, there was something of the same nature, and superior in kind, in the gospel. More particularly, as the Jews made great boasts of their priesthood, their temple, and their sacrifices, he finds a temple, a priesthood, and a sacrifice in Christianity. But in this there was much room for imagination, and for fancying there was a correspondence in the two systems, where none was intended in the original constitution of them.

After writing this epistle, it is conjectured that Paul might go to Jerusalem, but that finding every thing in confusion there, as it was but a short time before the breaking out of the Jewish war, he did not continue long in the country; and as he had expressed an intention of visiting Spain, it is not improbable but that with this view he went to Rome, and being there at the time of the persecution by Nero, he was, according to tradition, beheaded by order of that tyrant, or his ministers; being exempted from torture as a Roman citizen, while Peter, who was there at the same time, was crucified.

## SECTION VIII.

### *Of the Labours of the other Apostles.*

AFTER giving this particular account of Paul, his labours, and his writings, which his own epistles, as well as the book of Acts, written by his companion Luke, happily enable us to do; I shall give the little that I have been able to collect of what was done, or written, by the other apostles, before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was then approaching.

James, called the brother of our Lord, probably ended his course during the confinement of Paul at Rome, after writing the epistle which bears his name. The object of it is to enforce a variety of moral duties, which were much neglected by the Jews of that age; and it seems to have been designed for the use of the unbelieving, as well as the believing Jews. It is said that he was generally known by the surname of James the Just, no doubt for his exemplary virtue and piety, for which he was highly esteemed by the sober part of the nation in general.

According to Eusebius,\* the Jews, disappointed of their wicked purpose respecting Paul, when he was sent to Rome, were the more exasperated against the other Christians, and

\* Hist. L. ii. C. xxiii. p. 77. (P.)

especially James; and on the death of Festus (there being some interval between that event and the arrival of Albinus, the next Roman governor) they put him to death in a tumultuous manner. Many of the circumstances, as related by Hegesippus, seem to be fabulous; but it may be true that, upon his persisting in giving his testimony to the messiahship of Jesus, he was sentenced to be stoned, as a blasphemer, and that this was put in execution, after first throwing him down from some part of the temple; and that while he was praying for his persecutors, he was dispatched by the blow of a fuller's pole. Josephus says, that this James, and others, were sentenced to be stoned by the supreme council of the nation, before the arrival of Albinus, as violaters of the law; but that the more sober part of the citizens were offended at it, as an illegal proceeding, also that Albinus being by their means informed of the proceedings, wrote to the high-priest, threatening to punish him for it.\*

Peter, having, as we have seen, been at Antioch, had probably preached chiefly in Asia Minor, especially in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythynia, because his first epistle is directed to the Christians in those places. It seems to have been written not long after Paul was released from Rome; and as it contains salutations from the church at Babylon, where at that time there were many Jews, some of whom, no doubt, were Christians, it is probable that he wrote from this place; though he might afterwards go to Rome, and there write his second epistle, as, according to tradition, he suffered martyrdom there. It is also said that the wife of Peter suffered at the same time, and that when he saw her going to execution, he rejoiced that God had called her to so glorious a death, †. Some say that Peter, not thinking himself worthy to suffer in the same manner as his Master had done, was, at his own request, crucified with his head downwards.

The object of Peter's first epistle is to exhort the Christians to whom he wrote, to persevere in the profession of the gospel, notwithstanding the difficulties under which they then laboured. With this view he represents to them, in a very strong light, the honour and advantage they derived from the knowledge of the gospel; and, having enlarged on this, he exhorts them to adorn their profession of it by the

\* *Antiq. L. xx. C. ix. Sect. 1. p. 509. (P.)* See Whiston's *Treatise*, Note 6.

† *Euseb. Hist. L. iii. C. xxx. p. 124. (P.)*

observance of the moral duties of life, which he particularly enumerates.

The second epistle of Peter is a supplement to the former, and in this he warns Christians more particularly of their danger from those who corrupted the gospel, and whose practices were, as was generally believed, as licentious as their principles; alluding, no doubt, to the Gnostic teachers of that age. He also exhorts to vigilance, and constancy in the discharge of our duty, from the consideration of the dissolution of the world, and the coming of Christ to judgment. In these two epistles of Peter many attentive readers have observed that, without much regularity of composition, or clearness of expression, there is a peculiar dignity and energy, exceeding any thing in the writings of Paul, and worthy of the prince of the apostles.

Though much of what is related by Eusebius\* concerning the meeting of Peter and Simon Magus at Rome, be unquestionably fabulous, and the Clementine Homilies are evidently a romance, it is not improbable but that some well-known intercourse between them might give occasion to both. As Simon probably abandoned the profession of Christianity, and distinguished himself by travelling into distant countries, teaching his principles wherever he came, he might well meet with Peter, and they might have several disputations; Simon confiding in his eloquence and address, and Peter, though destitute of those advantages, yet possessing others of a superior nature, not likely to decline an interview with him.

The epistle of Jude was probably written upon the same occasion, and about the same time, with the last of Peter; being evidently intended to guard Christians against the principles and practices of the Gnostics. We know very little else concerning this apostle, who is otherwise called Lebbeus, and Thaddeus, the brother of James, the son of Alphaeus, probably the same with Cleophas, and together with him called the brother of our Lord. Where this apostle lived, or how he died, we are not informed; but probably he continued in some part of Judea till the breaking out of the war.

The apostle Philip is said to have lived chiefly at Hierapolis; and Papias, one of the first bishops of that place, says, that a person was raised to life by him. The same writer says, that Justus, surnamed Barsabas, who was thought

\* Hist. L. ii. C. xiv. p. 63. 75.

by the apostles to be a proper person to succeed Judas Iscariot, as well as Matthias, on whom the lot fell, having drank poison, received no injury from it.\*

Bartholomew, who was probably the same with Nathaniel, appears to have preached in India. For there, according to Eusebius,† Pantenus found a Hebrew gospel of Matthew, which had been left by him, and also many Christians, who may be supposed to have been the descendants of his converts.

As the epistles of John, and also the book of Revelation, were probably written after the destruction of Jerusalem, I shall not speak of them in this place: but it is probable that his Gospel, as well as the three others, were written about the time that Peter and Jude wrote their epistles, viz. on the approach of the Jewish war; when the general dispersion of the disciples was foreseen, and it was evident that the apostles could not continue long upon the stage.

It is generally thought that the gospel of Matthew was written first; but as it is pretty evident that neither Mark nor Luke had seen it, it could not have been published long before they wrote. This gospel was probably written in Hebrew; but as the two first chapters, which contain the account of the miraculous conception of Jesus, were not in the Ebionite copies of this gospel, I take it for granted they were not written by Matthew, but were prefixed to his gospel afterwards. As the learned Symmachus, in his commentary on this gospel, endeavoured to disprove the story of the miraculous conception, ‡ it could not have been thought by him to have been a part of the authentic copy.

Mark, the son of Barnabas's sister, and his companion as well as Paul's, is said to have been, in the latter part of his life, the companion of Peter, and to have written his gospel under the inspection, and with the approbation of that apostle.§ Mark is also said to have ended his days at Alexandria in Egypt.¶

Luke is said to have been a physician at Antioch, and together with Mark and Barnabas, to have been one of the seventy disciples.● He evidently wrote the book of Acts after Paul's acquittal at Rome, and his gospel some time before.

John is said to have written his gospel at the request of the church of Ephesus, after the publication of the other

\* Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. xxxix. p. 147. P. — † Ibid. l. v. c. xv. p. 205. P.

‡ Ibid. Hist. l. vi. c. xvii. p. 267. P. — § Ibid. Hist. l. iii. c. xiv. p. 94. P.

¶ Ibid. l. iii. c. xvi. p. 103. P. — ● Ibid. l. iii. c. iv. p. 91. P.

three, to supply their defects. It also appears to have been a principal object with him, in his gospel, as well as in his epistles, to obviate the cavils of the Gnostics, shewing that Jesus had real flesh and blood, like other men, and that *the Christ* was not a person distinct from him, but that Jesus himself was the Christ, the Son of God.

What became of the apostles whose names have not yet been mentioned is now unknown, except that Thomas is said to have preached in Parthia, and Andrew in Scythia, but with what success is not said.\*

## SECTION IX.

### *Of the Persecution under Nero.*

TILL the reign of Nero, the Roman emperors had done nothing that was hostile to Christianity, having probably considered the Christians as a sect of the Jews, with whose customs they were well acquainted, and whom they had always tolerated, in all the provinces of the empire. But the enmity which the Jews bore them would in time shew that they were a distinct body of men, and proselytes made by the Jews were few compared with those that were made by Christians. Their converts were so numerous, that by this time it began to be apprehended that there might be some danger of the rites of the heathen religion being discontinued, and upon the observance of these it was imagined that the welfare of the state depended. The zealous Heathens, therefore, must have looked with an evil eye upon the christian missionaries, independently of the many, who, like Demetrius of Ephesus, were personally interested in the support of the ancient worship. Besides, the Christians, teaching a new religion, which was hostile to all others, and aimed at nothing less than the utter subversion of the worship that had hitherto been paid to the heathen gods, were in common language said to be guilty of the same impiety with which others who had at any time neglected the worship of the gods had been charged; and with the guilt of impiety was connected the idea of many horrid crimes. On this account the Christians being considered as profane and impious people, by those who did not trouble themselves to make any inquiry into their principles and conduct, when it suited Nero's purpose to persecute the Christians, great

\* Euseb. L. iii. C. i. p. 87. (P.)

numbers were well prepared to second his views, and to make very light of any sufferings to which they could be exposed.

We have no distinct account of this persecution of Nero by any christian writer who lived at or near the time; but it appears from the accounts of Tacitus and Suetonius, that when this emperor had wantonly set fire to the city of Rome taking advantage of the general odium under which the Christians then lay, he gave out that it was done by them; and though no credit was given to the accusation, yet on that pretence he exercised upon them, with the concurrence of the people, the most shocking barbarities. They were imprisoned and tortured. Some were crucified, and others were impaled, being held in an upright position by stakes thrust through their jaws; and some were thrown to the wild beasts. But what was particularly insulting and cruel, great numbers of them, wrapped in garments dipped in pitch, and other combustibles, were fastened to posts, and fire was put to them, that they might give light to the city, and expire in this most excruciating torture. Nero is said to have illuminated his own gardens in this shocking manner, and by this light to have amused himself in driving his chariot. In this persecution the tender sex was not spared; and notwithstanding the general odium under which the Christians then lay, these cruelties excited the compassion of many, who could not but perceive that these sacrifices were made to gratify the cruelty and caprice of one man, and not for any purpose of public utility.\*

In what manner the order was given for this persecution we are not told, but it was probably by a decree of the senate, which always exercised the power of checking foreign religions, it being thought to be their province in this, as well as in every other method, to take care of the state. And if this persecution was authorized by a decree of the senate, it probably extended to all parts of the Roman empire; and, not being repealed, would be a standing rule for the proceedings of the governors of provinces, though they would, no doubt, execute the law with more or less rigour, according to their own dispositions. The persecution of Christians, therefore, being once begun in this manner, would be continued in all future time, without any new law.

\* That this persecution of Nero did extend to the remote

\* Tacit. *An. L. xv. S. xlv.* Sueton. *Nero, S. vii. (P.)* See *Lardner, I. p. 168.* *All. pp. 253, 254, 267, 268.*

provinces, is expressly asserted by Orosius,\* and is also evident from an inscription found in Spain in honour of Nero, “for clearing the province of robbers, and those who taught mankind a new superstition.” For in this manner were the Christians at that time usually characterized by the Heathens.†

Considering the great number of Christians who must have perished at Rome only, in this persecution (Tacitus saying they were a great multitude, *ingens multitudo*) and that, in the most violent persecutions, they who suffer are few in comparison of those who, by some means or other, escape; this history affords an indisputable proof of the great progress that Christianity had made in the age of the apostles. Indeed, to have incurred the general hatred that Tacitus mentions, which implies that they had drawn a great degree of attention upon them, they must have been very numerous; and Nero must have been sensible of it, or he could never have thought of taking advantage of the circumstance in order to screen himself from public resentment. And there can be no doubt, but that there were at that time many more Christians in Antioch, Ephesus, and other great cities, in the eastern provinces, than in Rome, where it is not probable that any apostle had preached, before Paul, and he not more than two years; though a foundation had been laid, and a Christian church had been established there, before his arrival.

## SECTION X.

### *Of the Calamities of the Jews, and of the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.*

IT was in the reign of Nero that the war broke out between the Jews and the Romans, in the course of which the former suffered more than any other people are known to have done in the same space of time. In these events our Saviour’s prophecies concerning the calamities of the nation, and particularly concerning the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and of the temple, were exactly fulfilled; and the verification of this prediction is the more remark-

\* “*Primus Romæ Christianos suppliciiis et mortibus adfecit, ac per omnes provincias pari persecutione excruciarî imperavit.*” Lib. vii. Cap. 7. p. 475. Ed. Havercamp. (P.)

† See Lardner’s *Heathen Testimonies*, Ch. iii. Works, VII. p. 348. (P.) See also, *our* Vol. IV. p. 542.

able, as the events are recorded not by a Christian, but by a Jewish historian (Josephus) whose account is confirmed by the writings of several Heathens.

The Jews had always very ill brooked their subjection to the Romans; and when the first attempt was made to take the census among them, by Quirinus, governor of Syria, A. D. 9. there was a considerable revolt, headed by Judas of Galilee; and though he and his party were soon suppressed, their principles had taken deep root in the country, and whenever the Roman governors acted in an arbitrary and oppressive manner, as they often did, the people always shewed a disposition to rebel. What made the cause of the revolters more popular was, the connexion which their principles of civil liberty were supposed to have with those of their religion, which gave them a high idea of the dignity of their nation, as the peculiar people of God. They ought, it was said, to have no other master but him, who was not only the sole object of their worship, but their proper civil governor also, the only lawful head of their nation.

That there were persons who had this idea, is evident from some of them putting this question to our Saviour, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" And that this party was then numerous, and had great influence in public affairs, is evident from his prudent answer, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," Matt. xxii. 21. not choosing to give them any handle against him.

The same spirit of liberty and independence, joined to the contempt which the Jews entertained for other nations, made them generally hated by the populace wherever they were settled; though it is evident that many persons of reflection respected them on account of their religion, which appeared at first sight to be more rational than any that prevailed in other countries; and it pleased Divine Providence that most people should have an opportunity of forming a judgment in the case. It is remarkable that there was no city of any consequence, in all the eastern part of the world, in which there was not, in very early times, a considerable number of Jews. It appears from the book of Esther, that the Jews were then settled in all the provinces of the Persian empire, but few of them having returned to Judea after the Babylonish captivity, and being favoured by Cyrus and the succeeding kings of Persia. They had no less favour shewn them by Alexander the Great, whose part they had taken, and in general by his

successors, both in Syria and Egypt, especially in the latter, where they were a great proportion of the inhabitants of Alexandria. Under the Maccabees they had a league with the Romans; and though the Roman emperors afterwards took the government of the country into their own hands, they did not diminish their privileges in any other part of the empire.

It was in Egypt, which at this time is supposed to have contained not less than a million of Jews, that the hatred of the other inhabitants first shewed itself in any open acts of violence. Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, and grandson of Herod the Great, being appointed king of Judea by Caligula, and going through Egypt, was insulted in Alexandria by a mock procession, in ridicule of him and his kingdom; and the populace being favoured by the governor Flaccus, would place a statue of the emperor (who had insisted upon being worshipped as a God) in the Jewish synagogues. In this tumult many synagogues of the Jews were demolished and burned.

The Jews were then deprived, by order of the governor, of their privilege of citizens, and confined to a small quarter of the town; in consequence of which the houses and shops, which they had been obliged to abandon, were plundered, and in the progress of the tumult many of the Jews were burned alive, and dragged through the streets. The account of these cruelties greatly amused the brutal emperor; and when an embassy was sent to him from the Jews of Alexandria, with the celebrated Philo at their head, he behaved to them with a studied neglect and contempt, on finding that they persisted in refusing to acknowledge his divinity; and it was with great difficulty that Agrippa himself, who had returned to Rome, had been able to soften his resentment against the whole Jewish nation; and the effect of his interposition was not lasting. It is probable that his death only saved them from his utmost vengeance. Claudius, however, reversed what Caligula had done, and restored the Jews of Alexandria to their former privileges.

About the same time the Greeks and Syrians in conjunction destroyed more than fifty thousand Jews in Seleucia and its neighbourhood. This destruction was occasioned originally by a Jewish governor of the province, having rendered himself odious to the inhabitants.

The disturbances in Judea itself, began under the administration of Cumanus, A. D. 49, by a Roman soldier, at the feast of passover, shewing, by a very indecent attitude.

his contempt of the Jews, and their religion. This provoked the populace to revenge themselves by throwing stones, and insulting the governor. But when he sent for the troops that were stationed in the town, the people, not being prepared to encounter them, fled; and in the confusion pressed upon one another in such a manner, that twenty thousand of them are said to have perished on this occasion.

Under the government of this Cumanus, the Samaritans insulted the Galileans in their passage through their country to Jerusalem, on one of their public festivals; and on this occasion many of the Jews were killed, especially as the governor took the part of the Samaritans. However, at the intercession of Agrippa, justice was done to the Jews at this time, and Cumanus was sent into banishment. Then it was that Felix was made governor of the country.

Under the administration of Felix, A. D. 53, there appeared a Jewish impostor from Egypt, who, being followed by a multitude of people, advanced as far as the mount of olives; he promising that they would see the walls of the city fall down before them. Felix, however, marched out against them, and presently dispersed them, killing about four hundred, and taking two hundred of them prisoners, but their leader made his escape. It was this Egyptian that Lysias supposed Paul to have been. About the same time other impostors appeared in the wilderness, or the mountainous and less populous parts of the country, deceiving the people by their magnificent promises; but they were soon suppressed, and great numbers of them were crucified.

Felix, having been guilty of many excesses, was frequently admonished by Jonathan the high-priest; till at length, provoked at his freedom, he got him to be assassinated by some of the robbers, with whom the country at that time swarmed, and who, from carrying about them short daggers, (in Latin *sica*.) were by the Romans called *Sicarii*.\* The character of these men was a strange mixture of barbarity and religion. They shewed great zeal for the law and the temple; and exclaiming every where against the Roman government, and being men of desperate fortunes, they were perpetually urging the people to revolt. Festus, who succeeded Felix, A. D. 56, found the country full of these banditti, and, like Felix, he also suppressed an insurrection headed by an impostor, who had drawn after him a great number into the wilderness by vain promises of deliverance from their servi-

\* See Josephus, *Antiq. B.* xx. Ch. viii. Sect. v. — *War, B. ii.* Ch. xiii. Sect. 10.

tude.\* Thus was our Saviour's prediction concerning false christis and false prophets remarkably verified. Matt. xxiv. 11.

The farther and more serious calamities of the Jews were preceded by a very extraordinary circumstance, though perhaps not of a miraculous nature. One Jesus, the son of Ananus, coming from the country, began to cry in the temple, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem, and the holy house; a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people." Whatever was said or done to this man, he continued to bawl out in this manner, with little variation. When he was cruelly scourged by order of Albinus the governor, he kept crying, as if he had felt nothing for himself, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem." This he continued to practise with little interruption during the space of seven years and five months. When the city was besieged, he kept repeating his lamentable prognostic, "Woe, woe to the city again and to the people, and to the holy house." "Woe to Jerusalem, woe to the temple, woe to the people;" and, lastly, what he was not observed ever to have said before, "Woe, woe to myself also;" when immediately a stone from one of the Roman engines dashed him to pieces.†

Other things called prodigies are said to have happened previous to the war, most of them probably imaginary, or fabulous. Among others it is said that the eastern gate of the temple, which was of brass, and so heavy that twenty men could barely move it, opened of itself in the night; and that at the feast of Pentecost, while the priests were performing their functions, they first heard a rushing noise, and then a distinct voice, saying, "Let us remove hence."‡

The year after this, viz. A. D. 66, the government of Florus being insupportable, and the Jews obtaining no redress by their application to Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, (to which Judea was a subordinate province,) broke out into open rebellion. Agrippa did every thing in his power to dissuade them from so fatal a resolution; but making no impression upon them, he thought proper to quit Jerusalem. The first effect of their unbridled resentment was seizing the fortress of Massada, and killing all the Romans they found there. After this Eleazar, a headstrong young man, son of the high-priest Ananus, and captain of

\* See Josephus, *Antiq. B.* xx. Ch. viii. Sect. vi. *War, B.* ii. Ch. xiii. Sect. iv. v.

† Josephus *de Bello Jud.* L. vi. C. v. Sect. iii. (P.) ‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

the temple, persuaded the people not to receive the usual offerings in the name of the emperor. They then attacked the fortress of Antonia, which was near the temple; and when they had taken it, they put to death all the Romans they found in it. The chief actor in this scene of butchery was Menahem, the son of Judas of Galilee, mentioned above.

About the same time that these things were transacting at Jerusalem, there was an insurrection of the inhabitants of Caesarea against the Jews of that place; and Florus taking an active part against the Jews, more than twenty thousand of them were killed, and the rest enslaved. This massacre at Caesarea so provoked the Jews, that, with great rage, they rose in arms in all parts of the country, and attacking every place in which there were any Romans, they made great destruction among them, burning several towns, and killing many people. But these barbarities were severely retorted by the Syrians, and other inhabitants, against the Jews, who were not provided for any regular attack or defence of any place, so that the whole country was full of slaughter and confusion. At Scythopolis more than thirteen thousand Jews were killed; at Ascalon and Ptolemais two thousand in each, with many at Tyre. At Alexandria, where they had suffered so much before, more than fifty thousand were now slain. All this, however, was only *the beginning of sorrows* to this devoted nation.

Cestius Gallus, seeing the Jews every where in arms, thought it high time for him to interpose, and endeavour to quell the revolt. He therefore took one legion with his auxiliaries, and being conducted by Agrippa, he came first to Joppa, which he took and burned, killing all the Jews in it, to the number of eight thousand and four hundred, whilst his lieutenant Gallus, in Galilee, killed more than two thousand. But Cestius advancing to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, the inhabitants marched out against him in such numbers, that though they fought with little or no discipline, they gained a considerable advantage over him, killing five hundred and fifteen of his men, with very little loss on their side.

Without being discouraged by this repulse, Cestius advanced to the city, and took possession of what was called Bezetha, or the new town, which was but slightly fortified, and it was not doubted by Josephus, but that if he had pushed the assault, he might at that time have made himself master of the place; but, without any apparent reason, he retired, and the Jews pursuing him to Antipatris, killed

five thousand three hundred of his infantry, and three hundred and eighty of his cavalry. They also took his baggage, and his military engines, of which they made great use in the defence of the city afterwards. This action happened on the eighth of November, in the twelfth year of Nero, A. D. 66, and the advantage which the Jews gained in it greatly encouraged them to persist in the war, notwithstanding the dreadful losses they sustained on all other occasions.\* At Damascus, about this time, ten thousand of them were destroyed by the other inhabitants.

At Jerusalem, the Jews finding themselves engaged in a serious war, began to proceed with some more regularity, and appointed three commanders-in-chief, Joseph the son of Gorion, Ananus the son of another Gorion, who had been high-priest, and Joseph the historian, who had the command in Galilee.† At Jerusalem, Ananus had much trouble with the seditious *Sicarii*, and endeavoured to apprehend Simon the son of Gioras, who was at the head of a great party of them, plundering the country, but he escaped to Massada.

At the breaking out of this war, Nero was in Achaia, and being dissatisfied with the conduct of Cestius, he gave the command to Vespasian, who sent his son Titus to Alexandria, to bring some legions which were stationed there, while he advanced to Syria. This was the situation of things at the end of the year 66.

At the beginning of the next year, Titus joined his father at Ptolemais, and then the whole Roman army, including auxiliaries, amounted to sixty thousand.‡ The only considerable resistance that Vespasian met with was at Jotapata, where Josephus commanded; but after forty days the place was taken and destroyed, and Josephus, who had escaped, soon after surrendered to the Romans. In the course of this year Vespasian and his son made themselves masters of all Galilee, selling the inhabitants for slaves. But John, the son of Levi, who commanded the seditious *Sicarii* in that part of the country, and who had been very troublesome to Josephus, made his escape to Jerusalem.

At this time many of the elderly people were for peace, but they were not able to restrain the violence of the rest; and the *Sicarii* getting into the city, massacred without mercy whom they pleased, in order to possess themselves of their wealth, especially on the pretence of their being for peace

\* Josephus *de Bello Jud.* l. ii. c. xix. P. † Ibid. l. iii. c. iv. Sect. ii.  
‡ Ibid. l. ii. c. xxx. Sect. iii. iv.

with the Romans, and forming desigus to deliver up the city John, who at first had taken part with Ananus, who commanded in the town, soon joined these *Sicarii*, and kept possession of the temple against him. Not finding himself strong enough, they got twenty thousand Idumeans introduced into the town; and then breaking out upon the inhabitants, they killed the next day eight thousand five hundred persons, and among the rest Ananus himself. The havoc they made in the city was so great, that twelve thousand persons were left by them unburied. At length the Idumeans were shocked with the conduct of their associates, and left the city.

While the Jews at Jerusalem were thus madly employed in destroying one another, Vespasian, perceiving how much this was to his advantage, refrained from making any attempt upon the place, but possessed himself of all the country, except the castle of Macheron. On the death of Nero, the troops of Vespasian saluted him emperor, and the command of the army devolved upon his son Titus.

It was in the interval between the retreat of Cestius, and the approach of Titus, that the Christians, in the city and country, warned by the prophecies of our Saviour, and, as Eusebius moreover says,\* by persons divinely inspired, all fled into the dominions of Agrippa, beyond the sea of Galilee, residing chiefly in the city of Pella, and its neighbourhood. There they continued several centuries, though gradually diminishing in numbers, till at length they became extinct. Many of them, however, returned after the war, and continued at Jerusalem till the time of Adrian.

Before the approach of Titus, the Jews had been far from making any advantage of the absence of their enemies. On the contrary, they had been doing themselves infinite mischief by their divisions, so that at his approach there were three hostile factions in the place. The interior part of the temple was held by Eleazar, whose partisans were not numerous, but they were the best fortified. John was in the outer part of the temple, and Simon the son of Gioras commanded in the town at large. This Simon had been ravaging the country, and had been let into the city by the people to oppose John, whose followers were guilty of the greatest excesses, and who, it was feared, would even set fire to the city.

In the daily struggle between these factions all the stores

\* *Ant. C. v. p. 93. P.*

of provisions in the place, which might have sufficed for a long siege, were wantonly destroyed; and the temple itself was often full of blood and dead bodies. At length Eleazar, admitting the followers of John to worship in the temple, was overpowered and slain by some of them who had arms concealed under their garments, so that all the *Sicarii* were then under John, whose armed followers were eight thousand and four hundred, while those of Simon, who held the city, were ten thousand, besides five thousand Idumeans. These parties, though so hostile to each other, always united against the Romans.

Titus brought with him four legions besides auxiliary troops, and arrived a short time before the passover, so that the city was full of people, who soon consumed what provisions were in it; and the consequence of this was extreme famine, and its constant attendant pestilence. On the passover preceding, an estimate had been made of the people who resorted to Jerusalem, by counting the number of lambs that were killed for the purpose; from which it was computed that they did not amount to less than two millions five hundred and fifty-six thousand; but it cannot be supposed that the city contained half this number when it was actually besieged, especially as the arrival of Titus was a little before the passover. For though great numbers would crowd in, regardless of all consequences, many, no doubt, would be deterred from entering in those circumstances.

The greatest part of the distress of the Jews in this most memorable siege arose not from their enemies, but from themselves. Titus having soon made himself master of every thing to the north of the tower of Antonia, which was not far from the temple, endeavoured by all gentle methods to bring the inhabitants to terms, and gave leave to all who chose it to leave the place, but this was prevented by the leaders of the factions. Josephus also, by order of Titus, addressed the people in a long and affectionate speech, but this also produced no effect. What the people suffered from the attacks of the Romans was very inconsiderable, notwithstanding they employed all their usual methods of assault, such as battering rams, balistæ, and the like; but the dreadful effects of famine were soon felt in the extreme. A woman of some rank, and in good circumstances, was found eating her own child, a thing to which the Jews would have much greater aversion than any other people. Thousands would, no doubt, choose to languish and die, rather than have recourse to so horrible a method of prolonging

their lives: and yet this cannot be supposed to have been the only instance of the kind.

The followers of John and Simon were guilty of the most shocking cruelties in order to secure provisions for themselves, torturing and putting to death without mercy; and yet, notwithstanding this resource, the men in arms were obliged to go without the walls to search for whatever they could find that was eatable. These Titus, when he could seize them, crucified, sometimes five hundred in a day, so that at length they could not find wood for crosses, or room to erect them. Some of them Titus sent back with their hands cut off, and otherwise maimed: but this had no effect whatever on those within the city.

Titus, perceiving that all his attempts to reduce the place by force were in vain, such was the strength of the walls, and the desperate courage of those who defended them, and knowing that the famine would in time do the business for him, at length endeavoured to quicken the effects of it by making a wall of *circumvallation*, as it was termed, quite round the place: and thereby prevented any from going into, or coming out of it. This occasioned a dreadful increase of the mortality within the city; so that the living not being able to bury the dead, contented themselves with throwing them over the walls. Titus, seeing the ditch full of dead bodies, was so much affected with it, that it is said, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and called God to witness, that this was not owing to him.

Notwithstanding the care that was taken to prevent any persons from escaping to the enemy, before the building of the wall of circumvallation, many did get out, and the humanity of the Romans received them: but some of them being observed to examine their excrements, in order to pick out of them the money, jewels, &c. which, having no other method of concealing they had swallowed, the Arabians and Syrians in the army privately killed great numbers of them, in hopes of finding treasure. In one night two thousand were found dispatched for this purpose; and though Titus, on discovering, a man, ordered to punish such enormities with death, it did not prevent many murders being still committed with this view.

While the poor were carried out at the gates, to be buried at the public expense, the censor told Titus, that at one of the gates where he was stationed, there were carried out one hundred and fifty thousand, six hundred and eighty, between the fourth and eighth of April, when the siege commenced,

and the first of July. Another said that they had carried out at all the gates six hundred thousand, and that then, being unable to carry them all out, they had filled whole houses with them, and shut them up.

On the seventeenth of July, Titus took the citadel of Antonia, and consequently approached the temple; and at that time the daily sacrifice was discontinued for want of victims. On the eighth of August the Romans, not being able to make any impression upon the second inclosure of the temple, set fire to the gates, which soon extended itself to the galleries, and continued to rage the remainder of that day and the following night, so that they were now in possession of the outward court, in which was the altar of burnt-offering. Titus would still have saved the body of the temple, consisting of the holy and most holy places; but a soldier setting fire to a building that was contiguous to it, this also took fire, and notwithstanding the endeavours of Titus to prevent it, was burned to the ground. This was on the tenth of the month Ab, the fifth month of the pass-over in Nisan, and as Josephus says, on the same day of the year on which it had been burned in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.\*

There perished in and about the temple six thousand men, women and children, deceived by a prophecy, which promised them some extraordinary appearance in their favour. There were several of these false prophets, who perpetually deceived the people, and prevented many from going over to the Romans.

Titus was now completely master of the place, and as soon as possible he put an end to the slaughter: John and Simon, who had surrendered, being reserved to grace his triumph. It was supposed that one million one hundred and ten thousand people perished in this siege, and ninety-seven thousand were exposed to sale, but at length they could find no purchasers.

On the birth-day of his brother Domitian, more than two thousand five hundred Jews were massacred, some by fire, some by wild beasts, and others as gladiators. A great number also were destroyed at some games which Titus exhibited at Berytus, on the celebration of his father's accession to the empire.† At his own triumph, John and Simon, with seven hundred Jews, were led in procession, after which Simon

\* De Bello Jud. l. vi. c. iv. Sect. viii. P

† Ibid. l. vii. c. iii. Sect. i.

was put to death, and probably John also. In this triumph the golden candlestick with seven branches, the same probably which had been carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and restored by Cyrus, with other holy vessels, were publicly exhibited;\* and the figures of them may still be perceived on the triumphal arch which was erected on this occasion at Rome.†

The entire conquest of the country was completed by Titus's lieutenants; the last place that held out being the fortress of Massada, which was deemed to be impregnable. There Eleazar, the grandson of Judas of Galilee, commanded; but seeing no means of escape, he advised his followers to die by their own hands, rather than surrender to the Romans. This advice they took; and having first killed their wives and children, they dispatched one another, to the number of six hundred and ninety. This was the fifteenth of April, A. D. 73, seven years after the commencement of the war.‡

After the reduction of Judea, the *Sicarii* still created disturbances in Egypt and Cyrene, where one Jonathan induced many to follow him into the desert, by the promise of performing miracles; but he was soon overpowered by the governor of the province, carried to Rome, and burned alive. Three thousand were massacred on this occasion,§ and it is computed that there perished in the whole of this fatal war one million three hundred and thirty-seven thousand four hundred and ninety, besides many of whom no account could be collected.¶

Such was the dreadful issue of this war, terminating in the utter downfall of the Jewish state and nation, from which it has never recovered to this day, involving in it the destruction of the temple and the discontinuance of the services annexed to it. The desolation of the country itself went on increasing, till, from being, for its size, one of the most fertile and populous countries in the world, it is now the most barren and desolate, fifty thousand being the latest computation of the number of all its inhabitants.■

\* De Bello Jud. C. vi. Sect. v. vi.

† See \* H. Reland. de Spolis Temp. Hierosol. in Arc. Tit. Romæ conspici. p. 1746. I learn from a friend who has lately visited Rome, that, to this day, the Jews in that city carefully avoid passing under the arch of Titus.

‡ De Bello Jud. C. vi. C. vii. Sect. i. — P. Ibid. C. vi. Sect. i. — in

§ See *Lardner*, VII. p. 194.

■ This is the computation of Volney, but travellers with whom I have conversed, and on whom I can depend, say that they must be more than twice that number.

All these calamities were, no doubt, accomplished by natural causes, and therefore such as might have been expected from a thorough knowledge of the temper of the inhabitants, their refractory disposition towards the Romans, their factions among themselves, and their absurd confidence in supernatural assistance, joined to a knowledge of their real weakness, compared with the overbearing power of the Roman empire. But who besides the Supreme Being could have foreseen all these circumstances, or have known that the operation of them would have led to this precise catastrophe, when the rebellion might have terminated in many other ways, and not in such a total ruin of the country, and dispersion of its inhabitants? The divine foresight is therefore conspicuous in our Saviour's clear prediction of these events, with all their capital circumstances, which every reader of this narrative must perceive, when it does not appear that any other person had the least apprehension of such a thing.\* The Jews now say, that our Saviour found all this that he foretold in the prophecies of Daniel: but why did not their own scribes, the professed interpreters of the law and the prophets, and the leading men of their own nation, discover the same in that book?

The justice and wisdom of the Supreme Being are equally conspicuous in this great event. A particular providence had ever attended that people. They had always flourished while they were obedient to God and his prophets, and calamity of some kind or other had been the never-failing consequence of their disobedience; and never had the nation in general shewn a more perverse and obstinate disposition towards any prophets, than they did with respect to Christ and the apostles, though no prophets had ever been sent to them with more evident marks of a divine mission. Their inveteracy to Christianity continues, in a great measure, to this day, and so does their dispersion, though they are still a distinct people, and never mix, so as to be confounded, with any of the nations among whom they are settled. But we may hope that the time is approaching when their unbelief in Christianity and their calamities will both cease. A better disposition is already in some measure apparent in them, and the treatment they meet with from other nations is also better than it has been. May God hasten the time when this his favoured people shall, by their repentance and conversion to Christianity, recover the place they formerly had in his

\* See *Lardner*, VII. pp. 36—109.

favour, and in consequence of it be restored to their country, and be to the end of the world, what prophecy assures us they will be, the most distinguished nation upon earth.

We may naturally lament this inveterate obstinacy in the great body of the Jews, and their rancorous opposition to Christianity, at the promulgation of it; but we may easily perceive that it was calculated to have the happiest effect with respect to the evidence, and consequently the moral influence of Christianity, and with that the happiness of all mankind in future time. It will now be for ever unquestioned, that the rulers of the Jewish nation, in which Christianity rose, were by no means favourable to it, and that the Jewish scriptures (the authenticity of which is supposed by the writers of the New Testament, and of which they avail themselves in proving the messiahship of Jesus) were no forgeries of theirs. At the same time it will be evident, that so many thousands of this obstinate nation, the most attached to their own laws, and so averse to the pretensions of such a messiah as Jesus was, could never have been brought to admit his claims, and become his disciples, at the risk of every thing dear to them in life, and of life itself, as was actually the case, without the most satisfactory evidence. This will also appear to have been the case while the facts were recent, while both the friends and the enemies of Christianity had the best opportunity, and the strongest motives, to examine them with the greatest rigour.

## SECTION XI.

### *General Observations on the Doctrine and Discipline of the Christian Church at this Period.*

It is most evident, from the book of Acts, the history of which extends through almost the whole of the period, the events of which we have been reviewing, that no doctrine had been advanced by the apostles, and first preachers of Christianity, that gave offence to the Jews, besides that of Jesus being the Messiah. Had there been any appearance of an infringement of the great doctrine of the divine unity, to which the Jews were then, and still continue to be, so much attached, by the advancement of any thing approaching to the doctrine that is now received of *the divinity of Christ*, it could not but have excited the greatest outcry imaginable; as it did afterwards, when that doctrine was advanced, and as it continues to do at this very day.

As all the Jews expected that their Messiah would be a mere man, the natural descendant of David, it is evident that the apostles, and other primitive Christians, who were all zealous Jews, must have received him as such. It is evident from the gospels, and is acknowledged by all Christian writers of the four first centuries, that the apostles considered him in no other light during the whole of their intercourse with him; having no idea of his being God, or the creator of the world under God. It is no less evident from the Acts of the apostles, and is also acknowledged by the same early writers, who were themselves Trinitarians, that the apostles announced him as such to their nation, and the world, viz. as nothing more than "a man approved of God by wonders and signs which God did by him," and whom God had raised from the dead. And that they had any private information of their Master being of a higher rank in the creation than themselves, but that they thought it prudent to use great reserve in the communication of this knowledge to others (though such is said to have been their conduct by the ancient Trinitarian writers above referred to), is absolutely incredible.

Whenever any such doctrine as that of Christ being of a rank superior to that of man had been divulged, since no such person had ever been sent to the Jews before, or had been announced by any of their prophets (as they themselves understood their writings) to be sent to them in future, and as they could not conceive that any purpose of Divine Providence could require the interposition of such a Being, it must have excited the greatest astonishment possible. The information could not but have been received with great doubt and hesitation by those who might have admitted it, and probably with absolute unbelief by many other Christians. All this, joined to the offence which the divulging of such a doctrine would have given to the Jews, must have occasioned such a discussion of the question, and such controversies, and schisms, as we could not but have heard of. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ is the objection which every Jew now makes to any attempts to convert him to Christianity, and history shews this to have been the case from the time that it was generally received by Christians. Yet at the first preaching of the gospel, thousands of the Jews were converted, without ever making such an objection; a plain proof that there was then no foundation for it, by such a doctrine being professed by any Christians. There is not the least trace of any controversy

whatever concerning the divinity or pre-existence of Christ in all the *Acts of the Apostles*, or in any of the writings of the apostles, though they treat at large of such topics as excited the most attention for almost forty years after the first promulgation of Christianity.

It is apparent from all these writings, that the only topic of discussion with the unbelieving Jews of that age was, the Messiahship of Jesus; and among Christians, the only articles of debate were the proselyting of Gentiles to Christianity, without subjecting them to the law of Moses, and the notions of the Gnostics. These were considered as subverting the fundamental principles of Christianity, because they taught that it was not *Jesus* that was properly *the Christ*, or that he had not flesh and blood like other men; because they denied the doctrine of the resurrection, and because their principles gave countenance, as it was thought at least, to great immoralities. These therefore, Paul, Peter, Jude, and John, most strenuously opposed. But with respect to the doctrines of the divinity and pre-existence of Christ, which have engaged the attention of the Christian world from about the middle of the second century to the present time, they are absolutely silent, and all that can be pretended is, that they incidentally mention or allude to them.

It is something remarkable, however, that the most strenuous exertions of the apostles were not, in either of these cases, crowned with complete success. According to Justin Martyr, many of the Jewish Christians were so much attached to their peculiar rites, that they could not reconcile themselves to the Gentile Christians, who had not first become proselytes to Judaism, and they never had much esteem for the apostle Paul, who had been the great advocate for the liberty of the Gentile churches, and made no use of his writings. It can hardly be supposed, however, that this was the case with the majority of the Jewish Christians, considering the high commendation of Paul's epistles by Peter, and that in every thing that he did he had the countenance of the other apostles.

It is possible that some expressions of Paul, which perhaps were unguarded, might be the reason of the dislike which the zealous Jewish Christians in general had of him, and of the aversion they had to his writings. They have certainly been much misunderstood by Christians, who have thence been led to imagine that he considered the law of Moses as abolished by Christianity, though his practice

which is certainly the best interpreter of his language, sufficiently proves that he could not have any such meaning. This fact, however, among many others, shews that apostolical authority was not, in that age, of so great account as it was afterwards. The apostles were chiefly considered as witnesses of certain important facts, with which they were the best acquainted. Particular revelations were also made to some of them (though these were not confined to the apostles, as we see in the case of Agabus), and on these accounts they were respected as any other prophets would have been; but their opinions and judgments, as we may learn from what passed in the council of the apostles, and indeed from their taking so much pains as they did in their writings to convince other Christians of the truth of their opinions, and the propriety of the practices which they recommended, without deciding authoritatively, had no more weight than those of other men.

The *Gnostics*, though they were probably, in a great measure, silenced by the efforts of the apostles, which were certainly exerted to the utmost for the purpose, still kept their ground, and many of them had their separate assemblies, besides being mixed with other Christians, as we learn from the epistles of John, which were written long after those of Paul, Peter and Jude; so that whatever effect these could have produced, it must by that time have been fully seen; and in the age immediately following that of the apostles, they made a greater figure than ever they had done before. There was something in their principles so exceedingly plausible, and they were so generally received by all persons who pretended to philosophy, or more knowledge than the vulgar, that the better educated among the Christian converts were generally taken with them.

The *evil* that is in the world could not, in their opinion, have had the same origin with the *good* that is in it, not being able to conceive how evil, in so great an extent, could be subservient to good. So mixed a system as this is, they, therefore, thought to be unworthy of infinite wisdom and goodness. As to the doctrine of a soul, distinct from the body, which had pre-existed in an angelic state, and for some offence committed in that state had been degraded, and confined to the body, as a punishment, it had been the great doctrine of the eastern sages from time immemorial, and so enchanting is the idea, that very few Christians, in proportion, can even now be prevailed upon to part with it, and to believe with Moses, that man was made *of the dust of*

*the ground*, or wholly of what is called *matter*, which was afterwards made to breathe and live; and that this breath, or life, which is common to brute animals as well as men, is the highest sense of that word in the Scriptures which we render *soul*.

The Gnostics also supposed that, besides those spiritual beings, which became the common souls of men, there were intelligences of a higher order, which sprung more immediately, and by way of direct emanation, from the Supreme Mind, (for having no idea of the creation of any thing out of nothing, every thing of the nature of mind was supposed to have been derived ultimately from the one self-existing Mind,) and that these superior intelligences descended occasionally upon earth, either assuming the shadowy forms of men, and other things, or entering into men, and acting upon their organs, as demons were supposed to do in people who were insane.

These were the fundamental doctrines of the Gnostics, and they endeavoured to connect them with Christianity, by supposing that Jesus was either himself one of those superior intelligences, in the form of man, but without real flesh and blood, and without being subject to the pains and infirmities of human nature; or that there descended into the man Jesus one of those beings of a higher order, and that it was this great Being, and not the man *Jesus*, who was properly the *Christ*, and who was appointed by God to act so important a part in the affairs of men. The apostles they considered as judging only by their senses, which were deceived in this case; and though they gave entire credit to them with respect to every thing which they had seen or heard of Jesus, before and after his resurrection, they considered them as plain unlettered men, who were ignorant of what was not within the sphere of their senses.

As to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which they professed to hold in great contempt, as a mere clog to the immortal soul, they thought that nothing was meant by it, but either a moral change in the minds of men, which took place before they died, or that it signified the ascent of the soul to its proper abode in the superior regions, when it was disengaged from its earthly encumbrance. This doctrine they might think (as many now do) would sufficiently answer the purpose of a future state of retribution, which alone is the great object and end of Christianity, and of all religion, as well as the more simple, but to them the more improbable doctrine, which the apostles taught, of a resur-

rection of any thing that had died, and had been committed to the grave.

That some of the Gnostics, in consequence of making no account of the body, might think that there was neither moral good nor evil in any thing relating to it, and might therefore think themselves at liberty to indulge themselves in any sensual excesses, is not impossible; though it is more probable that every thing of this nature would be greatly exaggerated by the enemies of the Gnostics; and the apostles themselves, being men, might too hastily give credit to what they had heard reported concerning them; as very sensible and worthy men among the Heathens for a long time did with respect to similar reports concerning Christians in general; and as many persons now do with respect to new sects in particular, and all those who, on other accounts, have become the objects of general dislike.

It cannot be denied, because it is clearly implied in the writings of the apostle Paul himself, that others of the Gnostics, who held the same general principle, of the infinite superiority of the mind to the body, were led by it to acts of mortification, abstaining from flesh meat, wine, and reprobating even marriage. That the Gnostics believed in a future state, and the divine mission of Christ, is evident from there being martyrs among them; though others of them might not think that any truth was of so much consequence as that men should die for it, which we see to have been the case with many other Christians, who were not Gnostics.

The religious rites of Christians of this early period were few and simple. Their public worship was probably conducted as was that of the Jews, to which they had been accustomed in their synagogues, where the Scriptures were always read, and prayers made, and where exhortations were occasionally given, and the portions of scripture, which were read in course, were sometimes expounded. To this they added the celebration of the eucharist, or eating bread and wine in remembrance of the death of Christ, but probably with little form, and in such a manner as to take up but little time.\*

We have no distinct account of the administration of baptism in this period, † but it is evident that very few words were employed in the business. In general, it was, no doubt, performed by the immersion of the body in water.

\* See Vol. II. pp. 336, 337. V. pp. 231, 232.

† See Vol. II. pp. 332—335. V. pp. 263—275.

that being an easy and a pleasant custom in hot climates, and the dress was such as to be very easily put off and on. The baths also would furnish convenience for this ceremony in most places. In whatever the rite of baptism consisted, it was administered upon the simple profession of repentance, and faith in Christ; the person who administered it probably saying, "I baptize thee in the name of Jesus Christ," or varying the expression as he thought proper. If we may judge from the instances of baptism occasionally mentioned in the book of Acts, we may safely conclude that the persons who baptized did not think themselves obliged to make use of the form mentioned by Matthew, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" though nothing was originally meant by that, besides baptism into a religion which came from God, which was published by Christ, and confirmed by gifts of the Holy Spirit, or miracles.

The church government of the apostolical age was as simple as the rites of it. The persons who had the most authority were the *elders*, a title which had been borne by the rulers of the Jewish synagogues; and the same persons were indifferently called *bishops*, or *overseers*; having the general inspection of every thing relating to any particular church, and giving their time and attention to the concerns of it, according to their several qualifications; some in public teaching, others in keeping up order and discipline, others probably visiting the sick, and others instructing the young, &c. &c.

It is not improbable but that when the book of Revelation was written, one of these elders, in consequence of presiding (as some one of them must have done) when they were met to consult about any thing in common, might have obtained some title peculiar to himself, as that of *angel*, which is there used, though we never find any farther mention of it. Afterwards the title of *bishop* became appropriated to this person, while the rest retained the original appellation of *presbyters*, which in a later period was changed into *priests*. But in all the early ages the bishop had no power, but as one of the body of elders, and what he derived from his personal influence; though this (as he would, of course, be the most respectable of the elders) would no doubt be considerable. There was, however, no act or office, which might not have been done as regularly by any other of the elders as by himself, and he had no authority beyond his own church, or as we should say, parish.

Another order of persons in the primitive church, was that of deacons, a rank subordinate to that of elders. They were generally young men, whose business it was to attend to the secular affairs of the society, under the direction of the elders; but as an accurate distinction in offices was not much attended to, it is probable that the deacons were often employed in assisting the elders in their proper functions, for which they would by this means be gradually prepared. Thus the seven extraordinary deacons who were chosen to assist the apostles in the care of the poor, did not confine themselves to that office, but became, some of them at least, eminent preachers, like the apostles themselves, of which the history of Stephen and Philip is a sufficient proof.\*

Women, and particularly widows who were poor, were, in this age of primitive simplicity, employed in certain offices in the church, probably in attending the sick, assisting strangers, &c. for which they were allowed a certain stipend. To this, no doubt, Paul alludes when he says, "honour widows that are widows indeed," as he alludes to the salaries of the elders where he says that, "they who have ruled well are worthy of double honour." Such also is, no doubt, the meaning of the word honour in the fifth commandment, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, that is, give them a sufficient maintenance.

The fund for these expenses was a common stock, to which every person contributed according to his ability, a collection being probably made for this purpose every Lord's day; and out of it the poor were relieved, and the officers were paid, according to their occasions. The rich, no doubt, received nothing, but cheerfully gave their time and attendance to whatever business they undertook, and others received no more than was necessary to their comfortable subsistence, and decent appearance.

The appointment of salaries, as well as the proportion of relief to the poor, and every thing else relating to the administration of the affairs of the society, was made by the vote of all the members of it, including the common people, as well as the elders and deacons: for such was the custom till a pretty late period in the history of Christianity. But in those days of truly Christian simplicity and zeal, the great object and use of every particular regulation was more attended to, than any honour or emolument that resulted

\* See Vol. II. pp. 338—340, and King's *Enquiry*, Ch. v. Sect. i.

from it. Afterwards, alas! the object was less thought of, and the personal consideration more; till at length the latter wholly swallowed up the former; places and appointments in the church being considered in no other light than as means of advancing men in rank and fortune in the world.



## P E R I O D II.

OF THE PERSECUTION BY DOMITIAN, AND THE HISTORY  
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO THE END OF THE  
REIGN OF ADRIAN, A. D. 138.



## SECTION I.

*From the Death of Nero, A. D. 69, to that of Trajan,  
A. D. 117.*

NERO had rendered himself so odious by his folly and cruelty, that after his death, it is probable that his measures would be as unpopular as himself; and therefore that, though the laws against Christianity still subsisted, they were not then generally executed. Acts of violence seldom continue long, humanity interposes, and the minds of the most cruel relent. There is at least a silence concerning any particular cruelties exercised against Christians, from the death of Nero till the latter end of the reign of Domitian, a period of about thirty years, in which it cannot be doubted but that Christianity continued to spread in all the provinces of the empire, as well as in other parts of the world. Eusebius expressly says, that Vespasian attempted nothing against the Christians.\* Domitian, however, who, in the latter part of his reign, very much resembled Nero, imitated him also in his persecution of the Christians, though he does not appear to have carried it on with the same violence; and he seems to have been led to it by his jealousy and dislike of the Jews.

The prophecies concerning a king, or a conqueror, to arise in the East, though Josephus had maintained that they were fulfilled in his father Vespasian, who was raised to the empire in that part of the world, probably continued to give some alarm, so that the emperor was not quite easy about them. Indeed, the mind of Vespasian himself had not

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iii. C. xvii. p. 108. (P)

been perfectly at rest on this subject: for after the taking of Jerusalem, he ordered that inquiry should be made concerning the descendants of David, that he might exterminate all who were of that royal line.\* Domitian, hearing that some relations of Jesus were living, gave orders that they should be executed: and two grandsons of the apostle Judas, who is called the brother of Jesus, being sent to him, he inquired of them, whether they were of the family of David. When they acknowledged that they were, he inquired concerning their estates and property, to which they replied that they were together possessed of a thousand denarii, not in money, but in land, consisting of thirty-nine acres ( $\omega\lambda\epsilon\theta\rho\alpha$ ) out of which, by their own labour, they maintained themselves, and paid the taxes; and they shewed their hands callous with labour.

The emperor then inquired of them concerning Christ and his kingdom, when and where it would be set up. To this they replied, that his kingdom was not an earthly one, but angelic, and heavenly, to commence at the end of time, when he would come in glory, to judge the living and the dead, and to give to every one according to his works. With these answers Domitian was so well satisfied, that, thinking he had nothing to fear from men who made so wretched an appearance, he not only dismissed them, but also put a stop to the persecution: and it was not resumed till the time of Trajan. †

In this persecution, the apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos, in the Ægean sea, and there he had the vision which is recorded in the book of Revelation. Also Flavia Domitilla, the neice of Flavius Clemens, who was then consul, together with many others was sent to the isle of Pontia. ‡ And it is probable from Tertullian and Orosius, that though Domitian himself might not proceed to any great extremities in the persecution of the Christians, advantage was taken of it in several parts of the empire, by those governors of provinces who were not their friends, to exercise greater severities, such as had been inflicted in the time of Nero. For, according to the superstition of the times, the Christians, who taught a new religion, the object of which was the extirpation of the old ones, were thought to be the cause of all public calamities. If the Tiber flowed

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iii. C. xii. p. 106. P

† Ibid. L. iii. C. xx. p. 119. P

‡ Ibid. L. iii. C. xvii. p. 109. P

higher than usual, or the Nile not so high; if there was any alarming appearance in the heavens; if there happened to be an earthquake, pestilence, or famine, the common people were enraged, and were clamorous to have the Christians sacrificed, and thrown to the lions in the public games.\*

On the cessation of this persecution, the apostle John returned to Ephesus, and visited the churches in that province and the neighbouring ones. It is said that, though, on account of his great age, he was not able to preach, he would always attend the place of public worship, and frequently say, "My little children, love one another."†

Domitian was succeeded by Nerva, a man of an excellent disposition, the reverse of his predecessor, in his behaviour to the Christians, as well as in other respects. According to Dio Cassius,‡ he forbade the persecution of any persons either for Judaism, or for impiety; by which is to be understood Christianity, being so called by the Heathens on account of its being hostile to their worship; and because Christians, having no temples, altars, or sacrifices, were commonly said to be without religion.

The apostle John is said to have died in the reign of Nerva, or Trajan, having survived the persecution of Domitian, but how long is uncertain. According to Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus,§ he died and was buried at Ephesus.

Though Nero and Domitian, the first of the Roman emperors who persecuted the Christians, were bad men in other respects, we must not conclude that all persecutors have been persons of this character. Others thought it their duty to act this part. Thus Trajan, who succeeded Nerva, being intent upon restoring the empire, and extending the bounds of it, and being withal very superstitious, imagined, as the Heathens in general did, that this end could not be gained without the re-establishment of the ancient religion, under which the Roman empire had been formed and flourished; and Christianity had by this time gained so much ground, that the festivals and sacrifices of the heathen worship began to be much neglected, especially in Asia Minor, and the eastern provinces of the empire; so as to become the subject of great and general complaint. In consequence of this, Trajan

\* Oros. L. vii. C. x. p. 483. Tert. Apol. C. xl. p. 32. (P.) "Si Tiberis ascendit in mœnia, statim Christianos ad leones." See Reeves's *Apologies*, 1709. I. p. 340. Note.

† Jer. in Epist. ad Gal. C. vi. Opera, VI. p. 158. (P.)

‡ In Xiphilin, p. 126. (P.)

§ Euseb. Hist. L. iii. C. xxxi. p. 125. (P.)

procured from the senate an order to restore the ancient religion. On the same principle also Marcus Antoninus was a more unrelenting persecutor of the Christians than Trajan had been.

The younger Pliny, the particular favourite of Trajan, and governor of Bythiniã. was one, among others, who carried the orders of the emperor and of the senate into execution. But so great was the number of persons whose lives were forfeited by this edict, that he was at a loss how to proceed, and therefore applied to the emperor for farther instructions. The letter which he wrote on this occasion is extant, and is highly favourable to the Christians of that age, as the writer acknowledges that they could not be proved to be guilty of any immorality, or of obstinacy, except in adhering to their religion, and choosing to die rather than abandon it. It also contains a most authentic evidence of the great spread of Christianity in that early period, when the facts on which it is grounded were recent.

“Suspending,” says he, “all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice. For it has appeared to me a matter highly deserving of consideration, especially on account of the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering. Many of all ages, and every rank, of both sexes also, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized the cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country. Nevertheless, it seems to me, that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin to be more frequented, and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims likewise are every where bought up, whereas for some time there were few purchasers; whence it is easy to imagine what numbers of persons might be reclaimed, if pardon were granted to those who should repent.”\*

So thought this governor, who was probably entirely unacquainted with the principles of Christianity, and with the nature and strength of its evidence; and who, like many

\* Epist. xxvii. l. x. *P.* “*Delata cognitione, ad consulendum te decerni. Visa est enim mihi res digna consultatione, maxime propter periclitantium numerum. Multi enim omnis ætatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexus etiam, vocantur in periculum, et vocantur. Neque enim civitates tantum, sed vicus etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervegitata est, quæ videtur sisti et corrigi posse. Certè satis constat, prope iam desolata templa, cessasse celebrari, et sacra solemnia diu intermissa repeti. pas omniq. vante victimas, quarum adhuc rarisissimus emptor inveniebatur. Ex quo facile est opinari, quæ turbe hominum emendari possit, si sit penitentia locus.” *C. Plin. Cæc. Sæc. Epist.* 1767, p. 258. See Vol. IV. pp. 485, 504, 515, 521, 535, 542.*

other men in power, and even men of letters, at that time, thought it beneath them to make any serious inquiry on the subject. Others who did so were satisfied that it was founded in truth. Pliny says that among the Christians were persons of all ranks. Some of them, therefore, it may be presumed, were as respectable as himself.

The emperor, in his answer, approved of the conduct of Pliny, and being probably struck with the number of Christians, he ordered that they should not be sought out; but, persisting in his measures, he ordered that, if any were regularly convicted of being Christians, and did not retract, by performing some act of worship to the gods, they should be punished.\* This was a regulation of the persecution, and by no means a suppression of it; though, if the governors of provinces were disposed to favour the Christians, it would be now more in their power to screen them. But great outrages might still be committed by the populace, which Eusebius says was the case at this time;† and where the governors were hostile to the Christians, they would be little better for the edict.

One of the martyrs of principal note in this persecution was Symeon, the son of Cleopas, the bishop of Jerusalem, who succeeded the apostle James. He is said by Hege-sippus to have been accused by some heretics, and to have borne various kinds of torture many successive days, to the admiration of Atticus his judge, and the officers who applied the torture, especially as he was said to have been a hundred and twenty years old. As he survived the different modes of torture, this venerable old man was at length crucified.‡

But the most distinguished martyr in this persecution, of whom we have any particular account, was Ignatius, the second bishop of Antioch. Being brought before the emperor himself, when he was on his expedition against the Parthians, he was by him sentenced to be thrown to the wild beasts at Rome; and this he heard not only without dismay, but with seeming satisfaction. Being conducted at leisure through Asia Minor, he earnestly exhorted the Christians to whom he had access to persevere in the pro-

\* Epist. xviii. L. x. (P.) "Conquirendi non sunt: si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt: ita tamen ut qui negaverit se Christianum esse, idque se ipsa manifestum fecerit, id est, supplicando diis nostris, quamvis suspectus in præteritum fuerit, veniam ex poenitentia impetret." C. Plin. Cæc. Sæc. Epist. 1767, p. 253. See Vol. II. p. 216, III. pp. 514, 542.

† Euseb. Hist. L. iii. C. xxxii. p. 126. (P.)

‡ Ibid. p. 127. (P.)

fession of Christianity, and also to be upon their guard against the principles of the Gnostics, which, as we shall presently see, began about that time to prevail more than they had done before; and as the Gnostics separated themselves from the communion of the catholic church, he most earnestly besought all Christians to adhere to their regular bishops and clergy. Having liberty to write, he expressed his sentiments in several letters, addressed to particular churches, which, with many interpolations, are still extant. In these letters he often speaks of his approaching death, not only without terror, but with joy.\*

## SECTION II.

*From the Death of Trajan, A. D. 117, to that of Adrian,  
A. D. 138.*

THE reign of Trajan, which was nearly twenty-one years, and especially the early part of it, was unfavourable to Christianity, as far as persecution can be said to make it so. That of Adrian, which followed, and continued twenty-one years, was favourable to it, though no law against the Christians was properly repealed. But this emperor restrained the malice of the licentious populace, who were often so clamorous for the execution of Christians, especially for their being thrown to the wild beasts (a barbarous entertainment of which the bulk of the people of that time were extravagantly fond), that the governors of provinces were often obliged to give way to their importunity. Indeed, on several occasions, the mere clamour of the mob induced the emperors themselves to do many things which were both contrary to law, and what they themselves much disliked.

Besides the bigotted attachment of the common people to the religious rites of their ancestors, which often consisted of scenes of riot and intemperance, to which the rabble in all countries are much addicted, many absurd and shocking calumnies were in those early times propagated against the Christians; and to these the common people, and many of the better sort also, were too ready to give credit. Of this kind Eusebius mentions the promiscuous commerce of the sexes, even with their nearest relations, and their feeding on execrable food, which other writers explain of their feasting upon young children, and drinking their blood.†

\* Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. xxxvi. p. 122. P.  
Ibid. l. iv. c. vii. p. 119. P.

These reports, according to Eusebius, arose from the practices of the Gnostics; but it is probable that they were no more true of them than they were of the Catholics.

In this state of things, two Christian writers had the courage to present apologies to the emperor for their religion. The first was that of Quadratus, bishop of Athens, in which he did not content himself with asserting the innocence of the Christian tenets and rites, but urged the sure grounds of the Christian faith; asserting that the miracles of Christ were even then to be seen, in the cure of diseases, and the raising of the dead; some of the persons in whose favour these miracles were wrought being then living. As this was not much more than eighty years after the death of Christ, and but a few years after the death of the apostle John, (and the miracles of the apostles might with sufficient propriety be called the miracles of Christ, since they were equally proofs of his divine mission with the miracles performed by himself,) what this writer asserted is by no means improbable; and, in his critical circumstances, he would hardly have ventured to allege a fact which could not have been satisfactorily ascertained. Another apology was presented to Adrian by Aristides, who had professed philosophy at Athens; and this, as well as that of Quadratus, was extant in the time of Eusebius.\*

It appears also that, after the example of Pliny. S. Granius, a proconsul in Asia Minor, had represented the unhappy situation of the Christians in his province, and especially the outrages which they had suffered from the mob. For the edict of the emperor, sent to his successor Minutius Fundanus, directs him not to suffer those things; and though he does not repeal the laws against the Christians, he orders that the penalties should not exceed the nature of the offence, and moreover, that malicious accusers should not escape punishment.

That Adrian had no particular hatred against the Christians, appears from a satirical, but facetious letter of his to Severianus, the husband of his sister Paulina, preserved in Vopiscus, in which, speaking of the visit he had made to Egypt, and ridiculing the fickleness of the people in it, he mentions the variety of religions in the country, and says, that every person coming there, even the patriarch, would by some be required to worship Serapis, and by others

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. iii. p. 142. (P.) Lardner, II. pp. 288, 289.

Christ; but that all were busy, and addicted to gain. "This deity," he says, "the Christians, this the Jews, this all the Gentile people worship."\* From this letter it is evident, that the Christians in Egypt were not few in number, or timid, but bore a considerable proportion to the Jews, and even to the Heathens, and that they were very assiduous in making proselytes.

By this edict of the emperor, and his known disposition towards them, the Christians could not but have been greatly benefited, and it is evident that Christianity gained much ground in this reign. Many persons of learning and inquiry joined them, and the calumnies which had been raised against them vanished very fast. Eusebius, speaking of the great number of Gnostics in this period, says, that they were greatly eclipsed by the Catholics, who received fresh additions to their number every day, and that the sanctity of their manners struck with respect not only the Greeks, but the Barbarians also. He adds, that the calumnies by which they had suffered were then so fully refuted, that from that time to his own no person had ventured to defame them.† This, however, could only be the case in general. For certainly, by some reports to the disadvantage of Christianity were believed, and propagated, long after this time.

That there was no great persecution of Christians in the time of Adrian, may with great probability be inferred from there being no account of any particular and distinguished martyrs in the whole course of it. In all persecutions, indeed, the names of but few of the sufferers are preserved, those only being noticed by writers in whose character, or case, there was something extraordinary, so as to excite particular attention. Still, however, when no names are mentioned, we may presume that, compared at least with the times preceding and following it, there was no great cause of complaint.

The Christians were so well known in this age, that there was no danger of confounding them with the Jews, as was the case when they first appeared; and as the affairs of the Christians flourished, the calamities of the Jewish nation increased. In the eighth year of Trajan, the Jews of Egypt and Cyrenaica revolted, and at first had some advantage against the Greeks: but these, taking refuge at Alexandria, slew the Jews who resided there; and those of

\* See *Lardner*, VII. pp. 566, 567.      † Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. vii. p. 149. P.

Cyrene, wanting their assistance, were not able to carry on a regular war, and therefore contented themselves with plundering the country, being commanded by one Lucua, called by Eusebius, their king. At length the emperor, sending against them Marcius Turbo, with a sufficient force by land and sea, after many engagements, and in a long course of time, destroyed great numbers of them, so as to put an entire end to their ravages.\* The emperor, fearing lest the Jews in Mesopotamia should molest the other inhabitants, ordered L. Quietus to expel them from that province. Accordingly, in a pitched battle, he defeated a great number of them, and on account of this victory he was made governor of Judea.

But what the Jews suffered under Trajan, was little when compared with the calamities which befel them in the following reign of Adrian. Having revolted under Barchocab, who had been nothing better than a leader of banditti, but who had flattered them with a prospect of some great deliverance (probably giving out that he was the Messiah), they were subdued by Rufus the governor, who made use of his advantage to exercise the most shocking cruelties; killing an infinite number of men, together with their wives and children. At length, in the eighth year of Adrian, when the whole war was reduced to the siege of Beththera, a fortified place not far from Jerusalem, the Jews within it suffered the greatest extremes of hunger and thirst, and the fortress being at length taken, Barchocab himself was put to death. Also, to prevent any future revolt of the nation, the whole race of the Jews were forbidden to set foot in their own country, or even to see it at a distance.†

Thus, says Eusebius, was the land of Judea emptied of its own inhabitants, and peopled by a concourse of strangers: a Roman colony being fixed at Jerusalem, which, in honour of the emperor Ælius Adrian, was called Ælia. There being no more any Jews in the place, the Christian church, which arose there, consisted wholly of Gentiles, and their first bishop, after those of the circumcision, bore the name of Marcus.‡

After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, many of the Jewish Christians returned to the place, and kept up the form of a church till the time of Adrian. The names of

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. i. p. 142. (P.)

† In the war under Adrian, the Jews lost 580,000 men in battle, besides those who perished by famine, distress and fires. *Basnage*, VII. p. 368. (P.)

‡ Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. vi. p. 144. (P.)

the bishops are preserved in Eusebius, and they succeeded James the brother of Christ in the following order: Simeon, Justus, Zaccheus, Tobias, Benjamin, John, Matthew, Philip, Simeon, Justus, Levi, Ephraim, Joseph and Judas. Though, excepting Simeon, the first of them, we know nothing of these, besides their names; yet as they succeeded the apostles in the ancient mother church, I thought it not amiss to give the catalogue of them.

### SECTION III.

#### *Of the Gnostics in the Reign of Adrian.*

THE Christian writers of this and the following age make grievous complaints of the increase of *Gnosticism* in the time of Adrian; and no doubt, in some respects, with reason, as it was a great corruption of the true Christian principles. But this circumstance is an incontestible and valuable proof of the favourable reception of Christianity by the learned and inquisitive of that age. Those who distinguished themselves as Gnostic Christians were the literati and philosophers of their times; who being convinced by historical evidence, of the truth of the miracles and resurrection of Christ, were led to embrace Christianity; at the same time that, not being able to divest themselves of their philosophical principles, they endeavoured to retain both; and doubtless, thought they could do it very consistently; considering Christ and the apostles as sent by God to teach certain important truths, but who (either not being philosophers, or having their reasons for concealing their more sublime tenets, which were connected with their doctrines) taught what they knew in language adapted to the vulgar.

We have seen the rise of this system in the times of the apostles, and the offence which it justly gave them. But notwithstanding this, and though their remonstrances might prevent the spread of this philosophical Christianity for a time, other persons arose, who either were not moved by the authority of the apostles, (with respect to what they might think they had no particular commission to teach,) or finding means to explain what they had written, so as not to be unfavourable to their sentiments, revived the same general doctrines, perhaps with some little variation. And when, about this time, Christianity made more rapid advances than ever it had done before, so as to engage the attention of all ranks and classes of men, it is not surprising that, while the

greater part received it as it was plainly taught by the apostles, some persons of a speculative turn should receive it in conjunction with their philosophical tenets.

That nothing but the strongest evidence, and that of the plain historical kind, could have led these philosophers to embrace Christianity, is evident from the opposition that was for some time made to it by persons of this class, as by Simon Magus and his immediate followers. It was, indeed, the union of principles which were far from having any natural connexion. The philosophers of that age, viz. those of the East, could not believe that such a world as this, abounding with so many evils, could have been made by the Supreme Being, who is perfectly good; and they had always been used to regard with extreme dislike and contempt the ceremonies of the Jewish religion. They therefore thought that the world was made by inferior and imperfect beings, and that the Jewish religion had no better origin. They had always regarded *matter* with peculiar aversion, as a clog to pre-existent, lapsed spirits, who longed to regain their liberty, and rise unfettered to their pristine seat in the empyreal regions. They therefore could not bear the idea of the resurrection of this hated body.

Yet, notwithstanding these fixed principles, without the aid of any arguments in favour of Christianity derived from the Jewish Scriptures, and its prophecies, (of the divine origin of which they could not but know that Christ and the apostles were fully persuaded,) they could not refuse their assent to the evidence of the recent facts of the gospel history. They therefore retained their former principles, as a sublime philosophy, which was not wholly inconsistent with the plainer Christianity of the common people.

Justin Martyr, who was well acquainted with the Gnostics, and who wrote a treatise against them, which is now lost, sums up the principal of their tenets in two passages, in his Dialogue with Trypho, in which he says, "They blasphemed the Maker of the universe, and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; some of them being called Marcionites, some Valentinians, some Basilidians, some Saturnianians, and others going by other names; who say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that, immediately after death, souls are received into heaven. Do not," he adds, "take these to be Christians."\*

It is remarkable that, at the same time that Justin makes

\* Dial. pp. 308 and 311.

the exclamation against the Gnostics, calling their tenets impious and blasphemous, he was himself uniting with the plain doctrine of Christ, other philosophical tenets, little less heterogeneous to it, though from a different school, viz. that of Plato, to which he was attached. This union of philosophy and Platonism afterwards produced a system far more absurd, and more directly contrary to the principles of the gospel, than any thing that Gnosticism could have led to, as we shall see in the course of this history.

The Gnostics whom I have now described, regarded with contempt the system of the Jewish religion. But it appears from the writings of the apostles, that many Jews, and those the most zealous for the rites of their religion, held Gnostic principles. These must have been Jews of a speculative turn, who, with other philosophers, (though they might not perhaps believe that the world was made by inferior and imperfect beings,) regarded matter, and the body, with contempt, and were no believers in a proper resurrection. These philosophical Jews held these new tenets in conjunction with their belief in the divine inspiration of Moses, just as the Gnostics in Adrian's time, who were unbelievers in the divine inspiration of Moses, held the same philosophical tenets in conjunction with their belief of the divine mission of Christ.

Of the class of Jewish Gnostics was probably Cerinthus, who is said to have opposed the apostle John; and, considering the vehemence with which this apostle writes against the Gnostics, an anecdote which Irenæus says he had from Polycarp, who was acquainted with the apostles, and was by them ordained bishop of Smyrna, I do not think altogether improbable, viz. that finding himself in a public bath together with Cerinthus, he made haste to leave the place, saying, "Let us flee, lest the bath in which is Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, fall upon us."\* In this manner might this apostle choose to express his aversion to Cerinthus and his principles. The Nicolaitans, who are mentioned with great indignation in the book of Revelation, as addicted to some practices highly censurable, were probably Gnostics of this class. †

An anecdote similar to that which Irenæus from Polycarp relates concerning John, is told of Polycarp himself, viz. that being met by Marcion, and asked whether he would acknow-

\* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. c. xiv. p. 64. P. 1. see *Lectures*, p. 109. † See *Lectures*, p. 109.

ledge him, meaning as a Christian and a brother, he replied, I acknowledge thee to be the first-born of Satan.\* The philosophical Marcion would probably smite at this angry reply of the venerable old bishop.

After the age of the apostles, we have no distinct account of any other eminent Gnostics of the same class with Cerinthus, who is said to have had many followers, especially in Asia Minor, though some of the sect of the Gnostics enumerated by Hegesippus, were probably Jews. For he speaks of the church of Jerusalem, as continuing a pure virgin till the time of Simeon, the last of the Jewish bishops of Jerusalem. "Till that time," he says, "it was not corrupted with absurd doctrines, (an expression almost appropriated to the Gnostic notions,) but first, Thebuthis, because he was not made a bishop, began to corrupt it, his being one of the seven heresies. After him were the Simonians from Simon, the Cleobeans from Cleobius, the Dositheans from Dositheus, the Gortheans from Gortheus, and the Masbotheans. From them came the Menandrians, the Marcionites, the Carpocratians, the Valentinians, the Basilidians, and Saturnianians, each of them preaching their different doctrines. From them came false Christs, and false prophets, who divided the unity of the church with corrupt doctrines, against God, and against his Christ."†

We may the less wonder at our hearing of no particular Gnostics among the Jews, as we have so few accounts of the Jewish Christians themselves. But the Gnostics among the Gentile Christians made a great figure at this time, under leaders of distinguished eminence, who wrote many books, which employed the learned among the Catholics of some centuries to answer. They are represented as having been the disciples of one another in regular succession, beginning with Dositheus, who is said to have been the master of Simon, as Simon was of Menander, a Samaritan, and Menander, of Saturninus of Antioch, who was followed by Basilides of Alexandria.‡

Cerdon who is said to have been the disciple of Simon, came to Rome in the pontificate of Hyginus, the ninth from the time of the apostles. He was succeeded by Marcion of Pontus, who had many more followers.§ But the person whose disciples were the most numerous was Valentinus,

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. xiv. p. 161. (P.) Lardner, II. p. 87.

† Ibid. C. xxiv. p. 122. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. vii. p. 147. (P.) Lardner, IX. p. 270.

§ Ibid. C. xi. p. 154. (P.) Lardner, IX. pp. 364, 365.

who also visited Rome in the time of Hyginus. He flourished chiefly in the time of the emperor Antoninus Pius, and continued to the time of Anicetus.

In the time of Hegesippus, Gnosticism (which was the only system that this writer considered as heresy) had not infected the greater churches. He came to Rome in the time of Anicetus, and on his journey conversed with many bishops, and particularly visited the church of Corinth, and found in all of them what he calls the doctrine of the apostles.\*

## SECTION IV.

### *Of the Christian Writers in this Period.*

WITHIN this period, the apostle John wrote his book of the *Revelation*, containing an account of the visions which he had in the isle of Patmos, whither he had been banished by Domitian. It was, however, long objected to by many, as not written by this apostle; and some are still averse to receive it. I shall not enter into the arguments for or against this book; but what has been alleged in favour of its having been written by the apostle, preponderates with me.

There is little doubt of the genuineness of the three epistles of John, or of their having been written near the close of his life; one, a general epistle, and the two others addressed to particular persons. The principal object of them all is to guard those to whom he writes against the opinions of the Gnostics, especially the Docetæ, who held that Christ was man only in appearance, and had not real flesh and blood. He also inculcates, in a most earnest and affectionate manner, the Christian duty of brotherly love, and exhorts to practical virtue in general.

The other writers within this period are very few, and of them few are extant, except such as are evidently interpolated.

The oldest work of the age, if it had been genuine, is that which goes by the name of *The Epistle of Barnabas*, † The design of it is the same with that of Paul to the Galatians and the Hebrews, viz. to shew the superiority of the gospel to the law of Moses. Whoever was the author of this epistle, it was probably written soon after the destruction of Jerusalem. It abounds with interpretations of the Old Tes-

\* Euseb. Hist. l. iv. c. xxiv. p. 151. P.

† See Wake's *Gen. Ernst*, vol. 2, *Disc.* p. 60, and *Ep.* p. 100.

tament, which discover much more of imagination than of judgment.

The most valuable, and unquestionably genuine, production of this age, is an epistle to the church of Corinth by Clemens, bishop of Rome, the same whom Paul mentions, as one of his *fellow-labourers, whose names were in the book of life*. Philip. iv. 3. This epistle was held in the highest esteem by all Christians, and, like the Scriptures, was publicly read in many churches. It is an earnest dissuasive from the spirit of faction, which appeared in the church of Corinth, and which was indeed sufficiently conspicuous when Paul wrote his epistles. There is extant another epistle ascribed to this Clemens, but it is evidently spurious, and was probably written in the middle of the third century. So highly was this Clemens esteemed by Christians of a later age, that several other writings were palmed upon him, especially the *Apostolical Constitutions*, and the *Clementine Homilies*, of which an account will be given in their proper place.

Another work of doubtful authority is, *the Shepherd of Hermas*,\* by some thought to be that Hermas who is mentioned by Paul in his epistle to the Romans; but by others supposed to be either spurious, or to have been written by a later Hermas, or rather Hermes, brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, about the year 140. Whoever was the author of this work, (and though it was so much esteemed by many Christians as to be publicly read in their churches.†) it is certainly a very poor performance. It consists of three visions, twelve commands, and ten similitudes. The object of them all is to inculcate moral duties, but the method of doing it, by visions or revelations, which were certainly fictitious, is not to be justified. Eusebius does not determine whether this work be genuine or not.‡

It is probable that the *epistles* ascribed to *Ignatius*.§ especially the lesser ones, are in the main genuine, and the interpolations that are in them may easily be distinguished. They were written, as was mentioned before, on his journey

\* See Wake's *Gen. Epist.* Ed. 2, *Di c.* v. 77, and *Ep.* p. 109.

† From this we may with great probability infer, that in this early age, the canonical books of the New Testament were not thought by Christians to be written by a proper inspiration. For they certainly did not consider the epistle of Clemens, or the visions of Hermas, as so written; and since the idea of the books of *apocrypha* being inspired has prevailed, it has been thought improper to put any other writings so much upon a level with them, or to read them alike in the time of public worship. (P.)

‡ I. iii. C. iii. p. 90. (P.)

§ See Wake's *Disc.* p. 50, and *Ep.* p. 63.

to Rome, to encourage Christians in a state of persecution, and to warn them against the principles of the Gnostics.

We have a *letter of Polycarp*, bishop of Smyrna, to the Philippians, written to enforce the practice of moral duties, and to dissuade them from the principles of the Gnostics. An account of the martyrdom of this excellent man will be given in the next period.

In the time of Eusebius there were extant *five books of Papias*, bishop of Hierapolis in Syria, a hearer of the apostle John, and a companion of Polycarp, *of the interpretation of the divine oracles*. Papias was a great collector of the sayings of the apostles; and one of the traditions preserved by him was, that, after the resurrection, Christ would reign upon earth a thousand years, an opinion which, from his authority, was long respected by many.\*

The apologies of Quadratus and Aristides addressed to Adrian were mentioned before.

Among the Christian writers in the time of Adrian, Eusebius mentions Hegesippus, and also Justin; but in the Apology of the latter was addressed to Antoninus Pius, I shall speak of them both hereafter.

To this account of Christian writers, it may be proper to add that of two Jewish authors, as their works are of particular importance to Christians, viz. Philo and Josephus.

Philo was a native of Alexandria, brother to the chief magistrate among the Jews in that place, and he was sent at the head of the embassy to Caligula, as has been mentioned. His writings, which are numerous, shew that he was much attached to the Platonic philosophy; and he made a very absurd use of it in interpreting the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which is the object of most of his works. In fact, he represents the writings of Moses as a kind of allegory, the true meaning of which is to be found in the principles of Plato; though we are not to suppose that he therefore considered the Mosiacal history as a fable, destitute of historical truth. In this mode of interpreting Scripture, Philo was unhappily followed by Origen, and other learned Christians, for which they are justly ridiculed by Porphyry, as Philo was by Celsus. From Philo it was that the Platonicizing Christian fathers learned the personification of the divine Logos, so that, without being a Christian, he may be considered as having laid the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

\* Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. xxxix. p. 135. (P.) Lardner, II. p. 56.

Josephus is a writer of much greater value, as his principal work is a history of the Jewish nation from the beginning, and contains a particular account of the later periods of it, and of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other calamities which befel the nation, of which he was an eye-witness, having had the command of an army, and having been taken prisoner, and treated with great kindness by Vespasian and Titus. His history bears marks of a desire to recommend himself to the Greeks and Romans; but this appeared more particularly by his maintaining that Vespasian, who was proclaimed emperor in the East, was the Messiah of the ancient prophets. He carefully omits all mention of Christ, or of Christians. This, as he could not but have been acquainted with them, probably arose from his not being able to say any ill, and his not choosing to say any good of them, and shews that he had imbibed the general prejudices of his nation against them.\* On this account, however, his history, which shews the exact accomplishment of our Saviour's predictions concerning the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple, is of the more value to Christians.†

Besides his twenty books of Jewish Antiquities, and seven of the Jewish War, we have of Josephus a pauegyric on the Maccabees, his own life, and two books against Apion, in defence of his nation and religion. He spent the latter part of his life at Rome.

Thus we are come to the conclusion of what may be called the virgin, or pure age of the church, in which we perceive no trace of any doctrine or practice (excepting those of the Gnostics, who in this period were in a great measure separated from the catholic church) besides those which were derived from the apostles themselves. None of the writers I have mentioned so much as allude, in the most distant manner, to any heresy but that of the Gnostics, which was Christianity contaminated with the principles of the oriental philosophy. In the whole of this period, the sole object of worship, in all Christian churches, was no other than the one true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And Christ himself was by all considered as the most distinguished of the prophets, who had no existence before the time of his birth in Judea. The

\* See, on Josephus's Testimony, Vol. IV. p. 488, and the authorities mentioned in the Note.

† See Jortin's character of the Historian Josephus, quoted Vol. II. p. 168, Note

memory of what had been uniformly taught by the apostles was as yet too recent for any departure from such a fundamental doctrine as that of the unity of God.

In the following period we shall have a very different scene opening upon us. It could then no longer be said, as hitherto it might be, that there were few men of learning among Christians. Philosophers, as well as other persons, gave attention to the evidences of Christianity, and became converts; so that in a short time the number of writers among the Heathens bore a small proportion to those among the Christians. But the credit which Christianity derived from this flattering circumstance, was in a great measure counter-balanced by the foreign opinions which these philosophers brought into Christianity, and connected with it; since by this means a foundation was laid for a system of Christian idolatry, little better than that of the Heathens, and for various other abuses and corruptions, through which it was barely possible to discern the features of primitive Christianity.



## PERIOD III.

FROM THE DEATH OF ADRIAN, A. D. 138, TO THAT OF  
MARCUS AURELIUS, A. D. 180.



### SECTION I.

*Of the State of Christianity in the Reign of Antoninus Pius,  
and of the Martyrdom of Polycarp and Justin, in the  
Reign of Marcus Aurelius.*

ANTONINUS Pius, who succeeded Adrian, and reigned twenty-three years, was one of the best of emperors, and was distinguished for his justice and humanity. He was far from persecuting the Christians, though they were persecuted in his reign, especially in the beginning of it, by some governors of provinces, who either took advantage of the laws which were not repealed, or gave way to the clamours of the populace. For, as there had been some earthquakes in Asia, and the neighbouring countries, the superstitious Heathens, ignorant of their true cause, ascribed them to the anger of the gods, for the desertion of their worship, in consequence of the spread of Christianity; and on this account they were guilty of great outrages upon the Christians. Of these they complained, and Justin Martyr presented to Antoninus an apology, which is still extant, and appears to have been well received: for the emperor issued an edict in favour of Christians, the authenticity of which is vindicated by Dr. Lardner.\*

There is so much good sense in this edict, and it discovers so much knowledge of the principles and conduct of the Christians, in this emperor, that I shall give it entire, in the doctor's translation from Eusebius.†

“The emperor Antoninus, Augustus, Armenicus, Pontifex Maximus, &c. to the states of Asia sendeth greeting

\* *Heathen Test.* II. p. 155. (P.) *Works*, VII. pp. 390, 391.

† *L. iv. C. xiii.* p. 159. (P.)

I am well satisfied the gods will not suffer such men to be concealed: for undoubtedly they are more concerned to punish those who refuse to worship them than you are. But you only confirm these men in their sentiments, and make them more obstinate, by calling them impious, and giving them vexation. For they are not so desirous to live, as to be prosecuted, and suffer death for their God. Hence they come off victorious, laying down their lives rather than do what you demand of them. As for the earthquakes of the former or the present times, it may not be improper to advise you, to compare yourselves with them, and your sentiments with theirs. For when such things happen, you are dejected, but they are full of confidence in God; and you, in the ignorance you are in, neglect the other gods, and their rites, and the worship of the Immortal likewise; and the Christians who worship him, you banish and persecute to death. Before our time many governors of provinces wrote to our deified father about these men, to whom he wrote, that they should not be molested, unless they did things contrary to the welfare of the Roman government. Many also have informed me about the same men, to whom I returned an answer agreeably to the rescript of my father. If, therefore, any person will still accuse any of these men as such (i. e. a Christian), let the accused be acquitted, though he appear to be such an one, and let the accuser be punished.—Set up at Ephesus in the common assembly of Asia.”

“And that these things were so done,” adds Eusebius, “is attested by Melito, bishop of Sardis, who flourished at that time, in what he says in his excellent apology, which he made for our religion to the emperor Verus.”\*

Such being the disposition of this excellent emperor, the persecutions arising from the violence of the common people were, no doubt, restrained; and accordingly we have no account of any particular martyrdoms till the following reign of Marcus Aurelius; who, though an excellent emperor in other respects, was nevertheless a bigoted Pagan. In the eighth year of his age he had been introduced into the college of Sarian priests, and could himself discharge all the functions of that priesthood. Being much attracted to the study of philosophy, he honoured his teachers not only with statues, but also with sacrifices; and in the worship of the heathen gods he was so superstitious, that he

\* *Heathen Test. B. p. 170. E. Works, VI. p. 290.*

was sometimes ridiculed, as Julian afterwards was, for the great number of his sacrifices; and, in common with the weakest of the Heathens, he had great faith in omens and dreams.

In the beginning of his reign, many calamities befel the empire. The Tiber overflowed, and did great damage in the city. After this followed a famine. The Parthians also declared war against the Romans, and defeated their armies. Many heathen philosophers being by him invited to Rome, and supported by him, advised him to maintain the religion of his ancestors, no doubt, as a necessary means of preserving the empire, and providing for the stability of it. To this he had no aversion, and being a Stoic, and thinking it right to be inflexible in his measures, he issued rigorous edicts against the Christians, which were obeyed with sufficient alacrity by the governors of provinces.

He does not appear to have been at all moved by some excellent apologies, which were presented to him by Christian writers, or by those which had been presented to Adrian and Antoninus Pius; and yet he must have been well acquainted with Christians, and the principles on which they acted. The fortitude of Christians in bearing persecution he mentions in his own writings, but ascribes it to *obstinacy*; and this he, with Pliny the younger, and many others, thought to be a sufficient cause of punishment. Had Heathens borne torture and death with the same fortitude, he would, no doubt, have highly commended them; but he was provoked at the superiority which the Christians shewed to all other men in similar circumstances.

The apologies for Christians, which were presented to this emperor, though all without effect, were those of Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, Appollinaris of Hierapolis, Melito of Sardis, and Theophilus of Antioch; and towards the end of his reign, appeared that of Miltiades. Some passages in these apologies I shall recite from the translations of Dr. Lardner, as they shew the situation of Christians in those times, and how they were affected by it.

Justin, after mentioning Ptolemy, and two others who were put to death by the order of Urbicus, prefect of the city, and who speaks as if the persecution was general, says, "Things that have happened very lately, but a few days ago, in your city, and which are every where done in like manner by the presidents without reason, have compelled me to make this address to you." In the course of

at, he says that, "Every where, if any Gentile was admonished or reprov'd for a fault, by a father, a neighbour, a child, a friend, a brother, a husband, or a wife, he would presently have his reprov'er before a governor, who would be willing to inflict death upon him.\*

Athenagoras, who was probably an Athenian, tells this emperor and Commodus (for his apology was presented at the close of his reign, which shews that he had not relaxed of his severity in the course of it) that all other people experienced the benefit of their equitable government; "but we Christians," says he, "because no regard is had to us, nor any provision made for us, though we do no evil, and are in all things obedient to the Divine Being, and your government, are harassed and persecuted, for the name only. We therefore entreat you to take care of us, that we may no longer be put to death by sycophants." †

Melito, in a fragment of his apology preserved by Eusebius, says, "Pious men are now persecuted and harassed throughout all Asia by new decrees, which was never done before; and impudent sycophants, and such as covet the possessions of others, taking occasion from the edicts, rob without fear or shame, and cease not to plunder those who have offended in nothing." Afterwards, "If these things are done by your order, let them be thought to be well done; for it is not reasonable to believe that a just emperor should ever decree what is unjust, and we shall cheerfully bear the reward of such a death. This request, however, we make to you, that you will inform yourself concerning those who are engag'd in this contention [i. e. the Christians], and then judge whether they deserve death and punishment, or safety and quiet. But if this resolution, and new edict, which is not fit to be enacted against barbarians and enemies, proceeds not from you, as we hope, much more would we entreat you not to neglect us, and give us up to this public rapine." ‡

It is pretty evident from this, that the emperor Marcus Antoninus issued new edicts against the Christians, even towards the close of his reign, and though Tertullian says that he published no new laws against the Christians. Lardner observes that there might be imperial edicts published in Gaul and Asia, with which he was not acquainted. Other critics are of the same opinion, and Mosheim, with great probability, supposes that by the new edicts the

\* Heathen Test. II. p. 184. (P.) Works, VII. p. 184.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid. p. 186. (P.) Ibid. p. 111.

accusers and prosecutors of the Christians were entitled to their possessions, as a recompense for their zeal against them.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned excellent apologies, M. Aurelius, with unrelenting rigour, continued the persecution of the Christians to the end of his reign, which was near twenty years; so that they suffered more under him, than under all the preceding emperors. Eusebius says that, in consequence of the populace promoting the persecution, the number of martyrs was almost infinite, and that he should give a fuller account of them in a separate treatise, contenting himself with mentioning, in his general history, a few of the more remarkable cases, which I shall recite after him.

In this persecution suffered the illustrious Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who had been the companion of the apostle John; and Eusebius intimates, that the persecution was violent, not at Smyrna only, but in Asia in general. Of what happened in other places we are now ignorant, but of the martyrdom of Polycarp we have an authentic account, in an epistle from the Christians at Smyrna to their brethren at Philadelphia, and other places.\*

Before they come to the account of Polycarp, they speak of other martyrs in general, and describe their constancy in suffering the tortures to which they were exposed; observing that the spectators were astonished to see them scourged till their veins and arteries were laid bare, and even their entrails became visible; that after this they were laid upon the shells of sea-fishes, and sharp spikes fixed in the ground, and exposed to other kinds of torture, and at last were thrown to the wild beasts to be devoured. One Germanicus, being young, was advised by the president to spare himself; but he was not moved by it, and being exposed to the wild beasts, rather stimulated them, to dispatch him the sooner.

After this the whole multitude cried out for Polycarp to be produced. He, hearing of this, was not disturbed, and had no intention of flying, but was prevailed upon by his friends to retire to a country house not far off. Here, three days before his apprehension, he dreamed that his pillow was in flames, which led him to say, that he should die by fire. Being pursued, he fled to another place; but being traced thither, he refused to go any farther, saying, *the will of the Lord be done*; and going to those who were sent to apprehend him, he talked cheerfully with them, and ordered meat

\* See Wake's *Gen. Epist.* pp. 135—158.

to be set before them, requesting that they would permit him to pray undisturbed for a single hour.

After his prayer he was conducted to the city, and on the way Herod, the Tetrarch, and his father Nicetas, took him into their chariot, with a view to persuade him to sacrifice; but on his refusal, they thrust him rudely out of it, so that his leg was bruised. Recovering himself, he proceeded to the *stadium* with great cheerfulness, and being brought before the proconsul, and urged by him to revile Christ, he answered, "Fourscore and six years have I served him, and he has never done me any injury; how can I blaspheme my king and my Saviour?" Being threatened with being thrown to the wild beasts, and appearing indifferent to it, he was then threatened with fire, to which he answered, "You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and then is extinguished; but you are ignorant of the fire of the future judgment and everlasting punishment, reserved for the wicked; but why do you delay, appoint which you please."

Proclamation then being made that Polycarp had persisted in professing himself a Christian, many Jews and Heathens of the city demanded that a lion should be let loose upon him; but Philip the Asiarch saying, that this was impossible, as the exhibition of wild beasts was over, they cried with one voice that he should be burned alive, and all joined in bringing dry wood, the Jews eagerly assisting, according to their custom.

When the pile was made ready, Polycarp undressed himself, and endeavoured to pull off his shoes, which, on account of his great age, he had not of a long time been able to do; and when they were about to nail him to the stake, he said, "Let me be as I am. He that enables me to bear the fire, will also enable me to remain unmoved within the pile, without your fastening me with nails." They therefore only bound him, and after permitting him to pray, when he had concluded, (saying aloud, Amen,) fire was put to the pile; but as he did not die so soon as they expected, at the request of the people, he was dispatched with a sword. The flesh being consumed, the Christians gathered his bones, and deposited them in a proper place, the Jews having been particularly urgent that his body should not be given to the Christians to be interred. They conclude with saying, that if they were permitted, they should celebrate the day of his death upon the place, as his birth-day, in commemoration of so glorious a contest, and for the instruction of posterity.

The authors of this epistle give an account of twelve other

martyrs, and among them of one Metrodorus, a presbyter among the Marcionites, who was burned alive, and especially of one Pionius, distinguished for his bold confession, his exhortation to others, and his constancy in the fire. Eusebius concludes this chapter of his work with mentioning several who suffered martyrdom at Pergamum, as Carpus, Papulus, and a woman of the name of Agathonica.

It was under Marcus Aurelius that Justin, the author of the Apology mentioned above, suffered martyrdom, and thence acquired the title of *Martyr*, to distinguish him from other persons of the name of Justin. He was originally of Samaria, and had applied himself to the study of philosophy, especially that of Plato, of which he always continued to be a great admirer; but according to his own account, he was converted to Christianity in a private conference with some venerable old man. In a second Apology written by him, and addressed to Marcus Antoninus, he said, he expected that snares would be laid for him by one Crescens, a Cynic philosopher, with whom he had had some dispute; and this appears to have really happened. For, at the accusation of this Crescens, he was condemned to death, in the sixth year of this emperor, A. D. 166; and it is thought that he was beheaded by the order of Rusticus, the prefect of Rome.\*

According to Justin, this Crescens, though by profession a philosopher, was a very immoral man, and such in general were the prosecutors of the Christians. Justin himself gives us an account of a martyrdom, which shews the innocence of the accused, and the malice of the accuser. There was a man and his wife, who had both of them lived very dissolute lives, till the woman, becoming a Christian, reformed her conduct, and endeavoured to reclaim her husband; but her expostulations having no effect, after bearing with him a long time, she got herself divorced from him. In revenge, he accused her of being a Christian, but probably not being able to get her condemned, he next accused one Ptolemy, by whom she had been converted. Ptolemy, being asked whether he was a Christian, immediately acknowledged it, and in consequence was ordered for execution. One Lucius, seeing this, expostulated with the judge, whose name was Urbicus, for condemning a man who was guilty of no crime, or immorality. On this the judge asked him if he was a Christian also, and he answering that he was, he was immediately ordered for execution likewise; as also were three

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. xvi. p. 17.

others, who presented themselves in the same manner. So little dread, adds our historian, had the Christians of death, that many of them rejoiced in the prospect of it.\*

## SECTION II.

### *Of the Christian Martyrs at Lyons and Vienne, in Gaul*

THE most shocking scene of barbarous persecution in this or any other reign, was exhibited at Lyons and Vienne, in Gaul, which is given by Eusebius as a specimen of what was transacted in other places, from an authentic account written by the remaining Christians of the places, to the churches of Asia and Phrygia: and to give some idea of the savage rage with which this persecution was carried on, not only with the connivance, but with the knowledge and approbation of this philosophical emperor, I shall give a pretty large abridgment of this account.

The persecution began with excluding the Christians from the baths, the markets, and all places of public concourse. Then the populace insulted them in the most outrageous manner, dragging them about, plundering their goods, and thereby obliging them to keep within their houses. After this, being regularly accused before the magistrates, they were, on their confessing themselves to be Christians, sent to the prisons till the arrival of a president of the province. Being brought before him, Vettius Epigathus desired to be heard in their behalf; but acknowledging himself to be a Christian, he was not permitted, but was confined with the rest; and many others joined him in an open profession of their faith, though about ten persons were staggered with the prospect of what they had to suffer, and renounced their religion; a circumstance which gave the rest more concern than the idea of what was prepared for themselves. More, however, were soon added to the number of the confessors, and those the most eminent Christians in the place.

Strict orders having been given to make inquiry into the lives and conduct of the Christians, some apostates were prevailed upon to accuse them of incest, feeding upon human flesh, and such other abominations as public rumour had laid to their charge. After this the rage of the people, even of those who before had not been ill-disposed toward them, was raised to the highest pitch.

\* Euseb. Hist. l. iv. c. xvii. p. 177. (P.)

They then proceeded to torture those who had been apprehended, in order to make them confess the truth of what was laid to their charge, especially Sanctus, a deacon of Vienne, Maturus, a young convert, Attalus, a native of Pergamus, but a great pillar of the Christian cause in Gaul, and Blandina, a slave. For her, many persons, and especially her mistress, were in great pain, lest the torture should be too much for her. But she bore it, in a great variety of forms, from morning to evening, to the astonishment of those who applied it; and it was observed, that she seemed to relieve herself from her agony by every now and then repeating that she was a Christian, and that the Christians were innocent people.

To all the questions that were put to Sanctus, in order to prove the vile charges against himself and his brethren, he answered nothing but that he was a Christian. This provoked the executioners so much, that they applied red hot plates of iron to the tenderest parts of his body, till he was all one wound, and had hardly the appearance of the human form. Having left him a few days in this condition, they hoped that while he was sore, they should make him more exquisitely sensible to fresh tortures. But these being applied to him while he was dreadfully swelled, were observed to have the effect of reducing him to his former shape, and restoring him to the use of his limbs.

At this time one Biblias, who had renounced the faith, being produced, in order to repeat the calumnies with which she had been induced to charge the Christians, was filled with remorse, and openly retracted what she had alleged; saying, how could the Christians eat infants, or drink their blood, when they did not even eat the blood of brute animals.\* In consequence of this, she was added to the number of the martyrs.

This mode of torture not succeeding, many were shut up in noisome dungeons, in which they were also tortured in their feet, and other ways, and many died of suffocation; but others lived in this dreadful situation, and comforted such as were brought to them. Those who expired in this confinement were chiefly the young and the tender, who had not been accustomed to bear any hardships.

At length Pothinus, the bishop of Lyons, who was then

\* It is evident from this circumstance, that the Christians in that age thought themselves bound by the decree of the apostles at Jerusalem, not to eat blood (P.) See Vol. II. pp. 378—380.

more than ninety years old, and very infirm, was brought before the tribunal, and on his confession, without any regard to his age or weakness, he was insulted in the most outrageous manner by the mob, who beat him with their fists, kicked him with their feet, and threw at him whatever came to hand, as if they were avenging the cause of their gods upon him.

Ten persons, it was observed, had shrunk from the trial, and denied that they were Christians. These, not being credited, were not allowed to have the benefit of their recantation, and being rather insulted for their cowardice, were brought to punishment along with the rest, as murderers, though not as Christians, on the evidence which had been produced of their eating human flesh. These went along with countenances full of shame and dejection, while the rest appeared cheerful and full of courage; so that the difference between them was easily perceived by all the bystanders. After this no Christian who was apprehended renounced his profession, but persevered in it to the last.

The populace having been clamorous to have the Christians thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre, that favourite spectacle was at length provided for them on this occasion, and Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus, were brought out for this purpose. But before the production of the wild beasts, Maturus and Sanctus were made to suffer the torture in the amphitheatre, as if it had not been applied before; and every thing that an enraged multitude called for, having been tried upon them, they were at length roasted in an iron chair, till they yielded an offensive smell of burnt flesh. Nothing, however, could by this means be got from Sanctus, besides his former confession, that he was a Christian; and at length an end was put to his sufferings by death.

Blandina was then produced, and when she was fastened to a stake, a wild beast was let loose upon her; but this also she bore with the greatest composure, and by her prayers encouraged others to bear whatever might be prepared for them; and as the wild beast did not meddle with her, she was remanded back to prison.

Then Attalus was loudly called for, and accordingly he was led round the amphitheatre with a board held before him, on which was inscribed, *This is Attalus the Christian.* But it appearing that he was a Roman citizen, the president remanded him to prison, in expectation of an answer from the emperor, concerning him and others who were in the same predicament. In this respite they so encouraged others,

who had before declined this glorious combat, as it was justly called, that great numbers voluntarily declared themselves Christians.

The answer of the emperor was, that they who confessed they were Christians should be put to death; but that those who denied it should be set at liberty. Upon this there was another assembly held, attended by a vast concourse of people, before whom the confessors were produced; when those of them who were Roman citizens were beheaded, and the rest were thrown to the wild beasts. But, to the astonishment of all present, many who had before renounced their Christianity, and were now produced in order to be set at liberty, revoked their recantation, and, declaring themselves Christians, suffered with the rest. These had been greatly encouraged so to do by Alexander, a Phrygian, who had shewn himself particularly anxious for the perseverance of his brethren.

At this the multitude was greatly enraged; and then he being called before the tribunal, and confessing himself to be a Christian, he was sentenced to be thrown to the wild beasts; and the day following was produced in the amphitheatre for that purpose, together with Attalus, whom the people had insisted upon being brought out once more. But previous to their exposure to the wild beasts they were both made to bear a variety of tortures, and were at length run through with a sword. During all this, Alexander said nothing, but shewed the greatest firmness; but Attalus, when he was in the iron chair, said, in allusion to the Christians being charged with the murdering and eating of infants, "This, which is your own practice, is to devour men; we neither eat men, nor are guilty of any wickedness." It should seem that the privilege of a Roman citizen, viz. that of being beheaded, without torture, was not granted to Attalus.

On the last day of the show, Blandina was produced again, together with a young man of the name of Ponticus, about fifteen years of age, who had been every day brought to see the sufferings of others. This youth being called upon to acknowledge the heathen gods, and refusing to do it, the multitude had no compassion for either of them, but made them go through the whole circle of tortures, till Ponticus expired in them; and Blandina, after being scourged, and placed in the hot iron chair, was put into a net, and exposed to a bull; and after being tossed by him some time, she was at length dispatched with a sword. The spectators acknow-

ledged that they had never known any woman bear torture as she had done.

When this scene was over, the multitude continued to shew their rage by abusing the dead bodies of the Christians. Those who had been suffocated in prison were thrown to the dogs, and were watched day and night, lest any person should bury them. The same was done with the bodies that were left unconsumed by fire, that had been mangled, or burned, with the single heads of some, and the trunks of others. Even in this condition the Heathens insulted them, asking them where was their God, and what their religion had done for them. These bodies and limbs, having been exposed in this manner for six days, were burned, and being reduced to ashes were thrown into the river, to disappoint them, as they thought, of the hope of a resurrection. From what was done in this place, says Eusebius, we may judge of what was transacted in others.

What adds to the praise of these martyrs is, that, whereas that title was esteemed a mark of the highest honour, they would not, in the midst of their tortures, be called by that name, saying it belonged to Christ only, or to others who had died before them. They said that they were only confessors, and entreated the prayers of their brethren, that they might be able to hold out to the end. They also prayed for their tormentors, and did not exult over those who fell.\* This happened in the seventh year of Marcus Antoninus, A. D. 167.

### SECTION III.

#### *Of Montanism.*

IN the nineteenth year of Antoninus Pius, A. D. 156, appeared the sect of Montanus. He was a native of Ardaba, a village in Mysia, on the borders of Phrygia, on which account it is sometimes called the Phrygian, or Cataphrygian heresy. † The followers of Montanus soon became heretics in the original sense of the word. For being excommunicated by other churches, they had separate assemblies of their own, but they held no opinions on any subjects of much importance, different from those of other Christians. They only used greater austerity of manners, observing various rules of fasting, highly commending celibacy, con-

\* Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. 1. p. 198, &c. (P.)

† Ibid. c. xvi. p. 229. (P.)

denning all second marriages, &c. What they are most to be censured for is their pretending to the gift of prophecy, in the same sense in which the apostles were possessed of it, and to have that spirit which our Saviour called the *paraclete* or *advocate*, and which he promised to send, after his ascension. The Montanists maintained that this prophecy was properly fulfilled in them; the Christian church not having been able, before this time, to bear so rigorous a discipline as they were appointed to introduce into it.

Instead of delivering themselves, like Christ and the apostles, in connected and calm discourses. Montanus and his followers were thrown into violent convulsions; and in this state uttered things which their hearers supposed to be from inspiration. But while their admirers thought it to proceed from a good spirit, others attributed it to a bad one.\*

The idea of the peculiar excellence of austerity and mortification did not begin with the Montanists. For in this they only followed Tatian, whose disciples, from this circumstance, obtained the appellation of *Encratites*, voluntarily abstaining from whatever was thought unnecessarily to gratify the corporeal appetites, as flesh meat and wine, even in the celebration of the Eucharist, and objecting also to marriage. These notions Tatian probably got from the Valentinian Gnostics, to whose doctrine he was in some measure addicted; and all the Gnostics professed to hold in contempt every thing of a corporeal nature. Tatian was succeeded by Severus, and from him the Encratites were sometimes called Severians.†

Tatian taught his principles first in Mesopotamia, but they prevailed most in Antioch, and thence they passed into Cilicia and Pisidia; and as this was prior to the time of Montanus, there can be little doubt but that he was one of these Encratites. According to Epiphanius, this sect was formed in the twelfth year of Antoninus Pius, and was established in a part of Phrygia, of which Montanus was a native.‡

That persons of Montanus's turn of thinking should mistake the natural emotions of their own minds for divine impulses, is not at all extraordinary. This we see to have been the case with persons of all religions, Heathens, Mahometans and Christians. We find even at this day how unwilling, men of good sense in other respects are to give up

\* Euseb. Hist. L. v. C. xvi. p. 239. (P.)

† Ibid. L. iv. C. xxix. p. 193. (P.)

‡ Hær. xlv. Sect. i. p. 391. Hær. xlvi. Sect. i. p. 399. (P.)

all idea of supernatural assistance, or of invisible miracles, such as are incapable of any proper proof, especially upon extraordinary occasions. When they see men make great exertions, either in doing or suffering, they are apt to imagine that they have the aid of more power than their own. They are even apt to think so with respect to themselves. The early Christians had this idea with respect to the power of bearing torture in martyrdom, whereas the natural powers of man and the principles of Christianity, will appear to those who consider the force of them abundantly sufficient for all that we read of men having borne or done in those circumstances.

The opinion of the natural weakness of the human mind, and of the necessity of foreign aid, to produce any thing great or good, is the foundation of all that enthusiasm which, in all ages, and to this very day, has been the disgrace of Christianity. The whole of the Calvinistic doctrine of the *new birth*, or as it is called, the work of God in the soul of man, is built upon it. It was, in fact, the same ignorance of the powers of nature, and the idea of the perpetual interference of superior powers, in all the affairs of men, which laid the foundation of the whole system of Paganism. Hence the persuasion of the influence of the sun, moon and stars, in all events, and then that of dead men in the concerns of the living; and hence all the strange rites and ceremonies which have ever been imagined to be proper to gain the favour of those imaginary powers.

Where there is this ignorance of nature and of true philosophy, pretences to inspiration will easily gain credit. Thus the violent agitations of the heathen priests, and the similar ones of the Montanists, of the French prophets, and of the early Quakers, contributed to produce the persuasion of their being under some supernatural impulse; and the same is generally thought in the East to be the cause of the ravings of madmen.

Farther, as men are apt to admire what they find difficult to practise, austerity of manner and rigour of discipline have always been popular. This we see in other religions besides the Christian, as in the case of the Fakirs of Indostan, and the Dervizes among the Mahometans. This it was that chiefly recommended the Novatians, who borrowed much from the Montanists. It has also been the chief recommendation of the monastic discipline, and especially the more rigorous kinds of it.

The principal followers of Montanus were two women of fortune, Priscilla and Maximilla, and also Quintilla, men

tioned by Epiphanius, who all pretended to the gift of prophecy; but though Maximilla foretold the approach of wars and tumults, it was observed that nothing of that kind happened from the time of her death till thirteen years after.

These two women were said to have been married, but to have divorced themselves from their husbands when they appeared as prophetesses, and this they are said to have encouraged in others who were disposed to join them.\* They were both natives of Pepusa in Phrygia, and they called this place, and also Tymium, by the name of Jerusalem: as if that was to be the centre of a new and purer mode of worship, and the place where the Christians were to wait for the descent of the spirit. From the place of the nativity of these women, the Montanists were sometimes called Pepusians.†

This sect spread chiefly in Asia Minor, where it arose, and in Thyatira there was hardly any other Christianity professed;‡ but it extended itself also to other places, and some very distant ones, especially Africa, where it was embraced by the celebrated Tertullian. Montanus had several other followers of eminence besides these, especially Alcibiades and Theodotus.§

When the extravagancies of the Montanists spread, as they soon did, into distant countries, they were strenuously opposed by the more sober part of the Christian world; among others Sotas, bishop of Anchialus in Thrace, taking it for granted that it was an evil spirit that had got possession of Priscilla, endeavoured to exorcise her, and, in conjunction with other bishops he excommunicated her.||

Several synods, or councils, were also held in Asia Minor, especially one at Iconium, in which Firmilian presided, in which the Montanists were excommunicated, and the baptism administered by them declared to be null.¶ On this they formed separate societies, calling themselves the *spiritual*, and other Christians *carnal*. It is said that Victor, bishop of Rome, for some time favoured them, and received them into his communion. Their churches were small but numerous, and they soon divided into a great variety of sects; which cannot be wondered at, considering the principle on which they separated from other Christians.

\* Euseb. Hist. L. v. C. xviii. p. 233. (P.) † Ibid. p. 284. (P.)

‡ Epiphani, Hær. li. Sect. xxxiii. Opera, I. p. 455. (P.)

§ Euseb. Hist. L. v. C. iii. p. 212. (P.)

|| Ibid. C. xix. p. 237. Epiph. Hær. xlviii. Opera. I. p. 402. (P.)

¶ Cypriani, Epist. lxxv. p. 226. (P.)

Pretensions to inspiration being incapable of proof would be various and discordant; and they who professed to be guided by a divine spirit, would not yield to the controul of their brethren.

By the enemies of the Montanists many things were laid to their charge, which, being the reverse of their general principles and maxims, we cannot suppose to have had any foundation in truth, such as the studious ornamenting of their persons, playing at dice, the love of money, &c.\* I only mention these things to shew what absurd calumnies were raised, propagated and believed, concerning persons who, on other accounts, had made themselves obnoxious, and with what allowance we should read what Eusebius and other ancient writers say of the Gnostics, the Ebionites, the Unitarians in general, the Manichæans, &c., and what was afterwards said of the Arians and others.

With respect to the doctrines which then began to divide the Christian world, relating to the person of Christ, the Montanists held nothing that was peculiar to themselves; but many of them, as well as other Christians in that age, were Unitarians. Such was Praxeas, against whom Tertullian wrote, and there were so many others of them who retained the Unitarian doctrine, that by later writers the Montanists in general are sometimes charged with professing it. But the Montanists do not appear to have had many persons of learning among them; and as to the unlearned, and the common people, it is evident, from the acknowledgment of Tertullian and others, that in this age, and to a much later period, they were almost universally Unitarians. According to the author of the Appendix to Tertullian's treatise *De Prescriptione*, they were only those Montanists who followed Eschines who were Unitarians, while they who followed Proclus were of a different opinion.† For these persons distinguished themselves as leaders among the Montanists, and were at the head of what may be called separate schools. Eschines was the earlier of the two.

Some of the Montanists distinguished themselves as writers. Among them were Priscilla and Maximilla, whose writings were considered in as high a degree as the Scriptures themselves. What Tertullian has written concerning the human soul, in his treatise on that subject, is chiefly derived from the supposed revelations in their books. No writer, however, contributed so much to increase the reputation, and

\* Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. xviii. p. 255. P.

† Sect. lii. p. 223. P.

the number of the Montanists, as Tertullian himself, though none of his works that are now extant contain a regular defence of their principles. Patroclus wrote in defence of Montanism, but his treatise is not now extant.

The writers against the Montanists were chiefly Apollinaris of Hierapolis, Miltiades of Athens, Serapion of Antioch, and Caius who answered Patroclus.\* To these Jerome adds, Rhodon a disciple of Tatian. But as Eusebius gives a pretty large account of his writings, and makes no mention of any such treatise of his, it is not very probable that he wrote any thing on the subject.

It does not appear that this sect met with any particular opposition in Africa; but it was soon lost in that of the Novatians, and afterwards that of the Donatists. It appears indeed to have been on the decline soon after the time of Tertullian, and we find no mention of it after the fifth century. I have therefore chosen to give all that I have found to say about it in this one place.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *Of the Origin of the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

THE period of which I am now treating will be for ever noted for the introduction of a doctrine which led to that of the Trinity, as it is now held in all established Christian churches, and which may justly be called the greatest of all the corruptions of Christianity, as it infringes upon that fundamental and most important of all doctrines, the unity of God, in the person of the Supreme Father. This was the work of the Platonic philosophers, who when they embraced Christianity retained much of their former tenets; and the rather, as, in their opinion, these doctrines contributed to enhance the dignity of the head of their new religion, so that he might with propriety be denominated *God*, as well as *man*. And the greatest objection to the Christian religion in all the early ages was the meanness of its founder, viz. a crucified malefactor.

According to Plato, there are three *principles* (*αρχαι*) as he termed them, in the universe, the *good*, or the supreme mind, the *πρῶτος*, his *intellect* or *ideas*, and *ψυχη*, or the *soul of the world*. The second of these principles, Philo, the learned Jew of Alexandria, called *logos*, a term borrowed from the

\* Theod. Hær. Fab. L. iii. C. ii. Opera, IV. p. 227. (P.)

Scriptures, in consequence of its being there said, that the world was made by the word, or *logos*, of God, as Plato had made his (*νοητὸν*) *ideas*, or *intelligible world*, to be the immediate source, or cause, of the visible universe. In the application of these principles to the Jewish religion, the *logos*, that power or principle from which the universe originated, was thought to be something emitted from the supreme mind, and capable of being drawn into it again, as a ray of light was then conceived to be, with respect to the sun. This divine ray, or emanation, was supposed not only to have made the world, but also to have appeared to the patriarchs, to have delivered the law from Mount Sinai, and to have been that bright cloud, or glory, which had been the symbol of the divine presence in the tabernacle and the temple.

To this doctrine the platonizing Christians added, that this divine ray, or *logos*, was permanently attached to the person of Jesus Christ; and this emanation being of the essence of God, Christ, they said, might, on this account, be properly called *God*. According to these philosophizing Christians, therefore, the whole person of Christ consisted of three parts, viz. a body, a proper human soul, and also this divine uncreated *logos*; so that he was both God and man. But then, as the *logos* was only supposed to be something emitted from the supreme mind, just as a ray of light is from the sun, they were always careful to speak of Christ as a being who, though he was properly divine, was, nevertheless, far inferior to the Father, as a beam of light is to the sun. And they were the more careful to do this, that they might not give too much offence to the great body of Christians, who were justly alarmed at a notion which looked so like a violation of the greatest doctrine of all revelation, that of the unity of God.

This opinion of a divine ray, called the *logos*, being permanently attached to the man Jesus, and constituting a proper part of his person, appears first in the writings of Justin Martyr, who had been a Platonic philosopher, and who, when he became a Christian, continued to be a great admirer of Plato. Afterwards, many other learned Christians, especially those who were educated at Alexandria, where the Platonic philosophy was principally taught, adopted the same notion; and by this means they distinguished themselves from the unlearned Christians, as holding a more sublime doctrine than *they* were capable of comprehending. The doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ

they considered as *milk fit for babes*; but that of the divinity, as *meat for strong men*. This was the constant language of the learned Christians for many ages.

It is evident, however, that the new doctrine, though thus qualified, and ingeniously explained, gave much offence to the great body of unlearned Christians; and even many of the most distinguished for their learning, in every period, protested against it. But at length they were overborne by the majority of the learned bishops and clergy, and by them this system was in time so far improved, or rather changed, that Christ was asserted to be, in all respects, equal to God his Father.

Justin Martyr himself, when he first advanced his opinion, did it with great diffidence, without the least censure of those who thought differently from him, and even with the air of an apology, as for something that he was apprehensive might give offence. "It will not follow," says he, "that he is not the Christ, though I should not be able to prove that he pre-existed as God, the son of him that made all things, and that he became a man by the virgin. It is proved that he is the Christ, the son of God, whoever he was, though I should not prove that he pre-existed, but was a man of the same passions with ourselves, having flesh, and being subject to his Father's will. It will be right to say, that in this only I have been mistaken, and not that he is not the Christ, though he should appear to be a man, born as other men are, and to be made Christ by election. For there are some of our race," (meaning probably the Gentile Christians, for all the Jewish Christians are well known to have held this opinion,) "who say that he was a man born like other men. With them I do not agree, nor should I do so, though ever so many, being of the same opinion, should urge it upon me, because we are commanded by Christ himself, not to obey the teachings of men, but what was taught by the holy prophets and himself." \*

It is plain that, according to the Unitarian doctrine to which Justin here alludes, Jesus was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary. It is therefore probable, that this was the opinion of the Unitarians, that is, of the Christians in general, at this time; and that the doctrine of the miraculous conception, as well as those of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, arose about the same period.

Trypho, in his reply to Justin, gives a decided preference to this doctrine of the proper humanity of Christ, without a

\* Dial. p. 233. (P.)

miraculous conception, to any other. "They," says he, "who say that he was a man, born like other men, and that he became Christ by election," (that is, by the appointment of God.) "seem to hold a doctrine more credible than yours. For all of us expect that Christ will be a man, and that Elias will come to anoint him. If, therefore, this person be the Christ, he must by all means be a man, born like other men."\*

The comparison of the Deity to the sun, and of his energies to the rays of light, emitted from him, and drawn into him again, had unfortunately been adopted before Justin Martyr, by some who were properly Unitarians. A divine ray of this kind they supposed was emitted at the creation. The same, they said, was the glory which appeared to Moses, and the patriarchs, and to have constituted those appearances which are denominated angels. A ray of this kind they supposed likewise to reside in Jesus Christ, and that by this he worked miracles while he was upon earth, but that it was withdrawn from him when he ascended into heaven. Some of them might go so far as to say, that since this ray was properly *divine*, and the divinity of the Father, Christ, who had this divine ray within him, might be called *God*, but by no means God different from the Father. They are moreover charged with saying, that the Father, being in Christ, suffered and died in him also, and from this they got the name of *Patripassians*. But Beausobre, with great probability, supposes that this was only what their adversaries charged them with, as the necessary consequence of their opinions. It is not, indeed, certain, since none of their own writings are extant, that they ever, in any sense, called Christ God. Their saying that this divine ray was in Christ, was nothing more than expressing, in the philosophical language of the times, that the presence and power of God the Father was with Christ, and that this power, and not any proper power of his own, was that which worked the miracles. Justin Martyr, who mentions this opinion,† says nothing of those who held it calling Christ God, and much less of their maintaining that God suffered.

This opinion, however, of the divine power, or energy, which was in Christ, being only a divine ray emitted from the Supreme Being, and drawn into him again, Justin disapproved; supposing that after it was attached to the person of Christ, it was never withdrawn from him. He would

\* Dial. p. 233. (P.)

† Ibid. p. 112. (P.)

not, however, say that this divine ray, though permanently attached to Christ, and making an essential part of his person, was ever properly separated from its source, and in this consists the absurdity of the new doctrine. This opinion of his he illustrates by two comparisons; the one that of *speech*, or *logos*, which was the more convenient for his purpose, as this was the very term made use of by Philo to denote this divine ray by which the worlds were made. As speech, conveying a meaning, says he, goes forth from one man and enters into others, by which they comprehend his meaning, while the same meaning still remains in the person who speaks, so the *logos* of the Father continues entire in himself, though it be imparted to Christ.

He also illustrates this transferring of divinity from the Father to the Son, by one lamp lighting others, without losing any of its splendour.

The natural inference from both these comparisons would be, that divine beings were multiplied, because a lamp, though lighted by another, is a perfectly distinct lamp; and speech also, or meaning, communicated to another person, is numerically different from that which remains in him who communicated it, and they continue independent of each other. But Justin and his followers were careful not to pursue this comparison so far; and they all maintained that speech, or meaning, though transferred to another, was still the identical same meaning that was in the other; and that the light of the second lamp was not another, but the very same light with that of the first. By this subtle distinction they thought to avoid the charge of making more gods than one, which no believer in divine revelation would bear. On the other hand, the philosophical Unitarians admitted of no distinction, or difference whatever, between the divinity of the Father and that which was in the Son; so that their adversaries always charged them with confounding the persons of the Father and the Son, as the Arians were charged with separating them.

That Justin Martyr's doctrine of the divinity of Christ was little known at the time that he wrote, is pretty evident from the consideration of another production of the same age, which, with respect to ingenuity and information, is not inferior to any of the writings of those who are usually called the Fathers. I mean the *Clementine Homilies*, which is properly a theological romance, in which the writer personates Clemens, afterwards bishop of Rome; and in an account of his travels, and those of Peter and Simon Magus, intermixed

with a variety of other incidents, he introduces all the theological knowledge of the times. The author of this work not only appears to be a Unitarian himself, and of course represents Peter and Clemens as such, but he never so much as mentions such an opinion as that of Justin Martyr, though he had the fairest opportunity of doing it.

When he introduces Simon disputing with Peter on the plurality of Gods, one supreme and the rest subordinate, and urging as *argumentum ad hominem*, that this kind of plurality may be proved even from the Scriptures, as from God saying, *Let us make man*; Peter replies, that in this "God spake to his own wisdom, which is his spirit, united as a soul to God;"\* that is, he spake to himself; whereas Justin Martyr, and all the advocates of Christ being the logos, would have said that this speech was addressed to the logos, or Christ.

Justin and his followers vindicated the propriety of Christ being called *God*, as he was the uncreated logos of the Father; but in this work Peter says, "To us there is one God, who made all things, and governs all things, whose son Christ is." Again, "Our Lord never said that there was any other God besides him that made all things; nor did he ever call himself *God*, but pronounced him blessed who called him the Son of God."† This was in answer to Simon, who had said that, according to the rule laid down by Moses, Christ ought to have been rejected, either as a false prophet, or another God.

In this work it is likewise alleged as an argument, why a being produced even from the substance of God by way of generation (for such, according to the philosophy of the times, was the origin of all *souls*, both of men and angels), ought not therefore to be called *God*, that "he who is not, in all respects, the same with any other, cannot be entitled to the same appellation. It is the property of the Father to beget, and of the Son to be begotten: but that which is begotten cannot be compared with that which is unbegotten or self-begotten." This is the very reverse of the doctrine of Justin Martyr and his followers, who obtained the name of orthodox. For they maintained the propriety of calling Christ God, because he was begotten, or produced from the substance of the Father, though inferior to him; *God of God, light of light*, as it is expressed in the Nicene Creed.

\* Hom. xvi. Sect. xii. p. 727. (P.)

† Ibid. Sect. xv. p. 728. (P.)

Let any person now judge whether the author of this curious work could have written in this manner, on maxims so diametrically opposite to those of the supposed standard orthodoxy of his times, without at least making some mention of them, or alluding to them. It is therefore almost certain that this writer had never heard of such a notion as that of Justin, and that this was the reason why he took no notice of it.

## SECTION V.

*Of the State of the Jews in this Period, and the subsequent ones, collected chiefly from Basnage's History of them.*

AFTER the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews were governed by *Patriarchs*, the first of which that is known to us, lived in the time of Adrian. He was descended from Hillel, who lived in the time of our Saviour; and this dignity continued in his family till the year 429. His residence was at Tiberias, where the Jews had an academy for the study of their law.

This patriarch had under him several officers, some of whom are also called patriarchs in the laws of the Roman empire; but their jurisdiction was confined to particular places, and they were sent out by the principal patriarch as the occasions of his government required, especially to collect the tribute which every synagogue paid him. This was exacted with so much rigour, that complaints were sometimes made of it to the Roman emperors. The patriarch had likewise the nomination of the rulers of synagogues, and the power of erecting new synagogues, as well as that of deciding all differences relating to the interpretation of the law. This power of erecting new synagogues was forbidden by the emperor Theodosius II., as was also the converting of any person to the Jewish religion.

The first of these patriarchs, of whom we have any account, and probably the first that was created, was Gamaliel II. in the time of Nerva; the second was Simeon III. in the time of Adrian; and he was succeeded by his son, the famous Judah Hakkadosh, or the holy, who lived in the reigns of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus. He was born on the same day that Akiba, a famous Jewish Rabbi, died, which was in the reign of Adrian: and he distinguished himself by a collection of the decisions of the ancient Jewish doctors, or a compilation

of a body of the Jewish canon and civil law, called the *Mishna*, probably about the year 180.

Hillel H., a descendant of Judah Hakkadosh, was the author of the Jewish æra of the creation of the world, the year 3761 of which corresponds to the first of the Christian æra. He also composed the Jewish cycle, to reduce the course of the sun to that of the moon, by means of seven intercalations. This Hillel governed the Jewish nation till about the year 385; and the last of these patriarchs was Gamaliel, mentioned by Jerome about A. D. 392. This dignity was abolished A. D. 429, after it had subsisted three hundred and fifty years.

To these patriarchs succeeded *Primates*, who were elected by the Jews, one in each province; but Theodosius the Younger ordered the contributions which were made for their support, and which were the same that had been granted to the patriarchs, to be paid into the public treasury.

About the same time that the Western Jews were governed by patriarchs, who resided at Tiberias, the Eastern Jews were governed by a person who was styled *The Prince of the Captivity*, at Babylon. The first of these was Huna, who was contemporary with Judah Hakkadosh, and was chosen prince of the nation, A. D. 220 or 222.

The Mishna of Judah Hakkadosh being imperfect, its defects were remedied by Jochanan, assisted by Rab and Samuel, two of his disciples, and they called their work *Gemara*; and this, added to the Mishna, makes what is called the *Talmud of Jerusalem*. The defects of this work, R. Ase, who had a school at Sora, near Babylon, endeavoured to remove in another commentary on the Mishna of Judah; and his commentary, or *Gemara*, together with the Mishna, makes the *Talmud of Babylon*, which is generally supposed to have been completed about A. D. 500 or 505. This Talmud the Jews afterwards held in such high esteem, that they even preferred it to the Scriptures; comparing the latter to water, and the former to wine, “He that offends against the law of Moses,” they say, “may be pardoned; but he who offends against the decisions of their doctors, is deserving of death.”

It is remarkable, that about the time that the doctrine of the Trinity came to be generally professed by learned Christians, we read of few or no converts to Christianity from the Jews; and, no doubt, the teaching of such a doctrine as this, so repugnant to the most fundamental principles of their religion, must have contributed not a

little to this effect. But, indeed, from this time the learned Christians appear to have had little intercourse with the Jews, hardly any of them taking the pains even to learn Hebrew; and the same in general has been the case with the Jews and Christians to the present day.

It is hoped, however, that when the Jews shall fully understand that the doctrine of the Trinity, which gives them such great and just offence, is rejected by learned and well-informed Christians, so as to be convinced that it is unquestionably a corruption of genuine Christianity, they will give more attention than they have hitherto done to the historical evidences of Christianity; and whenever they do this, they must perceive that they are even stronger and clearer than those which they can allege for the divine mission of Moses. They will also see, if they read the New Testament for themselves, and judge of it without prejudice, that there is no contrariety or opposition between the two religions; since, whenever they become Christians, they are to continue subject to their peculiar laws and ritual, as Christ and the apostles, who were also Jews, did: and that, as Jews, there is reserved for them a permanent establishment in their own country, where they are to be the most distinguished nation upon earth. For such is the necessary interpretation of all the ancient prophecies.

## SECTION VI.

### *Of the Writers within this Period.*

I SHALL now give a short account of the Christian writers within this period, nearly in the order in which they are mentioned by Eusebius. The first of them is Hegeſippus, whom indeed he places in the time of Adrian.\* He was a Jew, and the author of an ecclesiastical history, or a continuation of the *Acts of the Apostles* written in a very plain style. It is unfortunately lost, and is by some thought to have been neglected on account of its containing some things that were too favourable to the Unitarian doctrine.

Besides Hegeſippus, there were three other Jewish Christian writers in this period, viz. Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, all of whom distinguished themselves by their translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek; and I choose to mention them all together, though the last of them more properly belongs to the next period. Aquila

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. viii. p. 150. (P.)

is said to have flourished A. D. 130, Theodotion in 180, and Symmachus 200. Their versions are quoted with great respect by all Christian writers, especially that of Symmachus, though they are not now extant, except that of Daniel by Theodotion, which is that which has been generally adopted instead of the LXX. which has been discovered very lately.

Symmachus wrote a commentary on the gospel of Matthew, in which he endeavoured to disprove the opinion of the miraculous conception of Jesus.\* Aquila also and Theodotion, as well as the Jewish Christians in general, were probably unbelievers in that part of the common gospel history, as Eusebius says of them, that "they were Jewish proselytes, whom the Ebionites following believe Christ to be the son of Joseph." †

In the reign of Adrian was Agrippa, surnamed Castor. He wrote against Basilides the Gnostic. ‡

Justin Martyr, besides his two Apologies for Christianity, mentioned before, and his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, proving the truth of the Christian religion on the principles of Judaism, wrote also a treatise of *monarchy*, proving against the Heathens the unity of God, the second part of which is still extant. He also wrote another treatise against the Gentiles, another on heresies, another on the soul, and a book entitled Psaltes, but they have not come down to us.§

Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, wrote epistles to several of the Christian churches, inculcating good morals, and guarding them against heresy, that is, Gnosticism. He particularly commends the Christians at Rome for the assistance they gave to those who suffered for their religion. He complained of some of his epistles being corrupted. ||

One of the epistles of Dionysius was addressed to Pinytus, a bishop in Crete, advising him not to impose on the brethren the yoke of celibacy. To this Pinytus wrote in answer, that we must not always be giving milk as to babes, but sometimes meat to strong men. ¶ In this we see the progress of superstition, and the secret influence of those principles which were the foundation of Gnosticism, and of the doctrine of the Eneerites. Neither the epistle of Pinytus, nor any of those of Dionysius are extant.

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xvii. p. 278. (P.)

† Ibid. L. v. C. viii. p. 221. (P.)

‡ Ibid. L. iv. C. vii. p. 148. (P.)

§ Ibid. L. iv. C. xviii. p. 179. (P.)

|| Ibid. C. xxiii. p. 185. (P.)

¶ Ibid. p. 186. (P.)

Of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, the seventh from the apostles, there are now extant three books addressed to Autolytus, against the Heathen religion. He also wrote against the heresy of Hermogenes, a Gnostic, and against Marcion.\* He is the first writer who uses the word Trinity.

Philip, bishop of Gortyne in Crete, and also Modestus, wrote against Marcion.†

Melito, bishop of Sardis, was a pretty voluminous writer; but nothing of his is come down to us, except a few fragments preserved by Eusebius. He wrote a treatise on Easter, of the rule of life, of the lives of the prophets, of the church, of the Lord's day, of the natural formation of man, of the subjection of the senses to faith, of the soul, body and mind, of baptism, of truth, of the creation and generation of Christ, of prophecy, of hospitality, a book entitled the key, of the devil, of the revelation of John, of the corporality of God, which he is said to have maintained; and an apology for Christianity, addressed to the emperor Marcus Antoninus, of which an extract has been given. In one of his works, Melito gave a catalogue of all the canonical books of the Old Testament, which is preserved by Eusebius. It contains none of those that we call apochryphal.‡

Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, wrote an apology for Christianity addressed to Marcus Antoninus, a treatise against the Gentiles, on truth, against the Jews, and against the Montanists.§

Tatian was a great admirer of Justin Martyr, but after his death he adopted some opinions of the Gnostics, which savoured of too great austerity, enjoining abstinence from animal food, and also from marriage. His followers, called *Encratites*, are also said to have had an aversion to the apostle Paul and his writings. Tatian wrote a harmony of the gospels, and many other works, the titles of which are now lost. All that we have of his works, is his treatise against the Gentiles, and this was the most admired of all his writings.||

Musanus, of whom we know nothing besides the name, wrote against the Encratites,¶ but the work is not now extant.

Bardesanes, who wrote in the Syriac language, was the

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. xxiv. p. 187. (P.) † Ibid. C. xxv. p. 188. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. xxvi. p. 191. (P.) § Ibid. C. xxvii. p. 191. (P.)

¶ Ibid. C. xxix. p. 193. (P.) ¶ Ibid. C. xxviii. p. 192. (P.)

author of several works, all of which are now lost; one against Marcion, another concerning fate, and a treatise relating to persecution. He had been at first a follower of Valentinus, and, according to Eusebius, always retained something of his sentiments.\*

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, was a disciple of Polycarp, when he was very old, and also of Papias. We have in a Latin translation, a large treatise of his against heresy, with many fragments of the original Greek. It relates almost wholly to the Gnostics, though he occasionally and very severely animadverts on the Ebionites, or Jewish Christians, for not admitting any divinity in Christ. He also wrote several epistles, one to Blastus concerning schism, another to Florinus concerning monarchy, to prove that God is not the author of evil, and another to the same concerning the Ogdoad of Valentinus.†

Athenagoras, an Athenian and a philosopher, is the author of an apology for the Christians, addressed to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and also of a treatise on the resurrection, both now extant, though he is not mentioned by Eusebius or Jerome.

Rhodon, a native of Asia, but educated at Rome under Tatian, wrote against the disciples of Marcion, who were then divided into several sects. He also wrote a treatise on the work of the six days.‡ Jerome says, he also wrote against the Montanists, but in this he is thought to be mistaken. Nothing is extant of his besides some extracts preserved in Eusebius.

To this list of writers I must add the unknown author of the present Sibylline verses, which were probably composed at different times, and the last additions to them allude to the emperor Marcus Aurelius. They are first quoted by Justin Martyr, and what is not a little extraordinary, they were received by him, and the Christian writers in general, as the genuine prophetic verses, or oracles, of those women who went by the name of Sibyls; whereas nothing can be more evident than that they are the work of some Christian, who, from some very wrong motive, endeavoured to avail himself of the credit they had obtained for the service of Christianity, which stands in no need of such supports.§

\* Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. xxx. p. 195. (P.)

† Ibid. L. v. C. xx. p. 237. (P.) ‡ Ibid. L. vii. C. xiii. p. 225. (P.)

§ See *Lardner*, II. pp. 242, 311—317, 323, IV. pp. 83—85.

## PERIOD IV.

FROM THE REIGN OF COMMODUS, A. D. 180, TO THAT  
OF DECIUS, A. D. 249.



### SECTION I.

*The general History of this Period.*

COMMODUS, who had neither the understanding nor the bigotry of his father, did not interest himself in the affairs of the Christians, any more than in those of the empire in general, but abandoned himself to the most brutal pleasures. In consequence of this, the Christian church in general had peace, and increased greatly, and many persons of rank and fortune joined the Christians. We have, however, one example of a martyrdom in this reign at Rome, and there may have been many others, of which we have no account, in other parts of the empire.

Apollonius, a Roman senator, a man of letters, and attached to the study of philosophy, was accused by his own slave, a man of a bad character, of being a Christian; and being brought before Perennis, the prefect of the Prætorian guards, he was by him referred to the senate, of which he was a member. But though he there made an excellent oration in defence of his faith, he was condemned to die; the law which ordained that a person confessing himself to be a Christian should be put to death, still remaining in force. The accuser, however, was sentenced to have his legs broken, having been guilty, as Eusebius says, of a capital crime.\*

\* Hist. L. v. C. xxi. p. 239. What this capital offence was, does not distinctly appear. Some interpreters say that, by a law of M. Antoninus, it was a capital crime to accuse a person of being a Christian, though, at the same time, it was death for any person voluntarily to declare himself one. But this is so inconsistent, that it is in the highest degree improbable. (P.) See *Lardner*, II. p. 303, VIII. p. 339.

Commodus reigned thirteen years, and after him Severus eighteen. In the first years of his reign, the Christians continued to be unmolested, owing, it is said, to the influence of a favourite slave. But afterwards, for what particular reason does not appear, he allowed the persecution of the Christians to proceed according to the standing laws. By some this is accounted for in the following manner. Albinus, the competitor of Severus in the empire, being defeated by him near Lyons, that city was miserably sacked, and on this occasion the Christians suffered extremely, after they had enjoyed a state of repose of thirty years, from the dreadful persecution mentioned above. In this interval Irenæus had been made bishop, and by his assiduity, the exemplary lives of the Christians, and especially their fortitude in bearing the persecution, it is said that almost all the citizens were become Christians. If this was the case, and if they had taken the part of Albinus, it will not be thought extraordinary that Severus should have been exasperated against the Christians in general. This happened in the sixth year of his reign.

When, after this, Severus set out on his expedition against Persia, he left Plautian prefect of the city. This was a man who had been raised from a low beginning, and who made a bad use of his power, especially against the Christians. But the persecution was general and violent, from the tenth year of Severus to his death. According to Spartian, Severus made laws to prevent the increase of the Jews or Christians: and if he did nothing more than this, it would be evident that he bore them no good-will; and this would sufficiently encourage those who were disposed to execute any of the standing laws against them.

Many Christians suffered for their religion in Africa in this reign. Rutilius, who had fled from place to place, and who had given money to some soldiers to comive at his escape, was at length apprehended, and though grievously tormented, and then burned alive, he bore the whole with great resolution.\* Mavilus was also condemned by the proconsul Scapula, to be thrown to the wild beasts.†

This persecution was particularly severe in Alexandria, and Egypt in general, where the martyrs bore torture and death with as much heroism as upon former occasions. At this time Leonidas, the father of the famous Origen, was beheaded.‡

\* Tertullian, *De Fuga*, C. v. p. 538. (P.)

† Ad. Scapulam, C. iii. p. 70. (P.) ‡ Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. i. p. 257. (P.)

Origen, who was then very young, distinguished himself greatly by his zeal for Christianity, as well as his learning. He particularly exhorted all those to whom he had access to bear their sufferings with fortitude; and several of those to whom he was preceptor behaved with the greatest resolution. Some of them are particularly mentioned by Eusebius. The first of them was called Plutarch, and as Origen attended him to the last, he was in great danger of suffering, himself. The second was Serenus, who was burned, the third Heraclides, and the fourth Heron; both beheaded. The fifth, after bearing much torture, was beheaded also. The sixth was a woman, Herois, who was burned. The seventh, Basilides, was beheaded.

There is something remarkable in the history of this Basilides, as connected with that of another celebrated martyr, Potamiæna. She was a woman distinguished for her beauty and chastity, and who, after being much tortured, was burned, together with her mother Marcella; boiling pitch being poured over them from head to foot, which they bore with the greatest constancy.\* Potamiæna had been threatened with prostitution, but had been protected from the insults of the mob by Basilides, who was the soldier to whose custody she had been committed. She, seeing his humanity, said she would reward him after her death, by praying for his salvation. Being afterwards committed to custody for not taking the military oath, because it was an act of idolatry, and being asked how he came to be converted, he said that Potamiæna had appeared to him in a dream, and told him she had obtained her request, and that he would soon be taken to heaven.† It is very possible, such was the superstition of this age, that this woman might make such a promise, it being no uncommon thing so to do; and this might have so impressed the mind of this man, as to produce his dream, without there being any thing miraculous in the case.

Severus returning in triumph to Rome, gave the soldiers who attended him crowns to wear upon their heads on that occasion; but this being declined by one of them, who was a Christian, and who chose to carry it in his hand, he was dismissed from the service, and committed to prison for punishment. This conduct offended many of the Christians, who thought that the soldier had provoked the emperor unnecessarily; but Tertullian wrote a treatise to defend his conduct, and of this some account will be given hereafter.

\* See *Lardner*, VIII. p. 102.

† Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. v. p. 262. (P.)

Caracalla, the son of Severus, who reigned six years, from A. D. 211 to A. D. 217, was a monster of wickedness and cruelty, but he spared the Christians; as also did Heliogabalus, a man of a similar character. However, the laws against Christians being unrepealed, some governors of provinces took advantage of this circumstance to harass them; and some think that it was under this emperor that Scapula, to whom Tertullian addressed an Apology, exercised his severities in Africa. Heliogabalus being a Syrian, and determined to give the god of his country, (to whom he had been a priest,) and the rites of his religion, a preference to all others, was the occasion of many persons giving their attention to the subject; in consequence of which they were led to see the folly of all kinds of idolatry, and came to embrace Christianity.

The reign of Alexander Severus, from A. D. 222 to A. D. 235, was peculiarly favourable to the Christians, in consequence of his mother Mammæa, an excellent woman, openly protecting them, though it does not appear that she was a Christian. Hearing of the fame of Origen, she sent for him when she was at Antioch, and retained him with her some time.\* But notwithstanding the good disposition of the emperor, several of the governors of provinces continued to harass the Christians. Even Ulpian, the famous lawyer, is said to have promoted the persecution.† But it is not at all extraordinary that, being a Pagan, he, as a lawyer, should encourage the execution of the laws, and be desirous of supporting the established religion.

That this emperor himself had a respect for Christ, is evident from his joining him, as well as Abraham, to Orpheus, and the emperors who had been deified, and performing to them certain acts of religion in his private chapel.‡

Maximin, a man of savage manners, having succeeded to the empire on the death of Alexander, was an enemy of the Christians, on account, it may be thought, of his predecessor having favoured them; but he only ordered that their ministers should be put to death. Nor did the persecution extend to all the provinces of the empire. It fell with the greatest severity on Pontus and Cappadocia, owing to the particular bigotry of the presidents of those provinces; but many of the Christians withdrew from them, and were safe.

\* Euseb. Hist. l. vi. c. xxi. p. 286. (P.)

† See *Lardner*, IV. p. 44. VIII. p. 125.

‡ *Lampridii Vita*, Sect. xxix. p. 549. (P.)

From the valuable letter of Firmilian to Cyprian, it appears that the persecutions in these provinces of Asia Minor, arose from the popular opinion that the dreadful earthquakes, with which they were then afflicted, and in which whole cities were swallowed up, were owing to the Christians; and that it was greatly promoted by the violence of the prefect Serapianus.\*

Origen is thought to have been particularly aimed at by Maximin, but he escaped by concealing himself. At this time, however, he wrote his treatise on martyrdom, and addressed it to Ambrosius, one of his pupils, and also to Protocletus, a presbyter of the church of Cæsarea, because both of them had run great risks in this persecution, and had derived great honour from their behaviour in it. Maximin did not reign more than three years. †

We read of no persecution of the Christians during the reign of Gordian, from A. D. 236 to A. D. 244, or in that of Philip, from A. D. 244 to A. D. 249, with which I shall close this period of my history. The latter of these emperors is supposed by Eusebius, ‡ but without sufficient ground, to have been a Christian. §

Thus we have seen that, in this long period, there was no severe or general persecution of the Christians, of many years' continuance, though it is probable that, during the whole of it, they suffered considerably in some particular provinces, owing to the bigotry of the presidents, or the violence of the mob. However, both the times of peace and of persecution were, in different ways, favourable to the growth of Christianity. Persecution, besides increasing the zeal of the Christians, preserving the purity of their morals, and checking the violence with which their differences among themselves would, no doubt, have otherwise been carried on, excited in unbelievers a desire to know the grounds of that faith which produced such wonderful effects; and as Tertullian observes, the usual effect of inquiry was conviction. On the other hand, when times of peace and security returned, the Christians, with a fervour of zeal acquired in persecution, were most assiduous in spreading their faith. They had felt the value and the power of it themselves; and their benevolence, joined with a natural desire to strengthen their party, made them desirous of extending the blessings of it to others.

\* Cypriani Opera, p. 222. (P.) Lardner, II. p. 545.

† Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xxviii. p. 293. (P.) ‡ Ibid. C. xxxiv. p. 298. (P.)

§ For this I refer to Lardner's Testimonies, III. p. 60. (P.) Works, VIII. p. 139.

## SECTION II.

*Of the Sufferings of Perpetua and Felicitas, with those of their Companions.*

THE martyrdom of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*, with that of their companions, in the reign of Severus, is so peculiarly interesting, that I have reserved the account of it for a separate Section. The writer of this piece is unknown, but it bears unquestionable marks of antiquity, and appears to have been taken in part from the notes of *Perpetua* herself. It will farther serve to give us a clear idea of the manner in which these ancient persecutions were generally conducted. The case of *Perpetua* is just mentioned by Austin.\* The scene of the transaction was some place in Africa, probably Carthage.

On this occasion there were apprehended three young men of the class of catechumens, viz. Saturninus, Secundulus, and Revocatus, with *Felicitas* his fellow-slave, and together with them *Ubia Perpetua*, a widow of about twenty-two years of age, of a good family, and well educated, who had a father and mother living, two brothers (one of them a catechumen), and an infant at the breast.

As soon as *Perpetua* was informed against, her father (who alone of all the family continued a Heathen) used every method of persuasion, and even force, to induce her to desist from her purpose of suffering martyrdom, so that she said, she was glad when he left her; and in this interval she and the rest were baptized. Some days after this they were all thrown into prison, and the treatment she met with there affected her at first very much; as, the darkness of the place, the great heat occasioned by the number of prisoners, the rudeness of the soldiers, and especially her anxiety about her child. Two deacons, however, *Tertius* and *Pomponius*, who ministered to their wants, procured, by money, the removal of all of them into a more airy part of the prison, where *Perpetua* gave suck to her child, which was ready to die for want of it.

In this situation *Perpetua* comforted her mother, and encouraged her brother, intrusting to him the care of her son, and was as happy, she said, as if she had been in a

\* *De Anima*, C. iv. Opera, VII. p. 304. P. See *Lardner*, III. pp. 2, 8. VIII. p. 192.

palace. Here she had a remarkable dream, from which she concluded that she should certainly suffer, but by which she was, notwithstanding, greatly encouraged in her resolution.

A few days after this, there was a report that these christian prisoners would soon be called before the governor, and then her father, in great grief, came to her, entreating her to have compassion on his grey hairs, and on her mother, brothers, and child, which, he said, could not survive her. This he did, kissing her hands, and throwing himself at her feet, which shewing more affection than he had discovered before, gave her great concern. Besides, he was the only relation she had who would not, in reality, think themselves honoured by her conduct; but she only answered, that she was at the disposal of God, and not at her own.

The next day, while they were at dinner, they were suddenly called to an audience in the public forum, where a prodigious crowd was assembled. There all the company confessed that they were Christians; but before Perpetua had an opportunity of doing it in the customary form, her father presented himself, holding her child in his arms, and begging that she would have compassion upon him. Also Hilarius, the procurator. (who then acted in the place of the deceased proconsul,) joined him in his entreaties, and desired her to think of her aged father and her own child, and to sacrifice for the safety of the emperor. But she only answered that she was a Christian, and could not do it.

After this the father was ordered to desist, and as he retired unwillingly, one of the lictors struck him with a rod, which affected her, she said, as if she had been struck herself. Then, having all made their confession, they were sentenced to be thrown to the wild beasts, notwithstanding which, they returned with great joy to the prison. Thence she sent Pomponius the deacon to request that her child might be sent to her as usual, to be suckled; but this favour was then refused. However, she bore the cruel disappointment better than she could have expected.

After a few days, Pudens the gaoler being disposed to favour them, allowed their friends to come to see them; and when the time of exhibition drew near, Perpetua's father came again; when he threw himself upon the ground, tore his beard, and did and said every thing that could have a tendency to move her; but all had no other effect than to fill her with pity for him.

Our author now proceeds to give an account of some of

the other prisoners; and the case of Felicitas is almost as interesting as that of Perpetua. Being eight months gone with child, she was much concerned lest her execution should be put off till another time, and that then she should die in the company of ordinary malefactors. The idea of going without her, affected also her fellow-prisoners. But three days before the exhibition she was delivered; and being in great pain, those who attended her asked her how she should be able to bear what she would suffer when she was exposed to the wild beasts, when she was so much affected with the pains of child-birth. She replied that, in this case, she was left to herself; but that in her other sufferings she should have another to support her, even him for whom she suffered. Being delivered of a daughter, a sister of her's undertook to bring it up. Secundulus died in prison; but they had been joined by another of their friends called Saturnus, who after they were apprehended, had voluntarily surrendered himself.

The day before the exhibition they all joined in a love-feast, with their christian friends who were permitted to visit them, in the presence of many strangers, whom curiosity had brought to the place. To these the prisoners expressed great joy in the idea of their approaching sufferings, and endeavoured to engage their attention. Saturnus particularly bade them observe their countenances, that they might know them all again the next day. From this extraordinary spectacle these strangers retired with marks of astonishment, and many of them afterwards became converts.

When the day of exhibition was come, they all went from the prison with erect and cheerful countenances, trembling, our author says, with joy rather than with fear. Perpetua especially walked in such a manner as struck the spectators with particular respect; and Felicitas rejoiced that, being delivered of her child, she could accompany her friends to this glorious combat. When they were arrived at the gate of the amphitheatre, the officers, according to custom, began to clothe the men in the dresses of the priests of Saturn, and the women in those of the priestesses of Ceres. But when they remonstrated against the injustice of being compelled by force to do that, for refusing which they were willing to die, the tribune gave them leave to suffer in their own habits.

They then entered the amphitheatre; when Perpetua advanced singing hymns, and Revocatus, Saturninus and

Saturus, solemnly warned the people as they went along. When they came in view of Hilarianus the proprætor, they said, "You judge us, but God will judge you." This so provoked the populace, that, at their request, all the three were scourged. But in this they rejoiced, as having the honour to share in one part of the sufferings of their Saviour.

When the beasts were let loose, Saturninus, according to a wish which he had previously expressed, died by the attack of several of them rushing upon him at the same time; and Revocatus was killed by a leopard and a bear. Saturus was first exposed to a wild boar; but while the officer who attended was gored by him, so that he died the next day, he was only dragged about, and not materially hurt. Also a bear, (which was an animal that he particularly dreaded,) to which he was next exposed, would not go out of his den to meddle with him. But at the end of the exhibition he was thrown in the way of a leopard; and so much blood gushed out at one of his bites, that the spectators ridiculed him, as being *baptized with blood*. However, not being quite killed, he had the presence of mind, when the animal was withdrawn, to speak to Pudens the gaoler, desiring him to be mindful of his faith, and not to be disheartened, but encouraged, by his sufferings. He even took a ring from his finger, and dipping it in one of his wounds, gave it to him as a pledge.

Perpetua and Felicitas were first inclosed in nets, and then exposed to a wild cow. But this sight struck the spectators with horror, as the former was a delicate woman, and the breasts of the latter were streaming with milk after her delivery. They were therefore recalled, and exposed in a common loose dress. Perpetua was first tossed by the beast, and being thrown down, she had the attention to compose her dress as she lay on the ground. Then rising, and seeing Felicitas much more torn than herself, she gave her her hand, and assisted her to rise; and for some time they both stood together, near the gate of the amphitheatre. Thither Perpetua sent for her brother, who was a catechumen, and exhorted him to continue firm in the faith, to love his fellow-christians, and not to be discouraged by her sufferings.

Being all in a mangled condition, they were taken to the usual place of execution, to be dispatched with a sword; but the populace requesting that they should be removed to another place, where the execution might be seen to more advantage, they got up of their own accord to go thither.

Then, having kissed one another, they quietly resigned themselves to their fate. In walking, Satorus had supported Perpetua, and he expired the first. She was observed to direct a young and ignorant soldier, who was appointed to be her executioner, in what manner he should perform his office.

### SECTION III.

#### *Of the Controversy concerning Easter.*

COMPARED with the scenes which I shall be obliged to bring before my readers in some subsequent periods of this history, the controversies among Christians within this period were few, and conducted with great moderation; though, on one occasion, and that indeed a very slight one, we have a lamentable instance of unjustifiable violence in one Christian bishop.

The only festival that we find any mention of in the Scriptures, (if, indeed, that was considered as a festival in the earliest times,) was *the Lord's day*, observed in commemoration of our Saviour's resurrection, and which the Gentile Christians observed for the purpose of their assemblies for public worship, as the Jews did their sabbath. It is evident, however, that very soon after, if not before the death of the apostles, for the same reason that the Christians had observed a weekly commemoration of the resurrection, they fell into the custom of holding a greater annual one. This was certainly natural; and except that one observance leads to others, and this without end, (so that it is best upon the whole to keep to some definite rule, as that of the Scriptures.) they who introduced and followed this practice of observing Easter cannot be blamed.

Very soon, however, Christians in different places fell into a custom of observing Easter on different days, some in the East on the day of the Jewish passover, or the fourteenth of the month Nisan, on whatever day of the week it might happen to be; and those in the West on the Sunday following it, because it was on a Sunday that Christ rose from the dead. It had also been the custom to set apart some time for the purpose of fasting before this great festival, in commemoration of the sufferings and crucifixion of Christ, which had preceded his resurrection.

Unhappily it was, from very early times, thought highly expedient, in order to preserve the unity of the church, that the opinions and practices of all Christians should be

the same; and, therefore, when this difference came to be noticed, endeavours were used to promote a uniformity with respect to it. With this view Polycarp, who, according to Irenæus, had been used to observe the fourteenth day of the month, together with the apostle John, whose disciple he had been, made a journey to Rome, on purpose to confer with Anicetus on the subject. In this conference each of these bishops maintained his own opinion, and, notwithstanding what was alleged by the other, determined to adhere to his former practice; but they agreed that such a difference as this should not break the communion between the different parts of the church of Christ; and to shew his charity, Anicetus desired Polycarp to officiate for him at the celebration of the Lord's supper, which he did, and they parted with mutual good-will.

In this state things continued till the reign of Commodus, when, superstition increasing, more stress was laid upon ritual observances than in former times; and a season of peace giving the Christians more leisure to attend to the differences among themselves, more offence was taken by Christian societies at practices which differed from their own. To heal these differences, synods, or councils, were held both in the East and in the West. Those which decided in favour of celebrating Easter on Sunday, were the following: two in Palestine, in one of which Theophilus, bishop of Cesarea, and in the other Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, presided; one in Pontus, in which Palma, an old bishop, presided; one of the churches of Osdroene, and its neighbourhood; one in Rome, where Victor presided; and another of the churches in Gaul, in which Irenæus presided; Bacchyllus also, bishop of Conon, published a letter in favour of this decision.

But the bishops of Asia Proper, in a synod which was convened on this occasion, decided in favour of the fourteenth day of the month; and Polycrates, who had presided in it, wrote a letter in the name of his brethren, to Victor, bishop of Rome, in which he gave him their reasons for adhering to the custom of their ancestors, derived from the apostle John; adding, that, notwithstanding the general decision in favour of a different practice, they thought it their duty to obey God rather than man.

Victor, who was a man of a violent temper, on receiving this letter, would have declared, by a solemn sentence, all the bishops of Asia cut off from the communion of the Catholic church, and of course declared heretics. But this

violence was far from being agreeable to those bishops who held the same opinion with himself; and among them Irenæus wrote an excellent letter upon the subject, expostulating with him on the unreasonableness of breaking the communion of the Christian church for such a trifle as this; alleging that there were other differences among them as great as this. but yet such as might be allowed without any breach of christian friendship. They differed, he said, about the preceding fast, as well as about the day of the feast: some fasting one day, others two, and others more; and some just forty hours (for that is the most probable sense of the passage), differences which arose in the time of their ancestors; and he concludes with the account of the friendly conference between Polycarp and Anicetus upon the subject. Irenæus wrote also to other bishops as well as to Victor, to the same purpose.

This controversy ended for the present, as most others have done, each party, for a time, being confirmed in his own opinion and practice. At the Council of Nice we shall find the present rule for observing Easter-day on the Sunday made absolute, with respect to all the Christian world.\*

## SECTION IV.

### *Of the Gnostics within this Period.*

THE most considerable of the Gnostics within this period were the Marcionites, who were much divided among themselves. Rhodon, the disciple of Tatian, gives an account of a conference which he had with a Marcionite of the name of Apelles, whom he acknowledges to have been very respectable, both for his years and his virtue. He owned one principle of all things, whereas Marcion and some others held that there were two original principles, and some said there were three. He said, however, that the prophets were inspired by an evil being.

According to Rhodon, Apelles was not a very zealous Gnostic; for he held that every person should continue in the faith in which he was educated, and that the Catholics might be saved if they had good works. He also acknowledged that, though he was a believer in one principle, and could not resist the conviction of there being no more than one, he was not able to prove this by strict demonstration.

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xxiii. xxiv. p. 241, &c. (P.)

For this, Rhodon derided him; and yet they who believe in the unity of God on the principles of the light of nature only, are not able to advance any thing more in favour of it, than Rhodon might have done for his *own principle*, which was, in reality, the same thing.\*

## SECTION V.

### *Of the Unitarians within this Period.*

EUSEBIUS introduces an article relating to the Ebionites under the reign of Trajan, which will equally apply to this period. In this chapter he shews himself most violently hostile to them, on account of all of them holding the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ, though some of them admitted his miraculous conception. None of them, he says, would admit that he was the *logos*, or the wisdom of the Father. The appellation of *Ebionites*, which signifies *poor*, he says, they got from their mean opinion concerning Christ; but it is much more probable that it was a name imposed upon them by the unbelieving Jews, either on account of the poverty of the greater part of them, or from the contempt in which they held them. “An evil demon,” he says, “has drawn them aside thus far from the faith, though he was not able to draw them from the faith altogether. They were,” he says, “rigid observers of the law of Moses; they rejected the epistles of Paul, calling him a deserter of the law; they made use of the gospel according to the Hebrews only, and observed both their own sabbath and the Christian Lord’s-day.” †

In this period Eusebius gives an account of a person who, in the reign of Severus, wrote against the heresy, as he calls it, of Artemon, who lived in the reign of Commodus, A. D. 185. In this treatise, which is supposed to have been written by Caius, a presbyter of Rome, and to have been called *The Little Labyrinth*, the opinion of the simple humanity of Christ was censured as novel, though the writer of it says, that they who held it maintained that it was the oldest doctrine of all, even that of the apostles themselves, and that it continued to be the prevailing opinion till the time of Victor, about A. D. 190, but that in the time of his successor, Zephyrinus, it began to be corrupted.

It is something remarkable that we have no account of

\* Euseb. Hist. L. v. C. xiii. p. 225. (P.) † Ibid. L. iii. C. xxvii. p. 122. (P.)

any treatise written against the Unitarian doctrine before this, which was about twenty years after Artemon, from which circumstance it may be clearly inferred, that till this time this doctrine had not given much offence: and yet that it had existed before, and was even generally prevalent, is undeniable. It was so well known to have been so in the time of the ancient christian writers, that, in order to account for it, they unanimously acknowledged that the doctrines of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, had not been taught with clearness and effect by the apostles, and other early preachers of the gospel, lest it should stagger their hearers, and especially those of the Jewish nation; and the apostle John they said was the first who clearly explained it, in the first verses of his gospel; which, according to them, was published almost twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem. And yet there is no evidence of any change being produced in the opinion of the Christian world by this gospel, no account of any other writings of that period to enforce the new doctrine of John, and nothing written in opposition to it; so that it is very evident that no such doctrine was at that time understood to be published by him, and therefore the hypothesis of these christian fathers is destitute of all probability. The fact, however, which they acknowledge, of the universality of Unitarianism at the time of the publication of John's gospel must remain undeniable.

What the Unitarians of this age alleged was highly probable. Justin Martyr published the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, as the logos of the Father, about A. D. 140, and between that time and that of this writer about seventy years had elapsed, so that it is probable that the majority of the learned bishops might now have adopted it, but not much before; and it was still reprobated with great indignation by the majority of the common people, who justly thought that it infringed upon the great doctrine of the *monarchy*, or sole divinity of God the Father. This is so evident from a passage of Tertullian, a writer within the period of which I am treating, and who was himself a Trinitarian, (so that his acknowledgment must have been made with reluctance,) that I shall recite the passage. "The simple," he says, "the ignorant, and unlearned, who are always the greater part of the body of Christians; since the rule of faith" (the apostles' creed) "transfers the worship of many gods to the one true God; not understanding that the unity of God is to be maintained with the *economy*, dread (*carpare sent*) this *economy*; imagining that this number and disposition of a

a trinity, is a division of the unity. They therefore will have it that we are worshippers of two, and even of three gods, but that they are the worshippers of one God only. 'We,' they say, 'hold the monarchy.' Even the Latins, and the most ignorant among them, have learned to bawl out for the *monarchy*, as if they understood that Greek word; and the Greeks themselves will not understand the economy."\* This is the language of strong feeling and complaint, and gives us the clearest idea of the state of this opinion in the period of which I am now treating; clearly proving that Unitarianism was the doctrine of the common people, and that many of the learned were much displeas'd at it.

Eusebius, to prove that the Unitarian doctrine was not so ancient as the Unitarians themselves pretended, alleges the writings of ancient Christians, but among these he mentions none older than Justin Martyr. He vindicates Victor from the charge of holding the Unitarian doctrine, on account of his having excommunicated Theodotus, who professed it. But in my "History of early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ,"† I have shewn that it is far from being evident that Theodotus was excommunicated as an Unitarian, especially as it is asserted by the writer of the appendix to Tertullian's treatise, *De Præscriptione*, that Victor was a favourer of the Unitarian doctrine, as the Unitarians themselves asserted.

With respect to this writer against the Unitarians, viz. Caius, who asserted the novelty of their opinion, what Eusebius says concerning him will not add to his credit with men of sense. He says that one Natalis was hired for a certain stipend, by two Unitarians, disciples of Theodotus, to be a bishop to their church, that after this he was often reproved by Christ in a dream; but neglecting this admonition, from his love of honour and gain, he was grievously beaten and wounded by angels, a whole night through; that rising early in the morning he went in sack-cloth and ashes, and with tears, to Zephyrinus, throwing himself at his feet, and at those of the laity, so as to move the whole church to compassion. By these marks of contrition, and shewing his wounds, he was, though with difficulty, restored to the communion of the church. A fact like this, says the writer, would have brought the Sodomites to repentance.

This writer then proceeds to charge the Unitarians with

\* *Ad Praxeam*, Sect. iii. p. 502. (P.) † See Vol. VII. B. iii. Ch. xv. Sect. ii.

not troubling themselves about the doctrine of the Scriptures; but with having recourse to syllogisms and geometry, busying themselves about terrestrial things, ignorant of him who comes from heaven. Some of them, he says, study Euclid's geometry, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Galen. He adds, that they adulterate the Scriptures, and publish copies of them different from one another, that they either deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, and are therefore infidels, or pretend to be wiser than the Holy Spirit, and therefore are possessed by demons. Some of them, however, he allows, did not adulterate the Scriptures, but, he says, they rejected the law and the prophets altogether; and for the sake of a lawless and atheistical doctrine, on the pretence of grace, they rolled down into the deepest gulph of perdition.\* What credit can be given to a man who can rail in this manner, or to the historian who can quote such things with approbation? Honest and worthy as Eusebius might be in other respects, we must, after this, pronounce him to be a man not to be trusted when he writes concerning Unitarians.

In this period Eusebius gives an account of another Unitarian, viz. Beryllus, bishop of Bostra, in Arabia, who flourished A. D. 230. He is said to have maintained that the divinity in Christ was not his own, but his Father's. A synod was called upon the subject, in which Origen is said to have convinced him of his error. The acts of this synod were extant in the time of Eusebius, with the questions proposed by Origen, and all that passed on the occasion.† It is much to be wished that they were extant now.

At the same time, says Eusebius, some Christians in Arabia held the doctrine of the soul dying with the body, and rising together with it at the resurrection; that a synod was called on this account also, and that Origen, attending again, induced those who held that opinion to abandon it.‡ These are marks of primitive Christianity, unadulterated by that heathen philosophy to which Origen was unhappily too much attached. It is not, however, to be wondered at, if his ingenuity and eloquence should puzzle and silence plain men.

To this, Eusebius subjoins an account of the heresy of the *Elcsaites*, which, he says, was extinguished almost as

\* Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. xxviii. p. 251. (P.) *Lardner*, H. pp. 381—384.

† Ibid. l. vi. c. xxviii. p. 297. (P.) ; Ibid. c. xxxvii. p. 339. (P.)

‡ See Vol. III. p. 575, and *Lardner*, H. p. 191.

soon as it arose. They seem, upon the whole, to have been Jewish Gnostics, but the account of them is very imperfect and obscure.\*

## SECTION VI.

### *Of the Growth of Superstition within this Period.*

By the writings of Tertullian we are able to point out the great progress which superstition had made among Christians in this early period, especially with respect to baptism and the Lord's supper; the application of the elements of them being considered not merely as expressive of sentiments of the heart, but as being themselves of a sacred nature, and having a real purifying virtue, such as was ascribed to similar things in the religion of the Heathens. Christians also considered the Lord's day with a kind of respect which cannot be pronounced free from superstition; and the use which they made of the sign of the cross is certainly deserving of the same censure. As the passage is remarkable and instructive, I shall give it entire from that treatise of his in which he defended the conduct of the soldier who refused to wear a crown in a triumphal procession, as mentioned above. His object is to shew that many practices are sufficiently authorized by tradition, without the authority of scripture.

Beginning with baptism, he says, "Before we go to the water, we declare in the church, before the bishop, that we renounce the devil, his pomp, and his ministers. We are then dipped three times, saying more than our Lord in the gospel prescribed. We then taste of milk and honey, and from that day abstain from our usual washings a whole week. We take the sacrament of the Lord's supper, both at the usual time of eating, and also in those assemblies which are held before day-break, nor do we take the elements from any other hands than those of the clergy. We annually make oblations for the dead, as in commemoration of the day of their proper birth," meaning their martyrdom. "We think it wrong to fast, or to kneel on the Lord's day, or in all the interval from Easter to Pentecost. We are anxious lest any part of the sacramental bread or wine fall to the ground. We sign ourselves with the sign of the cross in the forehead, whenever we go from home or return,

\* Luseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xxxviii. p. 500. (P.) *Lardner*, IX. p. 505.

when we put on our clothes or our shoes, when we go to the bath, or sit down to meat, when we light our candles, when we lie down, and when we sit." For all these observances, he says, "we have no rule besides tradition."\* It was, indeed, a great deal that Christians had learned of this new master in so short a time. We shall see, however, that they took many other lessons of the same kind afterwards.

## SECTION VII.

### *Of the Writers within this Period.*

By the writers of any period it will be easy to form an idea of the subjects which engaged the attention of mankind in the course of it. I shall therefore always close the account of every considerable division of this history with a brief account of them; and while Eusebius is my principal guide, I shall adhere pretty nearly to the order in which he places them.

Apoltonius, who was forty years old when Montanus published his prophecies, wrote against him, and his celebrated followers, Priscilla and Maximilla. He was replied to by Tertullian. †

Theophilus, bishop of Cæsarea, wrote a synodical epistle against those who celebrated Easter at the same time with the Jews. ‡ On the same subject Bacchyllus, bishop of Corinth, wrote an elegant treatise, in the name of all the bishops of Achaia. § Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, wrote in defence of the Jewish time of celebrating Easter, against Victor, bishop of Rome, who also had written on the same subject. ||

Pantænus was a Sicilian, who had been a Stoic philosopher. He presided over the school of Alexandria, which had been long established for instruction in sacred literature, and was kept up till the time of Eusebius. But he quitted this school to go on a mission to preach the gospel in India, where he found the disciples of the apostle Bartholomew, as was mentioned before. Returning from this mission, he resumed his care of the Alexandrian school, and wrote some commentaries on the Scriptures, which are now lost. ¶

Clemens of Alexandria was educated under Pantænus.

\* *De Coena*, Sect. iii. c. 191. *P.*

† *L. v. C.* xviii. p. 237. *Jerome's Catalog.* c. 11. *P.*

‡ *Ibid.* c. 14. *P.* *Ibid.* c. 14. *P.* *Ibid.* c. 14. *P.*

§ *Euseb. Hist.* *L. v. C.* x. p. 222. *(P.) London*, II. pp. 209--205.

and succeeded him in his school. He wrote a miscellaneous work, called *Stromata*, in which he treats of the true principles of knowledge, and which contains many things against the Gnostics. But when he wrote his *Institutions*, a work now lost, but of which an account is preserved by Photius, he must have been a Gnostic himself, as it contains many Gnostic opinions. He also wrote against the errors of the Jews, a treatise on Easter, and some other moral tracts, which are now lost. But besides his *Stromata*, we have his exhortation to the Gentiles, and a small piece on the salvation of the rich.\*

Of the writers who flourished in the time of Commodus, Eusebius just mentions the following: Heraclitus's (by Jerome called Heraclius), commentaries on the apostle, meaning Paul; Maximus and Apion on the origin of evil, and concerning matter; Candidus on the work of the six days; and Sextus on the resurrection. Eusebius says, in the same place, that there were many other writings, the titles of which he did not know, and many of them were anonymous.† About the same time Brabianus wrote some small pieces on subjects of Christianity.‡

Judas wrote on the book of Revelation in the time of Severus, and judged, from the severity of his persecution, that Antichrist would soon appear.§

Serapion, bishop of Antioch, in the first of Caracalla, wrote several things which Eusebius had not seen; but he mentions a letter of his to Dominus, who in the time of persecution had embraced the Jewish religion, some other epistles, the subjects of which he does not mention, and a treatise on the gospel of Peter, shewing the falsity of it, as containing some things favourable to Gnosticism.¶

Hippolytus, probably a bishop in Arabia, wrote on Easter, the work of the six days, the works which followed the six days, against Marcion, on Solomon's Song, on a chapter in Ezekiel, against all heresies, and other treatises which Eusebius had not seen.¶¶

Caius, a presbyter of the church of Rome, wrote against Proclus, a defender of the Montanists. He condemned the rashness of some persons in compiling the books of Scripture, and reckoned only thirteen epistles of Paul, omitting that

\* Euseb. Hist. l. v. C. xi. p. 223. l. vi. C. vi. p. 264. C. xiii. p. 271. (P.)

† Ibid. l. v. C. xxvii. p. 251. (P.) ‡ Jerome, *Catalogus*, C. lxxv. (P.)

§ Euseb. Hist. l. vi. C. vii. p. 264. (P.)

¶ Ibid. l. v. C. xiii. p. 236. l. vi. C. xii. p. 270. (P.)

¶¶ Ibid. l. vi. C. xxii. p. 286. (P.)

to the Hebrews.\* He is also thought to have been the author of the treatise, entitled, *The Little Labyrinth* against Artemon, of which an account has been given; and Photius ascribes to him a treatise *on the universe*, which went under the name of Josephus.

Beryllus, bishop of Bosira, the same whom Origen is said to have convinced of his error relating to the simple humanity of Christ, was the author, Eusebius says, of several elegant works, the subjects of which he does not mention. † Some of them, it is probable, contained his opinion concerning Christ.

Julius Africanus, of Palestine, wrote an epistle to Origen, to prove the spuriousness of the history of Susanna, and a book on the differences between the genealogies of Matthew and Luke; but his principal work was on the chronology of the world to the time of Heliogabalus. We have almost the whole of this in Eusebius's *Chronicon*. ‡

Tertullian, a native of Carthage, and the oldest of the Latin fathers, was the author of a great number of works, many of which are come down to us, and he was famous for turning Montanist after he had written several of them. § Those that are now extant are supposed by Du Pin to have been composed in the following order: “of penance, of baptism, of prayer, an apology for the Christian religion, concerning patience, and an exhortation to the martyrs.” These were written before he was a Montanist. When he appears to have been inclined to that sect, he wrote his treatises “concerning public spectacles, of idolatry, of the ornaments and dress of women, two books addressed to his wife, and a treatise on the soul.” After he was a Montanist, he wrote his books “against Marcion, of prescription, of the flesh of Christ, of the resurrection of the flesh, Scorpianus (against heresies), of the crown, of the pallium, and against the Jews.” He also wrote in this period of his life “against Praxeas, (the Unitarian Montanist,) against Heronogenes (who held some Gnostic opinions,) and against the Valentianians:” his treatise “of chastity, of fasting, of monogamy, an exhortation to chastity, of flight in time of persecution, a treatise to shew that virgins ought to be veiled, and a letter to Scapula,” the proconsul of Africa, relating to his persecution of Christians mentioned before. Several other treatises pass for his which were not written by him.

\* Euseb. Hist. l. vi. c. xx. p. 265. (P.) See *supra*, p. 163.

† *Ibid.* p. 284. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* c. xxxi. p. 295. (P.)

§ *Lardner*, II. p. 255.

Ammonius, the master of Origen in philosophy, wrote a treatise “on the agreement between Moses and Christ,” which is now lost, and “the harmony of the four gospels,” which is thought by some to be that which is now contained in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*. Eusebius warmly defends his being a Christian, against Porphyry.\*

The most distinguished character and writer in this period was Origen, a native of Egypt, surnamed *Adamantinus*, from his incredible labours. For besides his public teaching, which was incessant, he is said by some to have written six thousand volumes, but many of them were probably letters, or very small tracts. The catalogue of them, says Eusebius, would be a book of itself.† The character of Origen was so great, that it was commonly said of him, that his life was worthy of his eloquence, and his eloquence of his life.‡ Porphyry, the heathen philosopher, who wrote against Christianity, speaks of his having known Origen, and commends him highly,§ though he charges him with mixing Greek ideas with his Christianity, and continually studying Plato.|| He also says, that he borrowed his allegorical method of interpreting Scripture from Pythagoras.¶

As the history of Origen is written much at large by Eusebius, (though he professes to abridge it,) and he was a man so remarkable for his piety, genius and application, I shall give the outlines of it. His enemy, Jerome, allowed that he was a great man from his infancy. He was indeed an honour to Christianity, and to human nature. His father Leonidas gave him a pious and learned education, and his early improvements were such as gave his worthy parent the greatest satisfaction. Though he was not more than seventeen years of age when the persecution under Severus began in Alexandria, and his father was apprehended and confined, he would, at that early age, have thrown himself in the way of the persecutors, if his mother, after her most earnest entreaties had failed, had not hid his clothes, in order to prevent him going abroad.\*\* He wrote, however, to his father, exhorting him to persevere in his profession at all events, and without concerning himself about his family, though in case of his death, there would be a widow and seven children left in great poverty; and, thus encouraged,

\* Euseb Hist. L. vi. C. xix. p. 280. (P.) *Lardner*, II, pp. 413—415.

† Ibid. C. xxxii. p. 296. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. iii. p. 261. (P.)

§ Ibid. C. xix. p. 280. (P.)

|| Ibid. (P.)

¶ Ibid. p. 282. (P.)

\*\* Ibid. C. ii. p. 255. (P.)

his father was beheaded, and behaved with becoming resolution.

A large family being left in this destitute condition, a rich lady of Alexandria, a friend of virtue and genius, took Origen into her family. At the same time she entertained a distinguished Gnostic of Antioch, and her house was the resort of other men of letters. In this situation, though Origen could not refrain from the society of this Gnostic, he was so steady to his principles, that he would never join with him in prayer, but strictly adhered to the communion of the Catholic church.

Not choosing to be unnecessarily burthensome to his benefactress, and having made considerable proficiency in literature, he was soon able to maintain himself by teaching grammar.\* But the great school of Alexandria being deserted by its master in time of persecution, many persons applied to him for instruction in the principles of religion, though he was not more than eighteen years old; and as many were by him brought over to Christianity, he was at that early age appointed catechist by Demetrius the bishop of Alexandria. On this he discontinued the teaching of grammar, and he was so devoted to sacred literature, that he even sold all his books of profane science, receiving the small sum of four *oboli* a day from the person who purchased them.†

While he was in this employment, many of his pupils became martyrs, and being in so conspicuous a station, it was with great difficulty that he himself escaped. Being now obliged to instruct women as well as men, and forming to himself a plan of great austerity of manners, in a fit of enthusiastic zeal, he made a literal application to himself of that precept of our Saviour concerning persons making themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; an action for which, in the sober reflection of his after life, he greatly condemned himself.‡

Applying himself with singular assiduity to the duties of his office as catechist, he greatly increased his reputation, especially by an edition of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, with all the different Greek versions, in separate columns. He was induced, however, for what reason does not appear, (but it was no doubt sufficiently urgent, to quit

\* Euseb. Hist. l. vi. c. v. p. 259. *(P.)*

† Ibid. c. iii. p. 261. *(P.)*

‡ Ibid. c. viii. p. 264. *(P.)*

his employment and his studies for the purpose of making a visit to Rome, in the time of Zephyrinus. Returning very soon to Alexandria, many persons of learning, from distant places, resorted to him; and the bishop of Alexandria being applied to by an Arabian prince for a person to instruct him in the Christian faith, he made choice of Origen, in preference to any other.\*

When Alexandria was ravaged by Caracalla, he went to Cæsarea in Palestine, and there the bishop engaged him to expound the Scriptures publicly in his church, though he was not then even a priest. This gave some offence to Demetrius, who insisted on his returning to his proper charge at Alexandria, which accordingly he did.† He made, however, two other excursions, one at the request of the empress Mammæa, who sent for him to Antioch,‡ and the other to Achaia, in his way to which he was ordained priest at Cæsarea.§ This gave such offence to Demetrius that from this time he did every thing in his power to injure him, particularly by exposing the rash action mentioned above; though, when it was communicated to him in confidence, he had promised never to divulge it, and at that time did not condemn him for it, but encouraged him to apply with vigour to the duties of his profession.

At first Demetrius got him banished from Alexandria, in a council held A. D. 231, though on what pretence does not distinctly appear. In a second council he was deposed from the priesthood, and excommunicated; and the sentence was of course ratified by distant churches. Still, however, he was received at Cæsarea by Theoctistus, bishop of that city, and by Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, who were in an extraordinary manner attached to him, and undertook to defend him.¶ While he resided at Cæsarea persons flocked to him for instruction from great distances, and among others Gregory, afterwards bishop of Neocæsarea, and his brother Athenodorus, whom he persuaded to abandon profane literature for the study of theology. They attended his lectures five years. Firmilian also, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, a distinguished character in his time, was so fond of Origen, that he would have persuaded him to go into his province, and live with him.¶

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xix. p. 283. (P.) † Ibid. 284. (P.)

‡ Ibid. p. 296. (P.) § Ibid. C. xxiii. p. 287. (P.)

¶ Ibid. C. xxvii. p. 292. (P.) ¶ Ibid. P.

In this situation he composed his commentaries on the Scriptures, dictating, it is said, to seven notaries, and sometimes more, and employing as many scribes to take fair copies, the expence of which was cheerfully defrayed by Ambrosius, who had been converted by him to the Catholic doctrine from being a Valentinian.\* When he was turned sixty, he permitted scribes to copy after him as he delivered his discourses to the people, which he had not done before. It was in this period of his life that he wrote his excellent books against Celsus, in defence of Christianity. †

In the persecution under Maximin, Origen concealed himself by retiring to Athens. There, however, he was not idle, but continued to write commentaries. After this he returned to Cæsarea, and then spent some time with Firmilian in Cappadocia. In the reign of Gordian, he attended the synod in Arabia against Beryllus, and in the reign of Philip, the other synod in Arabia, in which the question concerning the state of the soul was discussed. In the persecution under Decius we shall see that he suffered torture with great fortitude; but surviving it, he died a natural death in the beginning of the reign of Gallus. ‡

Besides commentaries on many parts of Scripture, we have of Origen his “books against Celsus, a treatise on prayer,” *Philosophumena*, (which was probably the first of his books against heresy,) his treatise on *principles* in the Latin of Rufinus and *Philocalia*, or extracts from his commentaries on obscure passages of Scripture, by Basil and Gregory Nazianzen.

Ambrose, the great friend of Origen, mentioned in the preceding account of him, wrote epistles addressed to him. Tryphon, also, a hearer of Origen, wrote letters addressed to him, and other small pieces, especially a treatise on the subject of the red heifer in the book of Numbers, and on Abraham’s dividing the dove and the turtle. §

Mmutius Felix, a lawyer at Rome, wrote a dialogue now extant, intitled *Octavius*, against the heathen religion. Another treatise on fate, or against the mathematicians, passed for his in the time of Jerome, but he thought the style not worthy of him. ¶

Alexander, bishop of Cappadocia, and afterwards of Jerusalem, and who suffered martyrdom in the persecution of

\* Euseb. Hist. l. vi. c. xviii. p. 278. (P.) † Ibid. c. xxxvi. p. 299. (P.)

‡ See Lardner’s Chapter of *Origen*, Works, II. pp. 442—465.

§ Jerome, C. lxxvii. lxxviii. (P.)

¶ Ibid. c. lxxix. (P.)

Decius, wrote several epistles, but it does not appear that any of them were on subjects of much importance.\*

Lastly, Jerome says that Geminus, a presbyter of Antioch, left a few monuments of his genius; but he does not say what they were. †

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xx. p. 284. *Jerome, C. lxxiii. (P.)*

† *Jerome, C. lxxv. (P.)*



## P E R I O D V.

FROM THE REIGN OF DECIUS, A. D. 249 TO THAT OF  
DIOCLETIAN, A. D. 284.



## SECTION I.

*Of the Persecution by Decius.*

IN the period of which I have been treating, the Christians had enjoyed a great share of repose, which had been favourable to the increase of their numbers, but by no means to their interior discipline, or their morals. Cyprian and other writers make great complaints with respect to the covetousness, pride, luxury, and worldly-mindedness of Christians, even of the clergy and confessors. Many also made no scruple of connecting themselves by marriage with Heathens, which shewed a great decline of zeal for their Christian profession.\* It pleased the Divine Being, however, to rouse the Christian world from this state of indifference by a more severe and extensive persecution than any of the preceding, in the reign of Decius, though it does not appear to have continued quite three years.

Decius was made emperor by the army, which had revolted against Philip; and perhaps, because his predecessor had ravoured the Christians, together with such other reasons as had influenced Trajan and Marcus Antoninus, he determined, if possible, to extirpate them; and by appointing proper governors of provinces, and giving them suitable instructions, he took the most effectual method to gain his end; directing them, as may be collected from the manner in which this persecution was conducted, to use every means in their power to bring the people back to the profession of the ancient religion, leaving the mode of proceeding, and the

\* Cyprian, *De Unitate Ecclesie*, Opera, p. 119, and *De L. 183*, p. 123. P

kind of punishment, to their discretion.\* From an expression of Cyprian in his epistle to Antoninus (*Tyrannus infestus sacerdotibus Dei*) it should seem that the violence of the persecution was more particularly directed against the Christian clergy,† but this would naturally be thought the most effectual method of extirpating Christianity, which the emperor had in view.

Before I relate what happened in consequence of the sanguinary edicts of this emperor, I shall give an account of some horrid cruelties which were exercised upon the Christians in Alexandria, in the year preceding the reign of Decius, viz. A. D. 248. It shews how subject the Christians were to grievous persecution, independently of the intentions of the emperors. And as we should not have had any knowledge of this persecution in Egypt, but by means of a letter of Dionysius the bishop,‡ preserved in Eusebius, it is probable that many cruelties of a similar nature were committed in other parts of the Roman empire, though they are now buried in oblivion.

Some time before any open violences were committed, a poet, whose name is not mentioned, had been busy in stirring up the mob against the Christians, and inflaming their zeal for their ancient superstitions. Headed by this man, they set no bounds to their outrages, but acted as if the service of their gods had consisted in the murder of the Christians. The first object of their vengeance was an old man of the name of Metras, who, refusing to pronounce certain words, which, it was well known, Christians would not do, they first beat him with clubs, then thrust reeds into his face and eyes, and at last stoned him to death. They then dragged a christian woman, of the name of Quinta, into an idol temple; and when she refused to perform the rites of it, they tied her feet together, and dragged her through the streets, which were paved with rough stones, and against mill-stones, &c. They then scourged her, and taking her into the suburbs, they stoned her to death.

After this they rushed into the houses of the Christians with whom they were acquainted, and driving them out, they plundered their goods. What was of most value, they carried away; but things of wood, and of less value, they broke in pieces, or burned in the streets, so as to exhibit

\* Greg. Nyss. *De Vit. Greg. Thaum. Opera*, I. p. 999. (P.)

† Epist. iv. *Opera*, p. 104. (P.)

‡ See his History, *Lardner*, III. p. 65.

the appearance of a city taken and plundered by the enemy. In this tumult the Christians fled, *receiving with joy*, our author says, *the spoiling of their goods*, Heb. x. 34, and hitherto not more than one person who fell into the hands of the mob was induced to renounce his profession.

They then seized upon a single woman of advanced age, named Apollonia, and striking her on the face, they beat out her teeth. Then lighting a pile without the city, they threatened to burn her alive unless she would pronounce certain words which they dictated to her. At first she seemed to parley with them, but, fearing perhaps more ill usage, she of her own accord rushed into the fire, and was burned. Having seized one Serapio in his own house, they tortured him in a cruel manner, and having broken his bones, they threw him headlong out of his chamber. In short, no Christian could appear in any public road or private path, the populace being every where clamorous to have all persons seized, and thrown into the flames, who would not pronounce their words. At length the Christians got some respite by the furious populace quarrelling among themselves, and exercising the same cruelties upon one another which they had done upon them.

This was a little before the dreadful edicts of Decius, which, when they arrived, filled all the Christians in Egypt with the greatest consternation. On the publication of them many persons of the higher ranks in life obeyed without hesitation; some, who were in office, doing first themselves what they were appointed to require of others. Some were brought by their heathen friends and relations, and being called upon by name, joined in the sacrifice, though many of them did it with manifest reluctance, so as to be laughed at by the bystanders, but others boldly declared that they never had been Christians. Of the rest, some fled, and others were apprehended. Of these some persisted in their profession of Christianity, till they were confined only, and others till they were threatened with torture; but there were many on whom no threats could make any impression.

The first of these was Julianus, who was so afflicted with the gout that he could neither walk nor stand, and two men who carried him. Of these two one recanted, but the other, together with his master, persisting in acknowledging themselves to be Christians, were set on camels, and in that situation beaten through all the city, and then thrown into the fire, and consumed, in the presence of the

whole multitude. A soldier called Basas, who attended at the execution, checking those who abused them, was by the clamour of the people brought before the tribunal, and appearing to be a Christian, he was beheaded. Macar, a native of Lybia, after resisting all attempts to make him renounce his profession, was sentenced to be burned alive.

After these, Epimachus and Alexander, when they had long borne the horrors of a prison, and had been tortured with iron forceps, and many other ways, were burned in a lime-kiln. Four women perished in the same manner. Ammonarion, an unmarried woman, being tortured a long time in the presence of the judge, and saying that nothing they could do to her would make her pronounce what they required, was ordered for execution. Mercuria, a venerable old woman, and Dionysia, the mother of many children, and who had brought them all up in the profession of Christianity, and also another Ammonarion, were then brought before the prefect; and he, being ashamed of having tortured women to no purpose, ordered them to be beheaded without any previous suffering.

Then Heron, and Ater, and Isidorus, all Egyptians, were brought before the judge, together with Dioscurus, a boy about fifteen years old. The men having borne flagellation with great fortitude, were thrown into the fire; but the judge, having compassion on the boy, who distinguished himself by the pertinence of his answers to all that was said to him, and finding that neither his entreaties nor his tortures had any effect upon him, dismissed him.

One Nemesion, who had been falsely accused as one of a set of banditti, proving his innocence of that charge, but acknowledging that he was a Christian, was tortured twice as much as any of them, and was burned along with them. At length Ammon, Zeno, Ptolemy, and Ingenius, together with an old man called Theophilus, all soldiers, who had attended these trials and executions, after shewing by their looks and gestures their displeasure at any who denied their faith, before they were apprehended or accused, went of their own accord to the tribunal, and acknowledged that they also were Christians. On this the prefect and his assistants were alarmed, and not choosing to proceed any farther, permitted them to go away in triumph.\*

Many others, says Dionysius, were destroyed by the Heathens in other towns and villages, of which he gives

\* Euseb Hist. l. vi. c. xli. p. 308. (P.)

the following example: One Ischyriion had been hired by some person in office to do his duty for him; and being in consequence of it ordered by his employer to sacrifice to the idols, and refusing, he was first reproached; and, persisting in his refusal, he was abused in a great variety of ways, but bearing all with wonderful patience, he was at last put to death by a large stake being driven through his body. Multitudes, he says, being driven into the mountains and desert parts of the country, perished with hunger and thirst, cold and disease, or by robbers or wild beasts, an account of whom was preserved by those who survived.

As an instance of this, he mentions the case of Chærcemon, bishop of Nilus, a very old man. He having fled with his wife to a mountain of Arabia, never returned; and though his brethren made diligent search for him, he could never be found, alive or dead. Many others were taken in these mountains by the Saracens, and reduced to slavery; and though some of them recovered their liberty by ransom, others did not. These confessors, Dionysius says, had great compassion for those who had not been able to bear the persecution, but had offered sacrifice, and afterwards repented of it, which was the case with great numbers.\*

What happened to Dionysius himself is not a little extraordinary. The person who had been sent by Sabinus, the prefect, to apprehend him, not thinking to look for him in his own house, he, who had no thoughts of flying, continued there four days; but being then, he says, admonished by God to withdraw, and a way being opened for him, he, with his servants, and many of his Christian friends, went out of the city together. About sun-set, however, they were all seized by a party of soldiers, and carried to Tapsiris; but one Timothy, who happened not to be with them, escaped.

He, going to the house of the bishop, and finding him and his friends fled, and a guard in it, fled also in great haste; when, being met by a person out of the country, and being asked by him why he fled, he told the whole story; and this man happening to be going to a nuptial feast, which, according to custom, was held in the night, told his companions; and they instantly rushing out, and attacking the guard, rescued Dionysius and his friends. But he, thinking them to be robbers, and being in bed, with only a linen garment on, offered them the remainder of his

clothes; and when, without regarding this, they bid him rise and follow them, he begged they would leave him, or do themselves the office of the soldiers, and cut off his head. They, however, compelled him to go, against his will, dragging him away by his hands and feet. On this, the soldiers being dispersed, and he being at his liberty, four of his friends, whose names are mentioned, conducted him out of the village, and placing him on an ass without any saddle, conveyed him to a place of safety.\* Whither he went, he does not say; but it is supposed that he kept himself concealed till the death of Decius.

At Rome, Fabian the bishop was put to death. In Palestine, Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, mentioned before, a man venerable for his grey hairs, being brought before the tribunal of the president, after having gained great honour by a former testimony, was sent to prison at Cæsarea, and died there. Babylas, bishop of Antioch, also died in prison. †

Origen, who had distinguished himself so much among the Christians, and who had been so much noticed by the mother of the late emperor, was particularly aimed at in this persecution, and apprehended; and though he was then advanced in life, yet shewing an example in himself of that fortitude which he had so early in life, and so often afterwards, recommended to others, he bore a great variety of tortures with invincible fortitude. He was confined in the interior part of the prison, and there fastened with an iron chain, and his feet stretched in the stocks to the fourth hole (which would not have been mentioned by the historian, if it had not been a situation exquisitely painful) for several days. He was also subjected to various other kinds of torture, care being taken that they should not absolutely deprive him of life; and he was moreover threatened with being burned alive. But neither what he felt, nor what he was farther threatened with, at all moved him. That he survived this persecution is certain, but by what means we are not informed. He wrote several letters afterwards, highly edifying to those who should be brought into the same circumstances, ‡ and he died in the beginning of the following year, at the age of seventy. §

We may judge from these few particulars which have been preserved of this persecution, of the sufferings of Christians

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xl. p. 302. (P.) + Ibid. C. xxxix. p. 301. (P.)

† Ibid. C. xliii. p. 316. (P.) § Ibid. L. vii. C. i. p. 322. (P.)

in other parts of the empire. For there can be no doubt of its having been a general persecution, as well as a very cruel one. In these circumstances, many real believers in Christianity would not have the courage to die for the profession of it, and especially to bear torture; and the agony of mind which many of them suffered afterwards moves our compassion, no less than the sufferings of those who had more courage. Dionysius above-mentioned relates an affecting instance of this kind.

One Serapion, an old man, whose life and conversation had been unexceptionable, had been induced to sacrifice in the time of persecution, but he enjoyed no peace of mind when it was over, and had never ceased importuning the bishops and clergy for reconciliation, but without effect. Being seized with an illness which he felt to be mortal, he sent his little grandson to a presbyter, to desire him to come to him, as he was then dying. The presbyter was sick and unable to go; but being well informed of the case, and having orders from the bishop to absolve penitents in the article of death, especially if they had sued for absolution some time before, he sent a bit of the eucharistical bread by the boy, as a token of his grandfather being received into the communion of the church; and having received it, he presently and joyfully expired.\*

The bishop who relates this, supposed that the life of the old man had been miraculously prolonged till he was reconciled to the church. The story, however, shews the progress of superstition in the minds of Christians, with respect to the importance of church communion, and perhaps the sanctifying virtue of the sacramental elements themselves. It is also, no doubt, a specimen of the anxiety of mind of great numbers who were in the same situation, whose faith in the gospel was no less real than that of the martyrs themselves, so that by these alone we are by no means to judge of the number of Christians in this age.

## SECTION II.

*From the Accession of Gallus, A. D. 251, to the Reign of Dioclesian, A. D. 284.*

DECIUS, who had taken the surname of Trajan, and whom he imitated in his successful wars, as well as in his

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xlv. p. 317. — P.

persecution of the Christians, being slain in a battle with the Goths, who, as some think, were assisted by the treachery of Gallus, was succeeded by him, and then peace was restored to the church, but not entirely. For Dionysius says, that Gallus did not see the faults of his predecessor, but fell into the same himself, persecuting those who prayed for his prosperity, though afterwards the Christians were obliged to discontinue those prayers.\*

About this time, there broke out a dreadful plague, which, as historians say, lasted ten, or even fifteen years, and made a great destruction among mankind. Dionysius, so often mentioned already, speaks of it as raging in Egypt, so as to exceed the plague in the time of Moses, when there was not a house in which there was not one dead. The behaviour of the Christians to their sick friends in this plague was remarkably different, he says, from that of the Heathens. For the Christians would not desert those who were seized with it, but continued to render them every kind office in their power, without dread of death; whereas the Heathens fled from their sick friends, and left them in the most destitute circumstances.† On occasion of this plague Cyprian wrote his treatise on mortality.

Gallus, after reigning not quite two years, was killed by his own soldiers, and succeeded by Æmilian, commander of the army in Panonia, who had revolted against him; and he being soon dispatched in the same manner, was succeeded by Valerian, the lieutenant of Gallus, who associated his son Gallienus in the empire with him. At first no emperor had been more friendly to the Christians than Valerian. His house was so full of Christians, that it was compared to a church. But at the instigation of Macrian, and the chief of the magicians of Egypt, he began a persecution of the Christians, which continued till he was taken prisoner by the Persians.‡ At the beginning, however, it seems to have been moderate, as the bishops and clergy were only sent into banishment.

In this persecution Dionysius, in whose letters are preserved so many particulars of the former persecution, was brought before Æmilian, the prefect of Egypt, together with a presbyter and three of his deacons; and on professing themselves to be Christians, they were banished to Cephro, a small village near the deserts of Lybia. There, preaching

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vii. C. i. p. 322. (P.) † Ibid. C. xxv. p. 346. (P.)  
 ‡ Ibid. C. x. p. 331. (P.) *Lairdner*, III. p. 60.

openly to the people of the place, who were Heathens, and who at first had been much enraged against them, they made many converts. On this they were separated, and removed to other places, worse, if possible, than the villages of Lybia. Dionysius himself was ordered to remove to Colluthio, a place which, he says, he had never heard of before, but which, he was told, was almost a desert, far from any city, and exposed to robbers.

Persons of both sexes, Dionysius says, and of every age and condition, soldiers and country people, were crowned with martyrdom, some by scourging, some by fire, and some by the sword, though his life was spared. Many Christians concealed themselves in the city, in order to assist and comfort their brethren, and take care of the bodies of those who were put to death, which they did at the great hazard of their own lives. Besides killing some outright, others, by the order of the president, were cruelly tortured, and some pined away in fetters and dungeons, where none were permitted to visit them; and he took particular care that his orders were strictly obeyed. Faustus was a confessor in this persecution along with Dionysius, but he survived, to suffer martyrdom in the time of Dioclesian; and was beheaded when he was very old and infirm.\*

It was in this persecution that the famous Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, suffered martyrdom. In the reign of Decius he had concealed himself, and in his retirement wrote many letters to the people of his charge, &c. On his return to Carthage, after the persecution, he took a very active part in the question, which was then warmly agitated, concerning the terms on which the lapsed should be admitted into the church, of which a more particular account will be given afterwards.

In the beginning of the persecution, A. D. 257, on the thirtieth of August, Cyprian was cited before Paternus the proconsul; and being required to sacrifice to the gods of the empire, he answered, that he was a Christian, and a bishop, and that he knew no other God besides the true one, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein, the God to whom Christians prayed for the safety of the emperor. Being required to name his presbyters, he said that he should not act the part of an informer. On this he was sent into exile, to a place called Cucurbis, his deacon Pontius accompanying him. About this time, as appears by a

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vii. C. xi. pp. 334, 339 (P.) Lardner, VIII. pp. 150—153

letter of Cyprian, many Christians suffered in Africa. For one of his letters is directed to nine bishops, who, together with presbyters, deacons and others, were then in the mines.

Paternus being succeeded by Galerius Maximus, Cyprian was recalled from his banishment and (probably by order of the proconsul) went to his country house, near Carthage, where he continued some time. There being many reports about the orders of the emperor with respect to this persecution, Cyprian, who does not appear to have been under any restraint as to his correspondence, procured an exact account of the state of the fact, which was this: The bishops, presbyters and deacons, were to be put to death without delay; senators, persons of quality, and Roman knights, were to be deprived of their dignities and goods; and if, after this, they persisted in professing themselves Christians, they were to be beheaded; women of rank were to be deprived of their goods and sent into exile; and lastly, the emperor's freedmen were to have their goods confiscated, be sent in chains to his lands in the country, and entered on the list of slaves to work there. Cyprian was also informed, that Xistus, bishop of Rome, had already been put to death there, and that the prefect of the city was intent upon executing the emperor's orders.

These orders soon arrived in Africa; and, in consequence of them, Cyprian was again brought before the proconsul, who, on his refusing to sacrifice, spake to him with great anger, calling him an enemy to the gods and a seducer of the people. After this, he pronounced his sentence, which was, that he should be beheaded; and to this Cyprian, with great magnanimity, replied, *God be praised*; and a multitude of Christians, who were present, cried aloud, and said, *Let us be beheaded with him*. The sentence was immediately after executed, after he had been permitted to kneel down and pray, in the presence of a great crowd of spectators, (many of whom got upon the branches of trees to have a better view.) on the fourteenth of September, A. D. 258.\*

In this persecution, as was mentioned before, Xistus, or Sixus, bishop of Rome, was put to death in the church, together with one Quartus, probably a presbyter; † and Lawrence, a deacon, was roasted before a slow fire, by the order of Macrian, the prefect of the city, in the absence of Vale-

\* This account is extracted from the authentic acts of the martyrdom of Cyprian, translated by Dr. Lardner, *Heathen Test.* III. p. 90. [Works, VIII. pp. 154—158,] and his Life by Pontius, prefixed to this Work. (P.)

† Cypriani Ep. lxxx. Opera, *Epist.* p. 238. (P.) Lardner, VIII. p. 157.

rian. Of the latter, the following account is given by Leo the Great, in his sermon on the subject of this martyrdom: \* “Lawrence was not only a deacon, but almoner of the church of Rome, and it was principally with a view to get possession of the treasures of the church, that he was apprehended. When they were demanded of him, he pointed to a great number of poor persons who had been fed and clothed out of it, so that nothing remained in his hands. The governor, disappointed in his expectations, required Lawrence to renounce Christ, threatening him, in case of refusal, with the most dreadful torments; and when he appeared unmoved at the mention of some, he proposed others still more excruciating. But nothing being able to move him, he had him first shockingly torn with scourging, and then exposed to the fire on something like a gridiron, and so that different parts of his body were presented to the fire in their turns.”

Valerian being taken prisoner, Gallienus his son remained sole emperor, and soon appeared to be a man of moderation, and well disposed towards the Christians. By one edict he ordered the clergy to resume their functions, and that those of their possessions, which had been seized, should be restored to them, and by another he restored their churches. Gallienus not being much respected in the empire, his edicts were not every where obeyed, and particular governors were still guilty of great cruelties; especially as the laws of Trajan had never been formally repealed.

We have, in particular, an account of one Marinus, a soldier, who suffered about this time. Being about to obtain the rank of centurion, another soldier, who claimed it as due to himself, accused him of being a Christian, and on that account incapable of that honour. Being interrogated by Achaëus his judge, he acknowledged that he was a Christian, but the judge being sensibly affected, and very unwilling that he should suffer, gave him three hours, in which he might consider of a more deliberate answer. †

Going from the Prætorium, Theotechnus, the bishop of the city, came to him, and, after some discourse, led him to the church. Then placing him near the altar, and shewing him his own sword, as the instrument of his death, on the one hand, and the Scriptures on the other, he bade him choose which he pleased. Deciding according to the wish of the bishop, he encouraged him to persevere; and the time being elapsed, he was again brought before the tribu-

\* Opera, p. 88. P

† *Lardner*, VIII pp. 158, 159

nal, and there shewing more constancy than before, and thereupon receiving sentence of death, he was immediately led away and beheaded.\* Asturius, a Roman senator, distinguished by his riches as well as his rank, and also by his zeal and courage as a Christian, being present at this execution, had the body carried away and decently buried. Many other things, Eusebius says, were related of this Asturius by those who knew him, and who were living in his time. †

What Gallienus might not have been able to effect, had he been ever so well disposed, in favour of the Christian church, was done by the distractions of the empire in his reign; in which those who are called the thirty tyrants were every where making insurrections, and setting up for themselves. In this state of peace the Christian church, as usual, greatly increased, numbers becoming every where more disgusted with the rites of Paganism.

The distractions of this time, and the wars between the Romans and the barbarous nations of the North, in this reign, and some that followed, were likewise eminently favourable to the spread of Christianity. For when a great number of these northern nations passed from Thrace into Asia, committing great devastations, and carrying many people with them into servitude, many of the clergy and other zealous Christians were among the captives, and exerted themselves in the conversion of the people among whom they were settled. In consequence of these events we find that, in the time of Constantine, the knowledge of Christianity was extended to many of these nations, as those beyond the Rhine, the Celtæ, the Goths, and the nations bordering on the Danube. ‡

Aurelian, who succeeded Gallienus, appears to have been superstitious, as he gave orders for consulting the Sybilline books, and reproached the senate with their indifference about that matter, as if, says he, they held their consultations in a christian church, and not in the temple of the gods.§ He did not, however, at first take any active part against the Christians; and when he was in the East, and was appealed to about the property of the episcopal house at Antioch, he condescended to hear the parties, and decided in favour of that person to whom a synod of the neighbouring bishops had assigned it. “Thus,” says Eusebius, “was he affected towards us at that time. Afterwards, at the

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vii. C. xv. p. 341. (P.)      † Ibid. C. xvi. p. 342. P.

‡ Sozomeni Hist. L. ii. C. vi. p. 52. (P.)

§ Vopisci Aurel. C. xx. p. 852. (P.)      Lardner, VIII. pp. 172, 173.

instigation of others, he raised a persecution against us, which excited much alarm; but he had no sooner prepared his edict for that purpose, than he died by a conspiracy against him in the army.\* From this time to that of Dioclesian it does not appear that there was any considerable persecution of the Christians. None is mentioned by Eusebius, though, as the laws against them were not repealed, it is very probable that they might suffer in various places. There are, indeed, accounts of many martyrs in *The Martyrology*, but the authority of this work is not very great.

### SECTION III.

#### *Of the Treatment of Penitents and the Origin of the Novatians.*

ON the termination of the persecution by Decius, we see the progress that superstition had made in the minds of many Christians. This persecution had been preceded by a long state of comparative rest, attended, as has always been the case, with a proportionable lukewarmness with respect to religion; so that when the Christians were suddenly called upon to renounce their religion, or resign their possessions, their liberty, or their lives; and generally to suffer torture also, great numbers were unable to stand the trial. Some complied without much hesitation with the demands of the governors to sacrifice to the heathen gods; but others thought to satisfy their consciences by eluding those demands; and this they did in various ways, but more especially by procuring, by interest or by money, certificates of their having sacrificed, though they had not done it.

Though these persons had not firmness enough to die for their religion, they did not therefore disbelieve it; and many of them, when they had recovered from their first consternation, and had felt the pangs of remorse, openly renounced their recantations, or gave up their certificates, and cheerfully suffered the extremity of the law. And the rest, when the danger was over, earnestly wished to be received into the bosom of the church by satisfying the demands of its regular officers, thinking that their eternal salvation depended upon it, and that without this, no repentance or contrition, would avail them in the sight of God.

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vii. C. xxx. p. 304. (P.) *Lardner*, VIII. p. 74.

According to the established forms of church discipline in those times, the *peace of the church*, as it was called, or a restoration to communion with it, could not be given to any person without the consent of the bishop, together with that of the other clergy and the people; though when the bishops were respected, their influence would naturally be very great and almost decisive. Hence they were incessantly teased by the lapsed, and recourse was had to every possible method of gaining their favour; but nothing was so effectual as the recommendation of a martyr or a confessor; any person being then considered as a *martyr* on whom sentence of death had been passed, especially if he had suffered torture, or any other punishment; and he was a *confessor* who had acknowledged himself to be a Christian before a heathen tribunal, though no punishment had actually followed.

The martyrs had, no doubt, great merit; but in this age something must be deducted from it on account of the superstitious respect that was paid to them. They were almost idolized by their fellow-christians, both before and after their deaths; and when they survived torture, or the mines, &c., the homage that was paid to them could not fail to hurt their minds, though they had naturally been ever so good. Accordingly, many of them were intoxicated with the applause which they received, and often made an improper use of the influence which they acquired. But though, on this account, the temper of mind with which some endured martyrdom might be very unlike that with which Christ suffered, and therefore could not be said to be a proof of a truly christian character, it was a proof of their firm belief of the truth of Christianity, and consequently affords to us the same evidence of it.

It having grown into an established custom, that the recommendation of a confessor, and especially that of a martyr, should entitle any person, without farther inquiry, to christian communion, the discipline of the church was greatly relaxed by the indiscreet ease with which they often granted these tickets of recommendation. They would not only give them to persons of whose repentance they were not well assured, but sometimes to a particular person and his friends, without distinguishing who they were. Some, before they died, would even leave it in charge to their friends, to grant the peace of the church in their names to all who should apply for it; so that it must have been thought that martyrdom operated to expiate the sins of others, as well as those of the martyr himself. Nay, it appears that these tickets

were sometimes bought and sold, not perhaps in the first instance, but by those to whom they had been granted.

These abuses were sensibly and strenuously opposed by Cyprian, who, from the place of his concealment in the former persecution, wrote the most earnest letters to the martyrs and confessors, to his own clergy and the people, and also to the church of Rome, on the subject. For the idea of the necessity of an uniform discipline in all the great sees, which was productive of much evil afterwards, was by this time firmly established; so that a simple notification of communion with any one church, was a sufficient recommendation to any other; and for the same reason, excommunication from any church was an excommunication from them all; distant churches seldom thinking it necessary to examine into the grounds of proceeding in other churches, as we have seen in the case of Origen.

To oppose this baneful influence of the martyrs and confessors, Cyprian urged that the care of the church was committed by Christ to the apostles, and by them to the ordinary bishops and clergy, who were responsible for their conduct in it; and he resolutely refused to receive any certificates without restriction and examination. It was admitted, however, by him, as well as by others, that in the article of death, the badge of communion should not be withheld from any who had professed repentance, as it was necessary to their dying in peace.

These laudable efforts of Cyprian were aided and rendered effectual, by letters from the clergy, and even the confessors, at Rome, addressed to the church of Carthage, and to Cyprian himself; so that we hear no more of this gross abuse in any subsequent persecution, and probably it was no where very great, except in Africa only.

It is no uncommon thing for one extreme to produce another. At the same time that there were so many just complaints of the relaxation of discipline, in consequence of the improper interference of the confessors, others, at the head of whom was Novatus, a presbyter at Rome, and a learned and respectable man, maintained that they who had apostatized ought not on any terms, and whatever professions they might make of repentance, to be restored to the peace of the church;\* and on this principle he made himself the head of a new sect, called *Cathari*, on account of their professing greater purity than others. This Novatus had first

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xliii. p. 310. (P.) Lardner, III. pp. 215—217.

separated from the church of Rome, of which he was a presbyter, and had procured himself, as it is said, to be elected bishop, in opposition to Cornelius, whose election he had opposed, and which he pretended was invalid. However, he was joined by several bishops in Italy, and by some confessors, which in that age was deemed a great acquisition; but his friends were most numerous in Africa, though he did not succeed in his attempts to get the concurrence of Cyprian.

In this he failed, in part perhaps, on account of Novatus being joined by another Novatus, a presbyter of the church of Carthage,\* who had had some difference with Cyprian, and who, in opposition to him, had ordained Felicissimus a deacon, in a separate congregation in which he presided. For this, and other crimes which were laid to his charge, but of which no proof appears, Cyprian proposed to have him excommunicated, but the breaking out of the persecution put a stop to the proceedings.

In the absence of Cyprian, Novatus and Felicissimus strengthened their party against him, and though at his return he procured the expulsion of Felicissimus and his friends, they, despising the sentence, formed a new church in Carthage, and chose for the bishop one Fortunatus, a presbyter who had been included in the sentence of excommunication.† We do not, however, hear any thing more of this schism, and probably those of whom it consisted joined the party of the Roman Novatus, whose disciples soon formed separate churches in all parts of the Christian world.

To decide concerning him and his principles, a synod was called at Rome, consisting of sixty bishops, and a much greater number of the inferior clergy; and in this Novatus and his party were excommunicated, and his opinion condemned. A synod was also held at Carthage on the same subject, in which Cyprian presided; and in this the sentence of the synod at Rome was confirmed, and particular rules were agreed upon relating to the admission of penitents, according to the nature and degree of their guilt; and among these it was determined, that the clergy who had apostatized in the time of persecution, should only be restored to communion, as laymen.

\* See *Lardner*, III. pp. 221—223, and *Note*, p. 248.

† These particulars of the proceedings in Africa, I take from Mosheim, (*De Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum*, p. 497, &c.) who collected them from the letters of Cyprian, and who does not altogether approve the conduct of this bishop in the business. (*P.*) See *Vidal's Translation*, 1813.

Eusebius gives us on this occasion a letter from Cæcilius to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, in which he draws a most frightful picture of Novatus, and of his conduct, in procuring himself to be elected bishop, and the method he took to keep his friends attached to him; but it has too much the appearance of invective and calumny. As the Novatians boasted that the founder of their sect was a martyr, it is probable that he was one, and that he suffered in the reign of Valerian, as Cæcilius, his opponent, did in the time of Gallus.\*

By this letter it appears that there were in the church of Rome at this time forty-four presbyters, seven deacons, as many sub-deacons, and fifty-two officers of inferior kinds, more than one hundred and fifty widows, sick persons, or poor, who were maintained out of the funds of the church; and the common people are said to be innumerable. †

There is also in Eusebius an excellent letter of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, to Novatus, reproving him for making a schism in the church, and exhorting him to restore its union. ‡ In another letter he condemns the harshness of Novatus and his friends, especially with respect to their treatment of penitents, and their rebaptizing those who quitted the communion of the Catholic church to join them, as if their former baptism had been of no effect. §

It must be observed, however, that the Novatians did not maintain that all those who had once apostatized would be excluded from heaven. On the contrary, they encouraged their repentance, but left them to the judgment of God, keeping their own church pure from so great a stain as they considered apostacy, and probably other great offences, to be. They also thought that no other church could be deemed pure, or its ordinances valid, which admitted such improper members. It is very possible, therefore, that many persons of the most exemplary piety and virtue might choose to join a church which professed such great strictness.

The sect of Novatians continued till after the middle of the fifth century, and their maxim of rebaptizing those who joined them from other churches, was adopted by the Donatists. Cyprian and the bishops of Africa had no reason to complain of the Novatians for rebaptizing those who joined them from other churches; since they had given

\* Cypriani Ep. p. 154. Socratus Hist. L. iv. C. xxviii. p. 256. (P.) *Lardner*, III p. 214.

† Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. xliii. p. 519. (P.) *Lardner*, III pp. 207—209.

‡ Ibid. C. xlv. p. 313.

§ Ibid. L. vii. C. viii. p. 325. (P.)

it as their solemn opinion that all heretics should be rebaptized, and since the Novatians were considered as heretics by the Catholics, they would, no doubt, consider *them* in the same light.

The question about rebaptizing heretics was at this very time agitated with great earnestness in Africa; and a council on the subject was held at Carthage, A. D. 255. In this, Cyprian presided, and it was unanimously determined that the baptism of heretics should be considered as invalid, and in this he had the concurrence of Firmilian, and probably that of the eastern churches in general; who, in a council held at Iconium, in Phrygia, consisting of the bishops of Galatia, Cilicia, and the neighbouring provinces, agreed that heretics should not be received into the church without being rebaptized. This we learn from the epistle of Firmilian, in the works of Cyprian.\* To shew that baptism in all the usual forms could not always be considered as valid, or have the effects of a real baptism, he mentions a case of its being administered by a woman out of her senses, or, as he thought, actuated by a demon, probably one of the Montanists, who were often considered in that light. "Could the remission of sins and regeneration," he says, "be given by such a baptism?" In this we see the superstition of this good man, and of the times.

In this epistle Firmilian answers what had been alleged by Stephen, bishop of Rome, who not only opposed the rebaptizing of heretics, but had excommunicated the African churches for doing it;† and he alleges among other things, that the church of Rome had not in all things kept to the ancient and apostolical practices, as with respect to the celebration of Easter and other things.

Afterwards it came to be a received maxim, and was confirmed by the Council of Nice, that if the heretics had used the proper form of baptism, that is, if they had baptized *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, it should be deemed valid, and therefore should not be repeated; it being thought impious to treat a real sacrament as if it had no virtue in it; such was the superstition with which this rite was then considered.

This opinion, however, was not always able to give satisfaction to persons of a timorous disposition, who were afraid they had not received the true baptism. Dionysius of

\* Epist. p. 221. (*P.*) *Lardner*, II. p. 545.

† "Rumpens adversus vos pacem." *Cypriani Opera*, p. 220. (*P.*)

Alexandria describes a case of this kind, with respect to which he appears not to have known how to act, in a letter to Xistus, bishop of Rome. A person who had been baptized by some heretics, (of what denomination is not mentioned,) applied to him to be rebaptized, using the most earnest entreaties for that purpose; and though he told him that he could not regularly do it, and that in his opinion the communion of the Lord's supper, to which he would be admitted, might satisfy him, he still had the greatest dread of communicating in those circumstances, as one of the *unworthy persons* mentioned by Paul, who *eat and drink damnation to themselves*. It was even with great difficulty that this person could be prevailed upon to attend the prayers which accompanied the celebration of the eucharist. Dionysius writes to the bishop of Rome, to know what he should do in such a case as this.\* What answer Xistus returned, does not appear. Indeed, I do not see how they could satisfy the scruples of this man, in whose mind the opinions of divines, and even of councils, seem to have had but little weight.

There were two cases respecting the baptism of heretics, one that of those who had always been such, and the other that of those who had left the Catholic church, to join any heretical society; and to the former more favour was shewn than to the latter. But Dionysius says, he had learned of his predecessor Heraclas to receive both without rebaptizing, because they had already received the Holy Spirit, † as if that was the necessary consequence of baptism in the proper form. At the same time, this excellent man represents the decision of the African churches as no new thing, but as the same with that of the churches of Asia at Iconium and Synnada, long before; and seems to intimate, that what had once been settled on a subject of this nature, in any place, should not be altered, quoting the law of Moses, *thou shalt not remove the land-mark*; at least, that they should not be disturbed by other churches on that account. ‡ This was acting with the moderation of a Christian and a lover of peace. Jerome represents him as agreeing in opinion with Cyprian and the African churches.

All the ecclesiastical historians make great lamentations on account of the schism that was made in the Christian church by the Novatians, whose difference from the Catholics

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vii. C. ix. p. 329. (P.) *Lardner*, III. p. 69

† Some MSS. have not the word *spirit*; and, according to them, Dionysius said, that they had already received a *holy*, or true *baptism*. (P.)

‡ Euseb. Hist. L. vi. C. viii. p. 327. (P.)

respected matters of discipline only. On the contrary, I cannot help thinking that this breach in the unity of the Christian church in that age, and other similar breaches at other times, have had a very happy effect upon the whole.

Besides promoting free inquiry and discussion, without which no subject can be well understood, and which is necessary to give a general confidence in what shall be afterwards acquiesced in, sects were the means of preventing that overbearing authority which, the whole Christian church united, could not have failed to have, and which, if there had been no place of retreat from its power, would have been insupportable. What would have been the terror of an excommunication from such a church, and how would it have been possible to correct any abuse in such circumstances?

That families and friends should have been divided, and that those divisions should have been the cause of so much animosity as often took place on these occasions, is, no doubt, to be lamented. But this was an evil that did not necessarily arise from sects in religion, but only from that unreasonable spirit of bigotry in men, which could not bear with patience that others should think or act differently from them: that very bigotry, which a number of sects, and their necessary consequences, can alone cure. Private animosity was an evil inseparable from the promulgation of Christianity itself, and was distinctly foretold by our Saviour.

The excellent character of many of the Novatian bishops, we shall find to have been of great use in exciting the emulation of the Catholic bishops, and in checking that abuse of power and other irregularities, which would have disgraced Christianity infinitely more than these divisions which are so much complained of. The schism made by Luther, so much opposed and lamented at the time, has been a means of reforming the church of Rome itself;\* and the benefit which the established church of England derives from the Dissenters is too apparent to be denied by any man of cool observation. It has been acknowledged by the English clergy themselves. But ecclesiastical historians have been struck with the immediate and temporary evils arising from the division of the Christian church by numerous sects and parties, and have not sufficiently reflected on the more remote, but necessary, and highly beneficial uses of them.

\* This subject was well considered in an *Essay*, 1805, by C. Villers, on a question proposed by the National Institute. See Vol. II. p. 190, Note.

## SECTION IV.

*Of the Origin of the Monks.*

THE persecution of Deems, which fell particularly heavy on Egypt, gave occasion to the rise of another species of superstition, which, from small beginnings, extended itself over the whole Christian world, and which, with some good, was productive of much evil, so as to make a very important period in the history of the Christian church. I mean that species of superstition, under the influence of which, persons have thought there was a real merit in bodily austerity, and in excluding themselves from the common comforts and enjoyments of life, especially in leading single lives, and being in all respects as far removed as possible from all commerce with the world.

It is evident that nothing of this kind was prescribed by Christ, or the apostles. Every person is by them supposed to live in society, and is exhorted to do the duties of it, and to be useful in it. Celibacy is, indeed, recommended by the apostle Paul, but only for prudential reasons, as subjecting men to less inconvenience in time of difficulty and persecution; and the state of marriage is always spoken of as honourable. Nor does it appear that, even in this age, any Christian adopted this new mode of life on the principles on which it was recommended afterwards. The first hermits were men who had been driven by persecution to a distance from cities; and, being obliged to conceal themselves in desert places, far from human society, but being able to subsist (either from the natural fruits of the ground, their own labour, or the charity of others) they by degrees acquired a fondness for it; and their satisfaction in it would, no doubt, be increased by the respect that was paid them, on account of their great sanctity, as men who had abandoned the world, and all the enjoyments of it, for the sake of religion; so that they were considered in the same light as martyrs and confessors; and such some of them were. The same idea of sanctity was by degrees transferred to those who chose the society of the original hermits, who relieved their wants in their rigid mode of life, and were induced to adopt the same themselves. At first also they did not make any vows, by which they bound themselves either to live single lives, or renounce the world in any respect; but they mixed with it, whenever they thought

they could do it with safety to themselves, or advantage to others.

Besides the habit of living in solitude, to which the Christians were driven by persecution, some maxims, which had their origin in Heathenism, greatly contributed to recommend this austere mode of life. The doctrine of a *soul*, as an immaterial substance distinct from the body, and capable of subsisting in a state of much greater perfection and happiness without it, which was first adopted by the heathen philosophers, was by this time almost universally received among Christians; and from this fruitful principle, among other consequences highly unfavourable to genuine Christianity, there soon arose the idea of endeavouring to detach the soul from the body as much as possible, even during their connexion, which was always thought to be unfavourable to the spiritual part of man, and necessarily to contaminate it. Every thing, therefore, which tended to reconcile the soul to its fleshly tabernacle, such as sensual indulgences of all kinds, even those which had always been deemed innocent, were to be carefully avoided. Whatever tended to mortify the body was conceived to be for the advantage of the soul, and the state the nearest to this ideal perfection was thought to be that in which life could be supported with the fewest enjoyments, or corporeal gratifications possible. Even those of the eye and the ear, which were always deemed to be the most refined of corporeal pleasures, were reprobated.

At the same time that the ancient heathen religions allowed, upon some occasions, the grossest sensual indulgences, in other cases they imposed acts of the greatest rigour, and required the most costly sacrifices; some of their gods being of such a disposition, that it was thought nothing else could conciliate them. Hence many of the heathen priests, who devoted themselves to the peculiar service of these gods, submitted to great mortifications, as fasting, &c. and performed upon themselves the most painful operations, such as cutting their flesh, &c., to say nothing of their human sacrifices, and the most shocking cruelties committed upon others. Some of the male priests castrated themselves, and the women devoted themselves to a state of virginity. All these things had been deemed acts of heroism, and, without the least regard to moral virtue, had been thought to recommend men to the favour of the gods.

In these things unfortunately the Christians had some

the Heathens, being ashamed not to be able to make as great sacrifices to true religion, as any persons had ever done to false ones. Hence some Christian hermits seemed to have emulated the severities of the Indian Fakirs, making a merit of the mere enduring of pain, and of the renunciation of all the comforts and enjoyments of life.

Lastly, the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophers, whose writings the learned Christians chiefly studied, thought that, by the force of contemplation, they could, in a great measure, detach the soul from the body, and thus re-ascend to that state of *union with God*, which all souls were supposed to have had before they were separated from that one great source of intelligence, and in which they expected to be absorbed, after undergoing a state of discipline in this lower world; and the reveries they naturally fell into in a state of long silence and solitude, to which, for this purpose, they sometimes gave themselves up (a state in which they were hardly sensible of the presence of any material objects) they imagined to be this detached and exalted condition of the soul, such as it would attain to in an unembodied state.

Christians, deeply tinctured with these notions, thought that prayer would greatly assist in this grand operation, and do more for them than mere meditation could for the heathen philosophers. Hence, to the most mortified state that the body could bear, they added the mental exercises of incessant meditation and prayer; and this indolent, contemplative mode of life they imagined to be the most perfect that human nature was capable of in this world.

But as it was necessary for the preservation of mankind, that some persons should marry, and do the common offices of human life, and therefore these things could not be absolutely said to be sinful, Christians followed the heathen philosophers in adopting the idea of two classes of men, the *operative* and the *contemplative*, and of the great inferiority of the former to the latter. Those persons who performed these common offices of life, and partook of the common enjoyments of it, feeling a natural reluctance to the idea of abandoning them, were easily led to form the idea of the superior excellence, as well as of the greater difficulty, of a state of mortification, and were glad to minister to all the wants of the contemplative order of Christians, from the benefit they hoped to derive from their prayers, which they conceived to be far more meritorious and effectual than their own.

Thus did heathen maxims, in the most specious and least suspected manner, introduce themselves into Christianity, and debase the genuine spirit of it; and by this means were men gradually led to place the greatest merit in things that had no relation to moral virtue. And what was of still worse consequence, mankind having, as they thought, this sure way of making themselves acceptable to God, were too apt to neglect any other, and even thought to make atonement for their vices by those austerities, or those donations, which were thought to be equivalent to them. For it has been universally observed, that the prevalence of superstition has always been attended with a proportional disregard of moral virtue.

The duties of superstition have this to recommend them, that it is easily known when they are discharged; whereas, the moral improvement of the temper and disposition of mind is a less definite, and more uncertain thing, so as to be less easily estimated. And when a man is persuaded that he can secure his future salvation by fasting, by penance, or by money, he will generally acquiesce in it, rather than have recourse to that constant attention to his heart and life, which true Christianity requires.

Notwithstanding this injury done to Christianity by the maxims of Heathenism, there was something in it, and inseparable from it, which preserved it from that deplorably wretched and contemptible state in which mere Heathenism left men. Moral precepts, especially those of humility, meekness, benevolence, and heavenly-mindedness, are so frequently inculcated in the gospel, that they could not be wholly overlooked. Consequently, almost all the orders of monks, notwithstanding the time they gave to meditation and prayer, and the severities they exercised upon themselves, practised some acts of beneficence, and studied to be useful to the world; not to observe that their reading of the Scriptures, and prayers, together with their habitual endeavours to raise their minds above this world, and to prepare themselves, in their way, for another (about which the Heathens knew nothing at all) would render them, personally considered, superior characters to any that mere Heathenism could produce. And, indeed, it is evident that, in the early ages (in the middle ages too, and, I believe, at the present time also) the generality of monks, notwithstanding the factions disposition of some, and the hypocrisy and secret sensuality of others, have lived very innocent

lives, and many of them highly useful ones, especially by their application to literature.

For it must not be forgotten, that it is to the monks that we are indebted for a great part of what now remains of the learning of the ancients. The northern nations, which overwhelmed the Roman empire, had been previously converted to Christianity; and the respect which they had for monks and monasteries, made those places a valuable and happy asylum for letters.\* It was also happy that, in a time of such general confusion as that in which all the states in Europe were for several centuries involved, there was any place of safe retreat for those who were disgusted with the world, and wished to retire from it, whether they were driven thither by remorse for their own crimes, or by the violence of others.

The first hermits that we read of were some who, during the persecution of Decius, took refuge in Upper Egypt, or Thebais, remote from Alexandria and the sea-coast; and one Paul is mentioned, as a person who distinguished himself the most by his solitary life in that country. It is said by Jerome, who writes his life, that being heir to a great patrimony, his sister's husband, in order to get possession of it, informed against him, and that upon this he fled to the mountainous parts of Thebais, where he was safe from his pursuers. This place, however, he quitted several times: but at length, finding a convenient cavern in a rock, he lived there ninety years, dying at the age of one hundred and thirteen. We shall have occasion enough to speak of the followers of this Paul in the succeeding periods of this history.

## SECTION V

### *Of Unitarianism in this Period.*

WE have seen that Unitarianism was the belief of all the Christian world during the age of the apostles, and till the time of Justin Martyr, when he, and some other Platonic philosophers, being converted to Christianity, mixed their peculiar notions with it. In this they acted with perfect integrity, though they were, no doubt, biassed more than they themselves were aware of, by the flattering idea of

\* *On Monastic Institutions*, See Vol. V. p. 100 and 80.

representing their religion to themselves, and others, in a more respectable light than that of the doctrine of a man who had been crucified. They therefore held that Christ was not a mere man, but that the *logos*, the power and wisdom of the one supreme God, had been, in some ineffable manner, emitted from him, so as to become a distinct person; and that this *logos* was so united to Jesus, that by virtue of it he was entitled to the appellation of God.

Still, however, not to alarm the common people, who justly dreaded the doctrine of a second God, they always spoke of Christ, though a God, yet as greatly inferior to the Father, as having derived every thing from him, who was alone (*αυαρχος*) without origin, and entirely subservient to his will. They were also far from molesting the common people, who retained the plain doctrine of one God, and who considered Christ as a man inspired by God. Thinking themselves much superior to them in knowledge, they rather despised them for their weakness, and their incapacity to comprehend this sublime doctrine which they had imbibed.

In this light Origen always exhibits his own opinion and theirs. "There are," says he, "who partake of the *logos* which was from the beginning, the *logos* that was with God, and the *logos* that was God——but there are others who know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, the *logos* that was made flesh, thinking they have every thing of the *logos* when they acknowledge Christ according to the flesh. Such is the multitude of those who are called Christians." Again, he says, "the multitudes," that is, the great mass or body, "of the believers are instructed in the shadow of the *logos*, and not in the true *logos* of God."\* That Tertullian considered the greater part of Christians as dreading the doctrine of the Trinity in his time, and as adhering strictly to that of the sole monarchy of God, the Father, we have seen already. Unfortunately, the writings of all the ancient Unitarians are lost. But still there is evidence sufficient of there having been writers who maintained their opinion against the learned Platonists. Beryllus is said to have been an elegant writer. Artemon and Theodotus, in the preceding period, were also writers, and they had many admirers.

In the period of which I am now treating, the Platonizing bishops were unquestionably more numerous than any

\* Comment. in Johan. II. pp. 49, 55. (P.)

other; and to this the school of Alexandria, and the reputation of Origen, had probably contributed; the most eminent of the bishops having been the disciples of Origen, such as Dionysius of Alexandria, Gregory of Neocæsarea, and Firmilian of Cappadocia. It is probable, however, that these men, especially the two last, retained the moderation, as well as the doctrine, of Origen on this subject. For they were far from proceeding with the decision and violence of the Catholics of a later period, when the Unitarian doctrine came before them.

Those who incurred censure for holding the Unitarian doctrine in this period were Noetus of Smyrna, or Ephesus, Sabellius, in Africa, and Paulus Samosatensis, bishop of Antioch. Noetus is not mentioned by Eusebius; but Epiphanius and others speak of him as the head of a sect, who were called Noëtians after him. He probably flourished not long after, A. D. 220, and what he wrote on the subject was replied to by Hippolytus. But neither the work of Noetus, nor that of his answerer, are now extant. At least the genuineness of the tract which goes under the name of Hippolytus is questioned. Noetus, persisting in his opinions, was expelled from the church of which he was a member, together with those who were of the same opinion with him; and Predestinatus says that he was also “condemned by Tranquillus, bishop of the Chaldeomans, in Syria.”\*

There are, however, so many improbable circumstances in Epiphanius’s account of Noetus, and also of his brother, (such as his pretending that he was Moses, and his brother, Aaron, and that when they died the orthodox refused to bury them,†) that there is but little to be depended upon in what he says concerning him and his followers, except that they were Unitarians. Theodoret says, that Noetus was the disciple of Epigonus, and that he was followed by Cleomenes,‡

Eusebius says but little of Sabellius, who is supposed to have published those writings which gave offence to the orthodox, as they called themselves, about A. D. 255 or 256, and which were answered by Dionysius of Alexandria in 257 or 258. So many bishops of Africa were then Unitarians, that Athanasius says, “the Son of God,” meaning his divinity, “was scarcely any longer preached in the

\* Lardner’s Works, III. p. 41. — P. — [Her. lvi. Opera, I. p. 406. — P.]

† Her. l. ib. l. iii. C. iii. Opera IV. p. 127. — P. — Lardner, III. p. 42.

churches;" and Sabellius was so distinguished a person that the Unitarians went by his name even in the time of Austin, though in general it had given place to that of Photinians, from Photinus, bishop of Sirmium, and a much more eminent writer. So popular was Unitarianism in this age, that, according to Epiphanius, when the Unitarians met with any of the plainer Christians, they would say, "Well, friend, what doctrine shall we hold, shall we acknowledge one God or three?" By this short and plain argument, he acknowledged that they gained the pious and plain people to join them.\*

Noetus, if Epiphanius may be credited, was excommunicated from his own church, of which, as he was a writer, it is probable that he might be a presbyter; but it is remarkable that, though Sabellius was much more known, and his opinions generally prevailed, at least in Africa, there was no council called on his account, no examination of his opinions, nor any public censure of them; when a preceding bishop of Alexandria had called a council for the purpose of condemning Origen. It does not appear that any application whatever was ever made to Sabellius himself by any Christian bishop or writer. All that we hear of, as written against his opinions, is a letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, addressed to Xistus, bishop of Rome, Ammon, bishop of Berenice, and four books addressed to Dionysius, another bishop of Rome.†

It is perhaps no less remarkable that, notwithstanding the blasphemous opinions, as they are commonly called, of which the Trinitarians accused Sabellius, no immorality appears to have been laid to his charge. It may therefore be safely inferred that his moral character and conduct were unexceptionable. And since no public censure was passed upon him, it may also be inferred, either that his opinions were not considered as very obnoxious, or that his friends were so many, that his enemies had no prospect of success in any measures that they might take against him.

Paul, a native of Samosata, was bishop of Antioch, twelve or thirteen years, in the time of the celebrated Zenobia, with whom he was a great favourite. Making allowance for prejudice and exaggeration, Dr. Lardner thinks that, from what Eusebius and others have said of him,‡ we may draw the following character: "He had a great mind, with a mixture

\* Hist. Jxii. Opera, I. p. 514. (P.) Lardner, III. p. 76.

† Euseb. Hist. L. vii. C. xxvi. p. 356. (P.) ‡ Ibid. C. xxvii. p. 257, &c. (P.)

of haughtiness, and too much affection for human applause. He was generally well-respected in the diocese, and by the neighbouring bishops; in esteem with the great, and beloved by the common people. He preached frequently, and was a good speaker; and from what is said by the fathers of the council, of his rejecting and laying aside some hymns as modern, and composed by moderns, it may be argued that he was a critic.\*

It appears that Paul had a difference with his presbyter Malchion, who procured a council to be summoned, which, according to Athanasius, was attended by 170 or 180 bishops, but according to Eusebius about 600. A. D. 264. At this synod Firmilian was present, but Dionysius of Alexandria, not being able to attend, sent a letter. In this synod Paul was only admonished, and not condemned. But in another synod, or council, at which Eusebius says innumerable bishops were present, but not Firmilian, or Gregory of Neocæsarea, he was excommunicated and deposed.† The dispute between Paul and Malchion, who had presided in a school of rhetoric at Antioch, was made public. Malchion also drew up the synodical letter in the name of the fathers of this council, which is preserved in Eusebius.‡ It is evidently dictated by the strongest prejudices and malice. Had half the villanies and immoralities that Paul is there charged with been true, it cannot be supposed that such men as Firmilian, Gregory, and those who attended at the first council, would have hesitated to depose him.

Notwithstanding this deposition by a council of bishops, Paul could not be removed from the episcopal house (which however it is evident he could not have occupied without the good-will of the people, who, it must be observed, had alone a proper right to depose him) till the authority of the emperor Aurelian, who was the enemy of Zenobia, was called in. What became of Paul afterwards is not said; but from him the Unitarians were generally called *Paulians*, till the Council of Nice.

Paul was a writer, but we have no particular account of his works; and he not only held the doctrine of the humanity of Christ, but probably denied the miraculous conception, as he said that “he acknowledged in Christ, the powerful word from heaven, by pre-determination before all

\* Works, III. pp. 261, 262. P. Hist. Eccl. G. 260, pp. 105, 106.

† Hist. E. vii. C. 8. x. y. 260. P. Eusebii, III. pp. 26, 27.

ages, but that it was manifested at Nazareth," which he probably considered as the place of his birth.\* It is also probable that the followers of Paul did not baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, because it was decreed by the Council of Nice, that if any of them joined the Catholic church, they should be rebaptized; which the orthodox of that age never did, if the baptism had been in that form, by whomsoever it had been administered.

It is acknowledged that the fathers who condemned the errors of Paul maintained that the son was not *consubstantial* (*ὁμοουσιος*) or of the same nature with the Father, which is the very reverse of what was defined to be orthodoxy at the Council of Nice. But it may be accounted for in the following manner. The more philosophical Unitarians said that the divinity which was in Christ was that of the Father, and therefore of the same substance with him. But it had been the custom, as we have seen, with the first Trinitarians, to speak of Christ (though they gave him the appellation of God) as greatly inferior to the Father; and in expressing this they had not scrupled to say that he was of a different nature (*ουσια*) from the Father. This they did the more effectually to distinguish between the persons of the Father and Son, which they commonly charged the Sabellians with confounding. But afterwards, when the Arians arose, and maintained that Christ was not only inferior to the Father, but a creature, made out of nothing, they who had held that the divine principle in Christ was the *logos*, or wisdom of the Father, personified, changed their language and adopted another, more agreeable to their principles; saying, that Christ was not of a different nature from the Father, but of the very same substance, or *consubstantial* with him; as indeed he necessarily must have been, if his divinity had ever been a proper attribute of the Father.

Though Paul was deposed, partly for his opinions, and in part for his pride, and the other vices which were laid to his charge, (but which do not appear to have been proved,) none of his clergy, or of the laity, are said to have been excommunicated along with him; and yet as he is allowed to have been very popular in his see, many of them must, no doubt, have thought as he did, as also must the bishops and presbyters of other churches who were his admirers. It is thought by some that Lucian of Antioch put himself at the

\* Athanasius *De Adventu Jesu Christi*, Opera, I. pp. 64, 637. P.

head of Paul's followers, who of their own accord formed a separate society; though some considered him as having entertained opinions much the same as those of Arius.

## SECTION VI.

### *Of the Controversy concerning the Reign of Christ upon Earth.*

DIONYSIUS of Alexandria, who distinguished himself in every thing in which Christianity was concerned, held a public disputation within this period with some who maintained that the reign of Christ would be upon earth, and who were likewise charged with saying that under him Christians would enjoy carnal delights. Nepos, a bishop in Egypt, had written a book in defence of this opinion, and it was answered by Dionysius, who, with a candour that does him the greatest honour, speaks in the highest terms of the genius and piety of Nepos, who was then dead, especially on account of the many hymns which he had composed, and which were very much valued by Christians. Many whole churches of Egypt adopted the opinion of Nepos, and with them it was that Dionysius held this public disputation, or rather friendly conference, which continued three whole days from morning till evening. Dionysius, in his account of this conference, greatly praises the candour of these *Mil-lennarians*, as they were usually called, and says that, at the opening of the conference, both he and they expressed the greatest readiness to relinquish their opinions, if, after the discussion of them, they should appear not to be well-founded. The issue was, that Coracio, who was then at the head of these people, professed himself convinced of his error, and openly declared that he would teach it no more; so that this conference ended, as very few have done, to the satisfaction of both parties.\*

That the reign of Christ, whatever be its nature, will be on this earth, seems to be evident, from what was said by the angels at the time of his ascension, viz. that he would return from heaven in the same manner as they then saw him go up thither. And as we are not informed that any change will be made in our future bodies besides what relates to the difference of sex, it does not appear but that they are

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vii. C. xxiv. p. 319. — *P. London*, III. p. 10.

to be supported by food. Our Saviour himself seems to have thought so, when, in taking leave of his disciples, he told them that he should no more taste the fruit of the vine, till he should drink it new with them in the kingdom of heaven.\* The opinion of Nepos is well known to have been held by Papias, and he always maintained that he had it from the apostles.

As to the sensual delights which it is said these Millennarians contended for, the charge was probably a calumny. Neither Papias, nor this Nepos, were persons who are said to be at all addicted to them, being men of great purity of manners as well as piety. And it may easily be supposed that the idea which took place very early, and extended itself very fast, of the natural impurity of every thing *corporeal*, led the generality of Christians to put a spiritual sense upon every expression by which the happiness of a future state is denoted. According to some, our pleasures are to be so much of an intellectual nature, that it cannot be conceived how our corporeal senses, even those of seeing and hearing, should be of any use to us.

## SECTION VII.

### *Of the Writers within this Period.*

THE writers within this period, considering the length of it, and the proportion of peace that was in it, are not many, and of their works several were suggested by the persecution, and the consequences of it. Several of them were of the Alexandrian school, from which the literature and the Platonizing theology of Christians was for several ages derived.

The principal of them is Cyprian, of whose conduct and martyrdom an account has already been given. He wrote many *letters* relating to the occurrences of his times, especially on the subject “of martyrdom, the baptism of heretics, the reception of the lapsed,” &c., and some short treatises, viz. “on the vanity of idols;” against the heathen religion; *testimonies*, consisting of a collection of texts of Scripture on different subjects, chiefly from the Old Testament; “on discipline: on the conduct and apparel of virgins; on mercy and forgiving; on patience; on envy; concerning those who had apostatized; and of the unity of the church.” written on

\* See the Author's *Notes*, Matt. xxvi. 29, and Sermon on R. Robinson's death.

occasion of the schism of Novatus and the faction of Felicissimus, who granted the peace of the church too readily to those who had fallen. Lastly, his treatise addressed to Demetrianus is an answer to those who accused the Christians of being the cause of all the calamities of the state. Cyprian had been a teacher of rhetoric before he was a Christian: and it is observed that he is one of the first of the Christian writers who have been admired for their eloquence.

Pontius, a deacon of Cyprian's, wrote an account of his life and death.\*

Contemporary with Cyprian, was Commodianus, another Latin author, of whom an account is given by Gemadius, who wrote near the end of the fifth century. His treatise *against the Pagans*, or more properly instructions to persons of every description, in a loose kind of verse, is still extant.

Novatus, the author of the schism that has been mentioned, composed the first treatise that was expressly written on the subject of the Trinity, in which he explains with great clearness the generally-received doctrine, concerning the person of Christ, before the Council of Nice; maintaining that he was the *logos*, or reason of the Father, but nevertheless greatly inferior to him. He is also supposed to be the author of a treatise of Jewish meats, of another on Easter, and of circumcision, as well as of some letters, especially one from the clergy of Rome to Cyprian. Both Novatus and Cyprian wrote in Latin.

Cornelius, bishop of Rome, wrote several epistles, chiefly on the subject of his difference with Novatus, but none of them are now extant.†

Gregory, bishop of Neocæsarea, the disciple of Origen, composed a discourse in his praise, a paraphrase on Ecclesiastes, and a canonical epistle directed to a bishop about the penance to be exacted of those who returned to the church, after having been guilty of various crimes, during the incursion of the barbarians into Asia, in the reign of Gallienus. There are other works falsely attributed to him.

Dionysius of Alexandria was the most distinguished writer, as well as actor, of the age in which he lived. He also had been the disciple of Origen. Some of his works have been mentioned in the course of this history; but nothing of his is now extant, except some fragments preserved in Eusebius. He wrote what were called *Paschal*

\* Jerome, C. lxxxix. (P.)

† Ibid. C. lxxxviii. (P.)

*Letters*, relating to the time of celebrating Easter, shewing that it ought to be before the vernal equinox; and he published a canon, or cycle, of eight years, for the direction of Christians with respect to it.\* Eusebius also quotes a second book of his concerning promises, meaning probably the rewards of virtue in a future state against the Millenarians.†

Dionysius speaks of his having had two revelations, one directing him to withdraw from the persecution in the time of Decius,‡ and the other to encourage him to read the works of heretics, by which he evidently meant those of the Gnostics, as he speaks of their traditions (παράδοσις) and of defiling his mind with their execrable opinions (πυμνιαισιν αἰσίων ἐπιθυμησίων).§ But as he mentions no circumstances of those revelations, the latter of which he calls a vision, it is impossible for us to determine whether they were real or not. With respect to the former, he solemnly declares that he told no untruth, and therefore there can be no doubt but that, if this excellent man was imposed upon by his own imagination, he was far from intending to impose upon others. As God has vouchsafed revelations of a similar nature to other persons, he, no doubt, may have done it in his case; but the facts are destitute of sufficient evidence.

In this period Anatolius of Alexandria, but bishop of Laodicea, distinguished himself by his genius and his writings, excelling in his knowledge of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, logic, philosophy and rhetoric. He wrote a treatise concerning Easter, a part of which treatise is extant in Latin. Eusebius gives a large account of this Anatolius, of the great esteem in which he was held at Alexandria, and especially of his services at the time of a siege.||

Theognostus of Alexandria, quoted by Athanasius and others, but not mentioned by Eusebius,¶ appears to have been a considerable writer and author of a treatise, entitled, *Institutions*, which was not altogether approved by those who claimed the title of orthodox in a later period,\*\* as he called the Son a creature.

Pierius, a presbyter of Alexandria, wrote with so much elegance, that Jerome says he was called the younger Origen. He wrote a commentary on Hosea, and a treatise

\* Euseb. Hist. L. vii. C. xx. p. 344. (P.) *Lardner*, III. p. 96.

† Ibid. L. iii. C. xxviii. p. 122. (P.) Ibid. p. 103.

‡ Ibid. L. vi. C. xl. p. 302. (P.) Ibid. p. 60.

§ Ibid. L. vii. C. vii. p. 326. (P.) Ibid. p. 63.

|| Ibid. L. vi. C. xxxii. p. 366. (P.) Ibid. pp. 265—268.

¶ See on Eusebius's Silence, *Lardner*, III. p. 275. \*\* Ibid.

on Easter, neither of them now extant. Eusebius speaks highly of him, as eminent for sublime philosophy.\*

This period produced two works which deserve to be mentioned for their singularity, and the relation they bear to Christianity. The heathen philosophers were, no doubt, much offended at the progress of the new religion; and this progress was evidently owing to the belief of the *miracles* of Christ and the apostles, recorded in the Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles. To counteract the effect of these writings, it is highly probable that we now find the life of Pythagoras written by Porphyry, and more largely by Jamblichus, and also that of Apollonius Tyanæus by Philostratus; and as they abound with the accounts of *miracles*, it may be worth while to mention some of them, that the judicious reader may compare them with those which they seem to have been intended to rival and discredit.

Pythagoras had been dead almost eight hundred years before these lives of him were written; and very little indeed had been recorded of him by any creditable historian. In these circumstances these writers might collect vague traditions, or invent anecdotes, without fear of being contradicted by any positive evidence; but being, on the same account, necessarily destitute of proper vouchers themselves, they could not be entitled to any credit. And, indeed, the stories are such as abundantly confute themselves, being extremely silly, not being brought as any proof of a divine mission, and having no rational object whatever.

If any credit, say both Porphyry and Jamblichus, (the latter of whom seems to have copied the former,) may be given to many ancient and excellent men, who have written concerning Pythagoras, his philosophy had in it something from which even brute animals might receive instruction. He so tamed a wild bear of Daunia, which had committed great ravages in the country, that he bound it by an oath never to meddle with any living creature for the future; so that ever afterwards it confined itself to the woods, and never injured any animal, tame or wild. Seeing an ox at Tarentum eating green beans, he whispered something in his ear, and from that time he never tasted beans any more; and living long after this near the Temple of Juno, he was called the ox of Pythagoras. Explaining to his disciples at Olympia that birds were messengers from God to pious men, he brought down an eagle which was then flying over

\* Euseb. Hist. l. vii. c. 25. x. p. 273. (P.) Lardner, III, pp. 273, 280.

their heads, and, after he had caressed him for some time, dismissed him again; by which, say these writers, he shewed that, like Orpheus, he likewise had power over wild animals.\*

When Pythagoras was travelling with a native of Sybaris, along the sea-shore, to Croton, he told some fishermen, who were dragging a net full of fishes, the exact number that it contained, on their promising that they would do whatever he should direct with respect to them, if he told them right. Accordingly, when they had counted them, and found the number to be what he had said, he ordered them to throw them back into the sea alive; and it was very remarkable, say these writers, that notwithstanding the time which was employed in counting such a number of fishes upon the sea-shore, not one of them died. †

Pythagoras, they also say, proved by undeniable evidence, that he was the same person with Euphorbus, the son of Panthus, who was slain by Menelaus, at the siege of Troy, after having killed Patroclus; his soul having transmigrated from one body to another. ‡

Though these writers appeal to “many ancient and excellent men who wrote the history of Pythagoras,” they do not mention any of them; and it is remarkable that Diogenes Laertius, who wrote the life of Pythagoras about one hundred and fifty years before these authors, has none of these prodigies, except the story of Euphorbus.

The miracles of Apollonius Tyanæus are not less ridiculous than those that are related of Pythagoras, and as destitute of proper vouchers. Philostratus, who wrote his life, did it, as he says, with a view to shew that he was a more extraordinary man than Pythagoras, and more divine with respect to philosophy. According to him, Damis, the companion of Apollonius, committed to writing whatever he said or did that was remarkable; that a friend of this Damis, (whose name is not mentioned,) committed these memoirs to Julia, the wife of the emperor Severus; and that she gave them to Philostratus, to transcribe and reduce into better order. In these circumstances it can hardly be supposed but that he would endeavour to acquit himself in such a manner as to please this empress, and her son Caracalla, by detracting from Christianity, to which they both had a very great aver-

\* Porphyrius *de Vita Pythagoræ*, C. xxiv. xxv. p. 31. Jamblichus, C. xiii. p. 46. (P.) Lardner, VIII. pp. 282—285.

† Porphyrius, C. xxv. p. 31. Jamblichus, C. viii. p. 47. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. xxvi. p. 32. Ibid. C. xiv. p. 48. (P.)

ston. He also says, that he was assisted by the books of Maximus of *Ægæ*, which contained an account of what Apollonius did in that place. Four books of the life of Apollonius were likewise written by Meragenes; but they were such as our author could not give credit to. Let us now see whether his own accounts be at all more credible.

According to Philostratus, Proteus appeared to the mother of Apollonius before he was born, and told her that she would be delivered of himself. She, not at all terrified at the apparition, asked him who he was; to which he replied, *an Egyptian god*. But Apollonius, he adds, proved himself to be much superior to Proteus in his knowledge of future events; for that his predictions were much more numerous than those of Proteus, and that he never failed in his interpretation of mysterious things.\* Before her delivery she was directed by a dream to go and gather flowers in a certain meadow. There she fell asleep, and was surrounded by swans, who, disposing themselves in the form of a chorus, set up a great cry, which awaked her, and immediately after this she was delivered. At the same time lightning descended from heaven, but presently ascended again into the higher regions of the atmosphere; signifying, as our author says, that this child would rise above the earth, and have his habitation near the gods.

Such was the birth of Apollonius, at Tyana, in Cappadocia, of which place our author relates several extraordinary things. He more particularly mentions a fountain, the waters of which could not be drunk with safety by any perjured person, † While Apollonius was a boy, an Assyrian youth, who had brought himself into a dangerous disease by his debauchery, was directed by the god *Æsculapius* to apply to him, who, by advising temperance, restored him to health. ‡ Such is the introduction to the life of Apollonius, and the whole work is of a piece with it. §

I need not say how little credit is due to such ridiculous stories as these, which are as destitute of any proper evidence, as those in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It is not, indeed, probable that they were believed by the writers themselves, or

\* *L. i. C. iii. p. 5. P.*

+ *C. iv. p. 6. P.*

† *C. vi. p. 10. P.*

‡ See Vol. II. pp. 192, 193, and *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 266—282, 286—292. Dr. F. remarks, "Such were the philosophers of that time. They did little or nothing to improve the sentiments of mankind. They confirmed the prejudices of the common people, and made them still worse than they otherwise would have been. If any others have since resembled them therein, they are far from deserving commendation." *P.* 286.

any of their readers. How unnecessary is it then to draw a comparison between them and the miracles of Christ and the Apostles,\* the accounts of which were written while numberless witnesses of them were living, and which were so well attested, that both before and after the publication of those books, thousands abandoned every thing that they had in the world, and many of them cheerfully laid down their lives, for their faith in them; and yet it cannot be said that any of these persons had been previously disposed to admit the truth of the facts!

\* On ancient and modern pretensions to miraculous power, including a consideration of "the pretended miracles of Apollonius Tyanæus." See Vol. II. pp. 191—196.

## P E R I O D VI.

OF THE PERSECUTION UNDER DIOCLETIAN, A. D. 302,  
AND TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE EMPIRE UNDER  
CONSTANTINE, A. D. 313.

THIS is the shortest period into which I have hitherto divided this history, but it is by far the most crowded with events, and those of the greatest consequence, and it terminated in the complete establishment of a state of things, the like of which had never been known before; in one respect highly favourable to Christianity, I mean in the general acknowledgment of its truth, but highly unfavourable with regard to its effects on the hearts and lives of men. This period also terminated in the union of Christianity with a power the most heterogeneous to its nature, by which it became the reverse of what it had been hitherto, viz. *a kingdom of this world*, arming itself with its powers and terrors, and by degrees exercising that temporal power with as much cruelty against a purer species of Christianity, as it had ever been employed against Christianity itself.

Previous to this last struggle between Christianity and Heathenism, the Christian church had, with little interruption, enjoyed more than half a century of rest and peace, in which it had enlarged its boundaries, and acquired a degree of external splendour unknown in any former period.\* Several of the emperors had been well-disposed towards it, and though they did not embrace Christianity themselves, they

\* Arnobius speaks of the knowledge of Christianity having reached the Seres or Chinese, as well as the Persians and the Medes. L. ii. p. 30. Mr. D. Guignes has endeavoured to prove that one of the Chinese emperors, having heard of it by the people of India trading to China, sent persons into the West to collect a more authentic account of it, A. D. 65, but that not making sufficient distinction, they brought back the religion of Fo, which had its origin about that time. *Histoire des Huns*, I. p. 30. But I do not lay much stress on this account. \*P. Arnobius "magnifies the speedy progress of the gospel in this manner: 'For many ages God was known in Judea only: but upon the coming of Christ, the word of the Lord ran swiftly from the East to the West, from the Indies to Britain. Cum per tot milia annorum in soli Judea notus fuerit Deus, nunc intra paucos annos, nec ipsos Indos lateat a parte Orientis, nec ipsos Britones a parte Occidentis, ubique cucurrit gladius: eruo ejus.' In Psa. cxlvii." *Lardner*, IV. p. 23.

had made no scruple of employing Christians in the most important departments of government, both civil and military; and had excused them from the performance of any acts which had formerly been indispensable in the execution of their offices, if they objected to them as inconsistent with their profession of Christianity.

Several of the emperors had indulged their christian officers and their families with the most public exercise of their religion, and among these Eusebius particularly mentions Dorotheus and Gorgonius, who, with many others, were advanced to the highest magistracies, and the government of provinces. Many heathen governors also shewed great respect to christian bishops, and permitted them to erect new and more spacious edifices for their public assemblies, as the demand for them kept increasing, and the rites of the heathen religion became more neglected and disused. We may therefore conclude, that at this time a very great proportion of the people, in all the provinces of the empire, and especially in the East, made open profession of Christianity.

But this state of prosperity had produced, as before, many bad, as well as many good effects. The christian bishops and people, having no foreign enemies, were divided among themselves; and that affectionate love and sympathy, which had been cherished by common difficulties, had given place to jealousy, envy and hatred; which, as Eusebius expresses it, led them to fight with words, as with swords and spears.\* Also, a spirit of indifference with respect to religion in general, and an attachment to the world and the things of it, the fruitful parent of all vices, infected Christians as well as other persons, when persecution had ceased to keep up their zeal, and to compel them, as it were, to look from earth to heaven.

At length, however, it pleased Divine Providence to rouse the Christian church from this state of indifference and worldly-mindedness, by the most severe, and the longest-continued persecution to which it had ever been exposed. And by this it appeared that, notwithstanding the diseases which it had contracted in a state of indolence, its *stamina* were good; for it not only survived, but was improved by the trial. The return of persecution revived the ancient spirit and zeal of Christians, and no more account was made by them of torture and death, than on any former similar occasion.

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. i. p. 375. (P.)

This persecution is usually ascribed to Diocletian, but it was more properly a measure of Galerius Maximian, his son-in-law, and one of the Cæsars; and it is said that, for some time, Diocletian remonstrated against the proposal, on account of the miseries that he foresaw it would produce. For though he was superstitious, and a friend to the ancient religion, (which was supposed to be connected with the welfare and glory of the empire, which he had much at heart,) he was not naturally cruel. Moreover, the persecution did not begin, at least it was not carried on with any violence, till the nineteenth year of his reign, a few years before he resigned the government entirely, and it continued seven years after he had nothing to do with the administration, and when it does not appear, that he interested himself at all in it.

It appears, however, that Diocletian, in conjunction with his colleague, Maximian Herculius, had shewn himself unfavourable to the Christians, on some occasions, before the breaking out of the great persecution which bears his name.\* It is said, that at the meeting of the two emperors at Milan, which was the year before the adoption of the two Cæsars, and the sixth of the reign of Diocletian, they concerted some measures that were hostile to Christianity;† and when ten years of the joint reigns of Diocletian and Maximian were expired, solemn games, in honour of the heathen gods, were celebrated, with sacrifices, through all the provinces, by Diocletian, at Nicomedia, and by Maximian, at Rome, which shews their attachment to their ancient rites.

## SECTION I.

### *Of the Progress of the Persecution in general.*

EUSEBIUS observes, that the persecution began in the army, before the publication of the edicts which made it general; the officers being obliged to resign their commands, if they would not sacrifice to the heathen gods. Many however, not only resigned their rank in the army upon this occasion, but suffered death; till one of their commanders was deterred from proceeding any farther, by the prodigious numbers who offered themselves to him, as ready to die when they were thus called upon.‡

\* Epiphanius, Her. lxxvi. Opera, l. (P.)

† De Mortibus Persecutorum, C. viii. (P.)

‡ Euseb. Hist. l. viii. C. iv. p. 380. (P.) Lardner, VIII. p. 298.

In the fourteenth year of Diocletian and Maximian, they made a magnificent triumph together at Rome, for their signal success in re-establishing the affairs of the empire; and from this time Diocletian affected to be called *Jovius*, and Maximian *Herculius*, and their pride and arrogance was from this time visibly increased. But it was not till the nineteenth year of Diocletian, when the emperors were established in full power, when the empire had no rebellion within itself, nor any war with its neighbours, that they formed the serious design of extirpating the Christian religion; imagining, it may be presumed, that till this was done, the prosperity of the state could not be said to be stable, the safety and grandeur of the empire being supposed to depend upon the observance of those rites, to which the Romans had been addicted when the empire was established.

It was this idea that misled Trajan, Marcus Antoninus, and other emperors, before Diocletian; and their failure of success in exterminating Christianity did not deter these two from making the attempt; imagining, no doubt, that notwithstanding the great increase of Christians, they were possessed of advantages sufficient to counterbalance that circumstance; and seeing that if the evil, as they thought it, was suffered to proceed much farther, it would be too late to attempt the suppression of it. It is also said, in Eusebius's Life of Constantine, that Apollo was reported to have complained out of a cavern, that his oracles were silent or uncertain, on account of some *just men*; and that on this account the emperor (supposing that by just men must be understood the Christians), was incited to begin the persecution.\*

By the first edict, which was published just before Easter, A. D. 303, at Nicomedia, where Diocletian and Galerius then were, it was ordered, that all christian churches should be demolished to their foundations; that the sacred books of the Christians should be burned; that those Christians who enjoyed any honours should be deprived of them, and that private persons should be reduced to servitude, if they did not renounce Christianity.† No sooner was this edict set up, than a person of considerable rank and intemperate zeal, pulled it down and tore it. Being immediately seized, and put to death by torture, he expressed the greatest composure and joy to his last breath.‡

Not long after appeared another edict, by which all the

\* Euseb. Hist. L. ii. C. i. ii. p. 561. (P.)

† Ibid. L. viii. C. ii. p. 379. (P.) Lardner, VIII. p. 299.

‡ Ibid. C. v. p. 381. (P.) Ibid.

bishops, and the other clergy, were ordered to be committed to prison, and compelled to sacrifice to the heathen gods; \* and this was followed by a third, in which it was ordered, that they who refused to sacrifice, should be exposed to torture. †

With respect to the particulars of this famous persecution, I shall strictly follow Eusebius, who declares, that he relates what passed under his own eyes. He himself, he says, was present when the churches were demolished, and the books of Scripture committed to the flames. In this persecution some of the clergy concealed themselves, others were apprehended and exposed to various insults, many had not fortitude to bear the trial, and many had recourse, as in the preceding persecution, to various artifices, in order to be thought to have sacrificed when they really had not. ‡

When Eusebius proceeds to mention particular cases, he begins with those who suffered in the emperor's household, and says, that Dorotheus, and other youths of the bed-chamber, who had been particularly favoured and esteemed by the emperors, preferred every species of torture to the honours with which they had been invested. § To enable us to judge of what was endured by the rest, he says that one of them, whose name was Peter, being brought before the emperors, and refusing to sacrifice, was first stripped naked, and then cruelly scourged till his bones were laid bare. This having no effect, he was washed with vinegar and salt, and afterwards gradually roasted on a gridiron, persisting in his profession of Christianity to the last. Dorotheus and Gorgonius, with many others who belonged to the palace, after enduring various tortures, were strangled: ¶ and Anthimus, the bishop of Nicomedia, was beheaded. ¶

After this the palace being on fire, and the Christians being said to be the incendiaries, all the Christians in the place were, by the order of the emperors, killed in crowds, together with their families: some by the sword, and others by fire: and upon this occasion many persons of both sexes voluntarily rushed into the flames. Many were thrown bound into the sea, and some who had been interred were taken out of their graves, and thrown into the sea also.

This passed at Nicomedia, at the beginning of the persecution: and when the same orders were carried into Armenia and Syria, an incredible number of persons were thrown

\* Euseb. Hist. l. viii. C. m. p. 379. P. *Lardner*, VIII. p. 500.

+ Ibid. p. 383. P. Ibid.

† Ibid. C. m. vi. p. 379. P.

‡ *Lardner*, VIII. p. 294.

Ibid. Note 'b.

¶ Ibid. p. 502.

into prison, so that those places which used to be occupied by murderers and villains of every species, were now filled with bishops and clergy; and there was no room left for those who were condemned for crimes. It is impossible, he says, to compute the numbers of martyrs in each province, especially in Africa Proper and Mauritania, Thebais and Egypt; and many persons flying from Egypt, were put to death in other provinces.\*

Some of these, Eusebius says, he himself saw exposed to various kinds of torture, and some thrown to wild beasts, at Tyre. On this occasion many of the beasts, he says, would not hurt them, but turned upon those who incited them. He particularly mentions a young man, not twenty years of age, who stood without moving from his place, and holding his hands in the form of a cross, when a wild beast rushing towards him, suddenly retired. A bull being let loose upon five persons, did not hurt any of them, but threw several of their enemies into the air, and tore them. After this, other beasts were let loose upon them; but this not succeeding, they were put to death by the sword, and then thrown into the sea. These were all persons who had fled from Egypt. †

In Egypt itself, Eusebius says, there were men innumerable, with their wives and children, put to death; and that after being made to endure cruel scourgings, and all kinds of torture, dreadful to hear of, they were either thrown into the fire, or drowned. Some cheerfully presented their heads to be struck off, some expired under the torture, and some were famished to death. Others were crucified, some in the manner that is most usual with malefactors, but others in a more cruel way, with their heads downwards, in which posture they were suffered to live till they died of hunger. ‡

But the tortures exercised on the Christians of Thebais exceeded all the rest. Some had their flesh torn with sharp shells till they died; women, half naked, were tied by one foot, with their heads downwards, and suspended upon high machines. Others were put to death by having their limbs torn asunder by branches of trees, to which they had been fastened, while they were bent with great violence, and then suffered to resume their natural position. These tortures were continued not a few days only, or a short space of time, but year after year; and thirty, sixty, or a

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. vi. p. 381. (P.) Lardner, VIII. p. 502.

† Ibid. C. vii. p. 384. (P.) Ibid. p. 300.

‡ Ibid. C. viii. p. 385. (P.) Ibid. p. 303.

hundred men, women and children, were sometimes put to death in different ways on one day. Eusebius himself saw many heaps of those who had been killed in a single day, some beheaded, and others burned. On this occasion the swords of the executioners were blunted or broken, and some being weary, they were succeeded by others.\*

Notwithstanding these cruelties, so great was the ardour of the Christians, that no sooner were some dispatched from the tribunals, than others presented themselves, professing that they were Christians, as Eusebius himself was witness; rejoicing when they heard their sentence pronounced, and singing psalms and hymns to their last breath. Some of these were rich and noble, and others distinguished for their eloquence and their knowledge of philosophy. Of this class was Philoromus, who was a chief magistrate in Alexandria, and had sat as a judge himself, surrounded by guards. Such also was Phileas, bishop of Thumis, a man eminent for philosophy. These two were surrounded by numerous relations and friends, who joined with the judge himself, in entreating them to have compassion on themselves, their wives, and children; but it was without effect, and with the greatest composure they submitted to have their heads struck off. †

From an epistle of this Phileas to a person in Thumis, Eusebius gives an account of the tortures inflicted upon the Christians in Alexandria. In this place, some were killed with clubs, and others in different methods of scourging. Some, with their hands tied behind them, were suspended on large stakes, and then had all their limbs violently stretched by machines. To some the executioners applied the instruments of torture, not to their sides only, which had been usual in the case of murderers, but to all parts of their bodies, their bellies, legs, knees, &c. Some were suspended by one hand to the porticoes, and others on posts, with their faces towards each other, and their feet not touching the ground; and in this posture they were suffered to continue, not only while the judge was speaking to them, but almost the whole day. For while he went to attend others, his ministers remained with the first, to release any who, being overcome by the violence of their sufferings, should retract their confession.

Some were so tortured in the stocks, that they were

\* *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 303—305.

† *Euseb. Hist.* L. viii. C. ix. p. 385. *P.* *Lardner*, III. pp. 352—354.

afterwards unable to stand at all; and many exhibited a more frightful spectacle with their bruises, scars, and distortions, when they were recovered, than they had done during the torture itself. Some expired under the torture, and others in prison afterwards. Some, who with great difficulty had been cured of their wounds and dislocations, being required to choose again, whether they would sacrifice or die, with the greatest cheerfulness chose the latter: mindful, as the writer says, of the command not to worship any God but one. Such is the account of Phileas, written not with a view to discourage those to whom he wrote, but to teach them, by these heroic examples, to make light of any sufferings in so glorious a cause.\*

We have a particular account of two martyrdoms in Africa in this persecution, one of Maximilian, a young man of Teveste, and the other of Felix, bishop of Tubysa, in Numidia.† The former, being chosen to serve in the army, refused, saying that he was a Christian, and that, as such, it was not lawful for him to do it. Being told that there were many Christians who served in the armies of Maximian, Constantius and Maximus, he said that others might do as they thought proper, but that he could not do what he thought to be wrong. Being then sentenced to be beheaded for refusing the military oath, he said, *Thanks be to God*, which seems to have been the answer which the Christians generally returned when they received their sentence.

At the place of execution he exhorted his brother to act as he had done, and desired his father to give the new suit of clothes (which had been prepared for him with a view to his going into the army), to the person who was to perform the office of his executioner. Pomponia, a christian matron, conveyed the body to Carthage and deposited it near that of Cyprian; and dying herself thirteen days after, she was buried with them. The father of Maximilian also gave God thanks for the honour that his son had received, and followed him not long after.

In the eighth consulship of Diocletian, and the seventh of Maximian, an order being issued to burn the sacred books of the Christians,‡ and published at Tubysa in Numidia, Magnilianus, the governor of the city, ordered first some

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. x. p. 388. (P.)

† This account is taken from an ancient MS. and is subjoined to the Oxford edition of the tract ascribed to Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. 1680. (P.)

‡ See an extract from this Edict, *Lardner*, VIII. p. 299.

presbyters, and then Felix, the bishop of the place, to be brought before him; and having recited the imperial edict, he required him to give up the books which belonged to his church that they might be burned. But on his declaring that he would rather give his own body to be burned, he was sent to Carthage to the lieutenant of Anulinus, the proconsul, and giving the same answer there, he was put into the lowest prison, and after being confined there sixteen days, he was brought before Anulinus himself, who sent him to Rome; and thence the prefect of the city sent him, loaded with heavy irons, to the emperor at Nola. Being then brought before the proper judge, and persisting in his refusal to give up the sacred books, he was sentenced to be beheaded. For this he returned God thanks, as was usual; and after being allowed to pray, the sentence was executed on the eighteenth of the calends of February, and his remains were carried by his fellow-christians to Carthage. He was 56 years of age.

In Phrygia there was a town, which, because it consisted wholly of Christians, the magistrates themselves as well as the other inhabitants, (for they had with one voice refused to sacrifice,) was surrounded with soldiers, who set fire to it, and burned it, together with all its inhabitants, men, women and children.\* In this province Adauctus, who had been advanced through all the dignities of the state till he was made procurator, and then held the office of treasurer, suffered martyrdom.†

Here, our historian says, it would be impossible to recite all the sufferings of the christian martyrs, or to describe the various tortures to which they were exposed. In some places they were generally beheaded, as in Arabia; in some they were left to die with their limbs broken, as in Cappadocia; in some they were suspended by the feet, with their heads downwards, and in this situation a fire was made under them till they were suffocated with the smoke, as was done in Mesopotamia; in some places their noses, ears, hands, and other limbs, were cut off, as at Alexandria; in other places they were roasted, but not suffered to die, on a gridiron.‡ Others chose to put their right hands into the fire rather than sacrifice, and some being pursued, threw themselves headlong from high buildings, rather than fall into the hands of their enemies.

\* *Lardner*, VIII. p. 305.

† *Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. xi. p. 590. P.*

‡ "At Antioch, some were broiled on gridirons." *Euseb. See Lardner*, VIII. p. 304

One woman of rank and fortune at Antioch, being apprehended, with two beautiful daughters, who dreaded violation more than any thing else they could suffer, having got leave from the soldiers, to whose custody they had been committed, to withdraw a little, threw themselves into the river, and were drowned. Two other women of the same place, sisters, distinguished by their birth, fortune, and every accomplishment, were thrown into the sea.\*

The sufferings of the martyrs in Pontus, Eusebius says, were particularly frightful. In this province, some had reeds thrust under the nails of all their fingers, some had melted lead poured upon them, and others were tortured in the most horrible manner in their private parts, and their bowels; their judges as it were contending with each other, who should excel the rest in the invention of tortures. At length, being tired with these cruelties, they desisted of themselves from inflicting capital punishments, as if by a special favour of the emperors, and contented themselves with putting out the eyes of some, and laming others, which was the gentlest of their punishments. But it was impossible to give the number of those whose right eyes were first put out, and then had cauteries applied to them, and who were afterwards sent to the brass mines in the province.† These sufferings, the historian says, were borne with such fortitude, as filled the whole world with the highest admiration.

In a separate chapter, Eusebius recites the sufferings of the bishops, and some of the superior clergy. Anthimius, bishop of Nicomedia, as mentioned before, was beheaded. Of the Antiochians, was Lucian a presbyter, a man of exemplary piety, who delivered an apology to the emperors at Nicomedia, and suffered there. In Phœnicia, Tyrannio, bishop of Tyre, and Zenobius, bishop of Sidon, were martyrs; as also Sylvanus, bishop of Emesa, who was thrown to the wild beasts, together with some other persons of the same place. The two others suffered at Antioch, Tyrannio being thrown into the sea, and Zenobius (who was an excellent physician) dying under torture with iron hooks.

Among the clergy of Palestine who were martyrs, was Sylvanus, bishop of Gaza, who, with thirty-nine other persons, was beheaded in the mines of Phœnus. In the same place the Egyptian bishops, Peleus and Nilus, with some other persons, were burned. But none appeared to our

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. xii. p. 391. (P.) † Lardner, VIII. pp. 304, 305

author to deserve a higher commendation than Pamphilus: a presbyter of Cæsarea, of whose sufferings an account will be given in another place.

Of the martyrs among the clergy in Egypt, was Peter, bishop of Alexandria, with the presbyters Dios and Ammonius, and likewise Phileas, Hesycheus, Pachumius, and Theodorus, all bishops of different cities.\* There were also, he says, six hundred others, by no means obscure persons, belonging to different churches in Egypt, the particulars of whose sufferings he leaves to be related by those who were eye-witnesses of them; he himself proposing to give a like particular account of those martyrs, of whose sufferings he himself was a witness, in a separate work, viz. of the martyrs of Palestine.†

This was the first persecution in which, by the orders of government, an attempt was made to destroy the sacred books of the Christians. And Mosheim, with great probability, conjectures that Hierocles, or some other learned Heathen, suggested this measure; and he supposes that many valuable treatises may have been lost in consequence of it. This may have been the case with respect to some books of which there were few copies, or to the original copies of the books of the New Testament: but there were at this time too many copies of the Scriptures (the books which the Christians valued most) for such an order to have any effect.‡ On the contrary, the natural consequence of such a measure would be, that books of value would be concealed with greater care, and more copies would be taken of them than ever.

## SECTION II.

*Of the Conduct of the Heathen Philosophers, and of the first Step that was put to the Persecution.*

IT is remarkable that we have no example of any heathen philosopher pleading in favour of toleration, or expressing any compassion for the sufferings of Christians, in this persecution, or any of the preceding ones. On the contrary, like Marcus Antoninus, who holds a high rank among philosophers, as well as of emperors, they bore the most implacable hatred to the Christians, and rejoiced in every

\* Lardner, VIII. p. 90.

† Euseb. Hist. L. viii. c. xxi. p. 568. P. Lardner, IV. p. 204.

‡ See *Dr. Reb. Christian's* *Tracts*, VIII. pp. 326; 327, 327.

event that was unfavourable to them. For notwithstanding many of the learned Christians retained, or adopted, the principles of Plato, or those of some other philosophers, (some species of philosophy being the most important article of liberal education in those days, and without some knowledge of which no person was considered as having any pretensions to scholarship,) and though by incorporating Platonism with Christianity many of the learned, who gave some attention to the historical evidences of Christianity, were, no doubt, brought to think better of it, and even to embrace it; yet the conduct of all christian teachers was so much the reverse of that of mere philosophers, that they could not but remain hostile to each other.

The Christians not only inculcated doctrines of infinitely more importance than any of the philosophers pretended to, and with an evidence that was level to the plainest capacities, but they took pains to teach the unlearned among the common people, whom the philosophers held in great contempt, as unworthy of their instructions. According to the principles of Christianity, all mankind, without any distinction of high or low, rich or poor, are equally candidates for a happy immortality; and in this great respect, compared to which all other distinctions are of no moment whatever, the meanest slaves are equal to their masters. Before such a system as this, the boasted superiority of philosophers to peasants or mechanics absolutely vanished. They therefore felt their pride mortified, and saw themselves and the science they pretended to, eclipsed by the illiterate among the common people, whom they had so much despised. In this state of mind they consoled themselves with affecting to despise those who despised them; and without demeaning themselves to examine the historical evidence of the facts on which Christianity is founded, they superciliously contented themselves with considering it as a *new thing*, brought into the world by obscure persons, with a crucified malefactor, and some fishermen, at its head, and with saying that it was impossible that such people as these should teach the world any thing new or important.

Besides, the heathen philosophers, how much soever some of them might despise the superstitious rites of their country, universally conformed to them, and promoted the observance of them in others; and many of them were, no doubt, seriously persuaded that things of such venerable antiquity were of a sacred nature, and in some unknown

manner connected with the well-being of states. Being ignorant of true science, and the real laws of nature, philosophers themselves, as they were called, were as superstitious as the lowest of the vulgar, believing in omens, and the power of charms and magic. Of this every age, even so late as that of Julian, in which more good sense might have been expected, furnishes abundant proof. On this account the philosophy of Marcus Antoninus, and of Julian, did not emancipate their minds from the most absurd superstitions, or dispose them to humanity with respect to men who entertained opinions different from theirs, though they were guilty of no offences against society or the state; and they were only the more provoked to find them to be such men as a regard to God and conscience rendered superior to their threats.

The first stop that was put to this cruel persecution was the effect of a superstition, similar to that which had occasioned it. Galerius Maximian, by whose instigation the measure had been adopted, being seized with a dreadful ulcer in his anus, which affected all the neighbouring parts, and almost his whole body (so that it bred worms, and the stench of it was so offensive as to be insupportable to his nearest domestics) having found the aid of his physicians, and also his prayers and his sacrifices to the heathen gods, unavailable, at length published a rescript in favour of the Christians, A. D. 311.

In this rescript we see the true principle of the persecutions, viz. that it was intended to restore the ancient rites, in order to establish the prosperity of the state. We likewise see in it a confession of an inability to succeed in that measure, notwithstanding all the violence with which it had been carried on, and that though some had been induced to abandon Christianity, they did not therefore become worshippers of the heathen gods, but threw aside all regard to religion. On these accounts the emperor abandoned the measure, and he endeavoured to do it in such a manner as to gain some credit for his clemency. Withal he entertained some hope that when all other help failed, he might be relieved by the God of the Christians, whom he desired to intercede for him. As this rescript is most curious and important, I shall give nearly the whole of it in the translation of Dr. Lardner.

“The emperor Caesar Galerius Valerius Maximian, invincible, august, High-Priest, to the people of the province. Among other things which we have ordered with a view

to the benefit and prosperity of the public, we did indeed formerly strive to correct all things according to the ancient laws, and established constitution of the Romans: and among other things, that the Christians who had forsaken the religion of their ancestors, should return to a right mind: forasmuch as by some means such an obstinacy had seized them, and such was their folly, that they followed not the institutions of the ancients, which possibly some of their ancestors had appointed; but according to their own fancy, and just as they pleased, they made laws for themselves, to be observed and followed by them, and in many places they drew over multitudes of people to follow their customs. Wherefore, when after we had published our edict, that they should return to the institutions of the ancients, many have been exposed to danger, and many have been greatly afflicted, and have undergone various kinds of deaths; and forasmuch as great multitudes persist in their opinions, and we have perceived that they give not due worship and reverence to the immortal gods, nor yet worship the God of the Christians; We, duly considering our accustomed mildness and humanity, with which we are wont to dispense pardon to all men, have thought proper readily to hold forth to them our indulgence, that they may at length be Christians, and that they may re-build the houses in which they have been used to assemble, provided they do nothing contrary to good government. By another letter we shall make known our pleasure to the judges, for the direction of their conduct. Wherefore, agreeably to this our indulgence, they ought to pray to their God for our welfare, and for that of the public, and for their own; that on all sides the public may be preserved in safety, and they may live securely in their own habitations.”\*

This edict, which was published at Nicomedia on the last day of April, A. D. 311, did not proceed from any remorse of conscience, to which Eusebius ascribes it, but, as Mosheim justly observes, it was suggested by superstition, and we may add by despair of gaining his object. Maximian did not long survive this edict; and its beneficial effects, as Eusebius observes, were not universal. For Maximin, who ruled in the East, not approving of it, did not publish it in the proper forms, but only mentioned it to some of the governors, as they did to others.† However

\* *Heathen Test.* III. p. 296. (P.) *Works*, VIII. pp. 506, 507.

† *Euseb. Hist.* L. ix. C. i. p. 439. (P.) *Lardner*, VIII. p. 5.3

Sabinus, the prætorian prefect, wrote to all the governors of provinces, signifying that, since it had been found impossible to reduce the Christians by any means to the obedience of the laws, they should not be any more molested. On this the persecution ceased, the Christians were restored to their churches, and those who had been condemned to the mines were set at liberty.\*

### SECTION III.

#### *The Renewal of the Persecution, and the final Cessation of it.*

THIS favourable state of things did not continue more than six months. And as a pretence for resuming the persecution, Maximin, who had been created Cæsar in A. D. 306, and who governed in the East, procured formal applications to be made to him from Antioch and other cities, requesting that no Christians might be permitted to reside in them. His chief agent in this business at Antioch was Theotecnus, a bitter and crafty enemy of the Christians, who had consecrated a statue to Jupiter Philius, and who pretended that it had given out an oracle to this purpose.† The emperor readily complied with the prayers which he himself had suggested, and the heathen rites being restored with great zeal in all places, the persecution of the Christians was resumed.‡

Eusebius then relates a singular contrivance of the Heathens to discredit Christianity. They published fictitious Memoirs of Pilate, and distributed copies of them through all the provinces subject to Maximin, with orders that they should be taught to children in the schools. Also some women of Damascus were prevailed upon by threats, to give evidence that the Christians of that city were guilty of those abominable actions, which had so often been laid to their charge. These allegations were likewise added to the Memoirs, and by order of the prince they were likewise published in all places.§ Some of the persons who had been most active in procuring these allegations, afterwards laid violent hands upon themselves.

The persecution being thus resumed, three persons, who confessed that they were Christians, at Emesa, (one of them

\* Euseb. Hist. L. ix. C. i. p. 440. (P.) Lardner, VIII. p. 312.

† Ibid. C. iii. p. 442. (P.) Ibid.

‡ Ibid. C. iv. p. 442. (P.) Ibid. p. 316.

§ Ibid. C. v. p. 443. (P.) Ibid. p. 313.

Sylvanus, who had been bishop of the place forty years,) were thrown to the wild beasts. At the same time Peter, who had with great reputation been bishop of Alexandria, was, by the especial order of Maximin, beheaded; and in the same manner were other Egyptian bishops put to death. And Lucian, a presbyter of Antioch, mentioned before, (the same who is said to have been at the head of the Unitarians there,) being carried to Nicomedia, where Maximin then was, was put to death in prison.\* The rescripts of the emperors against the Christians were also, by order of Maximin, engraved on brass, and set up in the cities, which had never been done before; and they were read in the schools along with the Memoirs of Pilate above-mentioned. †

A copy of this emperor's rescript, addressed to the people of Tyre, with respect to what they had decreed against the Christians, is given by Eusebius from the table of brass on which it was engraved; and as it shews the true spirit of Heathenism more distinctly than any other public monument of the kind, I shall give nearly the whole of it in the translation of Dr. Lardner.

“ Now, at length, the impudent confidence of men, having once shaken off the dark mists of error and ignorance, which for a while blinded the minds of men, rather miserable than wicked, may discern that the world is governed by the indulgent providence of the immortal gods. It is impossible to say how grateful, how delightful, how acceptable, your pious resolution for the honour of the gods has been to us. Nor was it before unknown to any, how great is your respect and veneration for the gods, which have been manifested not by vain words only, but also by great works; upon which account your city may be deservedly stiled the seat and habitation of the immortal gods; and it is evident by many proofs, that she flourisheth by the advent and presence of the heavenly deities. And now your city, negligent of your own particular interests, and no longer sending to me the requests which you formerly were wont to send, conducive to your own prosperity; when it perceived that the promoters of the detestable vanity began to creep abroad again, and that, like fire carelessly raked up, it broke out again with redoubled violence, immediately, without delay, you had recourse to our piety, as the metropolis of all religion, requesting redress and assistance. Nor can it be doubted that

\* Euseb Hist. l. ix. c. vi. p. 241. (P)

† Lardner, VIII. p. 311.

this wholesome design has been put into your minds by the immortal gods, for the sake of your pious regard for them. The most high and most mighty Jupiter, who presides in your famous city, who preserves your country gods, your wives, your children, your families and houses, from destruction, has suggested this petition to you. He it is who has breathed into your minds this salutary resolution, evidently shewing how excellent and noble and profitable it is to worship him, and to perform the sacred rites and ceremonies of the immortal gods with due veneration. Who can be so void of all sense and reason, as not to know, that it is owing to the propitious favour and bounty of the gods towards us, that the earth does not neglect to restore to us the seeds committed to it, that the hope of the husbandman is not disappointed, that the aspect of destructive war is not immoveably fixed on the earth, that our bodies are not destroyed by the intemperance of the air, that the sea is not perpetually tossed and made to overflow with stormy winds. and that the earth, the mother and nurse of all things, is not rent asunder by agitations within its own bowels, and mountains swallowed up by vast and unexpected scissures? There is no man that does not know that all these, and worse calamities, have heretofore often happened; and they have befallen us because of the pernicious error, and empty vanity. of those execrable men, which has so spread as to cover almost the whole earth with shame and dishonour." Then after some other things, he adds,

"Let men now look into the open fields, and see the flourishing corn waving its full ears; let them see the meadows bedecked with plants and flowers, they having been watered with seasonable rain; let them observe the calm and agreeable temperance of the air; let all men, therefore, henceforth rejoice, that by your piety and respect for the sacred rites of religion, the deity of the most valiant and most potent Mars has been appeased, and that they may now securely enjoy the benefits of a profound and delightful peace. As many as have forsaken that blind error, and intricate maze of vanity, and are returned to a right and sound mind. let them rejoice abundantly, as men delivered from a dangerous tempest, or a grievous disease, and who have now before them the prospect of a pleasant and comfortable life for time to come. But if any still persist in their vain and detestable folly, let them be expelled far away from your city and country, as you have desired, that thus, conformably to your laudable care in this matter, your city being purged

from all defilement and wickedness, you may, according to your own genuine disposition, with all due veneration and solemnity, perform the sacred rites of the immortal gods. And that you may know how grateful this your petition has been to me, and that, without decrees and without petitions, I am of myself forward to encourage well-disposed minds, we permit you to ask the greatest benefit you can ask, as a reward for so religious a purpose. Take care that you ask immediately, and that you receive what you ask; for you shall obtain it without delay. Which benefit, bestowed upon your city, shall be henceforward, throughout all time, a monument of your devout piety for the immortal gods, and shall declare to your children and posterity, that you have received from our hands a recompense of your love and virtue.”\*

We here see all kinds of temporal prosperity most confidently ascribed to the influence of the heathen gods, in consequence of the observance of the ancient rites; and, on the other hand, every species of temporal calamity is ascribed to the neglect of those rites, in consequence of the general spread of Christianity, which is here clearly acknowledged and grievously lamented. This rescript, Eusebius says, was fixed up on pillars in every province, so as to take from the Christians, as far as the power of man could go, all hope of a favourable turn to their affairs.

We have seen an inscription in honour of Nero, as having extirpated Christianity out of Spain.† Two inscriptions have also been discovered, which ascribe the same success to Diocletian, Maximian and Galerius, expressing that “the name of the Christians, who had overturned the state, was extinguished.”‡ How easy is it to flatter princes with accomplishing what is above their power! So far was this persecution, notwithstanding its long continuance and severity, from extirpating Christianity, that it was the means of giving it a firmer establishment than ever it had before, and of extending the bounds of it. The constancy of the martyrs could not but astonish many of the Heathens, and it convinced great numbers, that so remarkable an effect, a thing unknown to the world before, must have some solid cause. This would lead them to inquire into the nature and evidence of Christianity, and the consequence of this with respect to great numbers was a persuasion of its truth. Many of the

\* *Testimonies*, III. p. 306. (P.) Works, VIII. pp. 314, 315.

† See Vol. IV. p. 542, Note (†), and *Lardner*, VII. p. 248.

‡ *Test.* II. p. 321. (P.) “*Nomine Christianorum Deleto, Qui Remp. Evertant.*” *Gruter*, p. 280, in *Lardner*, VIII. p. 325.

persecuted Christians also fled into distant countries, and by this means carried the knowledge of Christianity whither it would not otherwise have reached so soon. However, while the emperor's servants were executing their orders in the provinces, and the Christians despaired of all aid, the tyrant was curbed, and the most unexpected relief was afforded them.\*

As if it had been the design of Providence to contradict the vain pretensions of Maximin, with respect to the uninterrupted prosperity which he confidently expected from the restoration of the rites of the heathen worship, there presently followed a total failure of the usual quantity of rain, to which succeeded a famine, attended, as usual, by a dreadful pestilence, the effects of which are particularly described by Eusebius. Maximin was also worsted in a war which he carried on against the Armenians, who were generally Christians, and whom he had endeavoured to bring back by force to the worship of the heathen gods. In the ravages of this pestilence the Christians were distinguished by their care of the sick, and the burial of the dead, as they have been observed to be on a former occasion; while the Heathens shamefully neglected these duties; and this, being observed, operated greatly in favour of Christianity, as the religion which alone could inspire such humanity and courage.†

Soon after these events arrived the news of the defeat of Maxentius, by Constantine and Licinius, and their rescript in favour of the Christians; giving to them, and to all the subjects of the empire, a complete toleration with respect to every thing relating to religion, and restoring to them their places of public worship, and all the possessions of which they had been deprived in the course of the late persecution. Maximin, finding himself unable to oppose them, and reduced to the necessity of complying with their measures, now published a rescript of his own, by which he exempted all Christians from punishment, but without expressly permitting them to rebuild their churches, or to resume their public worship. The Christians, therefore, apprehending such a change in his conduct as had taken place before, put no confidence in his promises, which were evidently the effect of compulsion.‡

After this, Maximin made war upon Licinius, and being

\* Euseb. Hist. l. viii. c. vii. p. 417. P. Lardner, VIII. p. 316.

† Ibid. c. viii. p. 418. P. See the conduct of Cyprian during a pestilence in 252, Lardner, III. p. 138.

‡ Ibid. c. ix. p. 419. P. Lardner, VIII. pp. 317, 318.

worsted in it, he first of all put to death the priests and prophets of the heathen gods, by whose vain promises he had undertaken the war, as if they had been conjurors and traitors; and then giving glory, as Eusebius says, to the God of the Christians, he published an unexceptionable rescript in their favour, giving them entire liberty to rebuild their churches, and restoring to them whatever lands, or other property, had been confiscated. Soon after this he died of a grievous disease.\* But Lactantius says, that he was seized with this disease before the publication of this last edict, and that he implored the forgiveness of the Christians, praying for relief from his distemper. †

Maximin being dead, A. D. 314, he was declared to be a public enemy, in consequence of which his statues were every where thrown down, and those who had taken his part, and who had been his chief instruments in the persecution of the Christians, were put to death. Among these was Picentius, for whom he had had a particular friendship, and Caledonus, who had distinguished himself by the unbounded slaughter of the Christians in Egypt. Theotecnus also was put to death, after being first tortured, together with those priests and prophets of Antioch who had been so active in the business of the image and oracle above-mentioned. The children of Maximin also, and his favourites in general, were put to death. ‡

Thus ended this great persecution, till it was revived for a short time by Licinius, A. D. 316. On his undertaking to contend for the empire with Constantine, knowing that the Christians would take the part of his rival, he hoped, no doubt, to secure the attachment of the Heathens, (who in the time of the late persecution were by much the majority of the subjects of the empire,) by shewing himself hostile to Christianity. He began with expelling all Christians from his own family. In the next place he deprived them of all the military honours they had enjoyed in the cities. He then contrived to cut off several of the more eminent bishops, on other pretences than their being Christians; and he expressly forbade their assembling in synods. § Some churches in Pontus he shut up, and others he levelled with the ground, on the pretence that it was more favourable to health for

\* *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 323—325.

† *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, C. xlix. p. 90. (P.)

‡ Euseb. Hist. L. ix. C. xi. p. 459. (P.) The heads of Maximin and his son were sent to Rome. *Crevier's Hist.* 1761, VIII. pp. 401—404.

§ *Vita Const.* L. i. C. li. p. 527. (P.)

such crowds of people to assemble in the open air. He more expressly forbade any women to frequent the places of worship, ordering that they should be instructed by other women at home. He then proceeded to confiscate the goods of Christians; and lastly, threatened them with death. At the same time he strictly forbade any persons affording the least relief or assistance to those who should be confined in prison, under the penalty of being subject to the same punishment themselves.

The governors of provinces, seeing the disposition of their master, subjected the bishops to the same punishments with the greatest miscreants, and some were even cut into small pieces and given for food to feed fishes.\* On this the Christians began to flee once more, and, as Eusebius says, the fields and solitudes, the mountains and the forests, received them.† Licinius was proceeding to the greatest extremities in this persecution, when his course was cut short by the victories of Constantine over him.‡

## SECTION IV.

### *Of the Martyrs of Palestine.*

THAT we may be able to form a clearer idea of the cruelty and extent of this persecution, I shall give a separate account of the martyrs of Palestine, from a particular tract of Eusebius, subjoined to his eighth book of Ecclesiastical History.§ The truth of the facts cannot be questioned, as the author was in the country at the time, and wrote from his own knowledge.

The first of these martyrs was Procopius of Cæsarea, who was beheaded on the seventh of the ides of June, in the first year of the persecution. After him many other clergy of the same province suffered with great constancy. Not a few, however, found their courage fail them. The rest were tortured in various ways; and some were saved by the bystanders crying out, that they had sacrificed, though they really had not. And though one of them shouted out that

\* Thus a Roman citizen, in earlier times, was said to have disposed of his refractory slaves. See Vol. II. p. 217, Note \*. It is remarkable that this inhuman slave-master was a *freed-man*. See *Creever*, I. p. 131.

† Hist. L. x. C. viii. p. 189, &c. *Vita Const.* L. i. C. li. lii. liii. p. 527. L. ii. C. i. ii. p. 535. (P.)

‡ “In 325, Licinius was put to death at Thessalonica, after that Constantine had reduced him to a private condition, and promised him his life.” *Lardner*, IV. p. 17. See *Creever*, X. pp. 95—100.

§ See *Lardner*, IV. p. 264.

he had not sacrificed, he was not allowed to be heard; of so great account did they make it to induce persons to apostatize, or make it believed that they had done so. In consequence of this, out of a considerable number who were accused at one particular time, only two, Alpheus and Zaccheus, suffered; but they bore various modes of torture, confessing all the while that there was but one God and one King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and were then beheaded. This was on the fifteenth of the calends of December.\*

On the same day suffered Romanus, a deacon of Cæsarea, at Antioch. That was the day on which the churches were demolished. Seeing the people going in crowds to sacrifice, he was moved with zeal, and could not forbear upbraiding them for their conduct. On this he was seized, and being threatened with fire, heard the sentence with a serene and cheerful countenance; then being tied to the stake, and the fuel heaped about him, while the officers were waiting for the orders of the emperor, who was present, he himself called for the fire. This being noticed, he was carried before the emperor, and there his tongue was cut out, himself presenting it for the purpose. After this he was thrown into prison, where he was cruelly tortured in the stocks, and then strangled. This was in the first year of the persecution, which extended to the bishops and clergy only.†

In the second year the persecution extended to persons of every description, and in this year it was that Timotheus, having borne every kind of torture, was consumed by a slow fire at Gaza, as was mentioned before. At the same time Agapius and Thecla were sentenced to be thrown to the wild beasts, and while the people were exulting in the idea of this spectacle, six young men, Timolaus of Pontus, Dionysius of Tripolis, Romulus, a sub-deacon of the church of Diospolis, two Egyptians, Paucis and Alexander, and also another Alexander of Gaza, having first caused their own hands to be tied, as ready for martyrdom, went altogether to Urbanus, the governor, who was then going into the amphitheatre, acknowledging themselves to be Christians, and shewing that they were not afraid of the wild beasts. The governor and his companions, being astonished at this, ordered them to prison. A few days after, being joined by Agapius, who had borne various kinds of torture, and by Dionysius, who had supplied them

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. 1. p. 407. (P.)

† Ibid. C. ii. p. 109. (P.)

with necessaries, they were all beheaded together at Cæsarea, the ninth of the calends of April.

At this time Diocletian and Maximian resigned the empire, after which followed several wars, which terminated in the settlement of the empire under Constantine; but, in the mean time, Maximin being advanced to the empire, and governing in the East, the persecution raged with more violence than before: and when the people were dispersed in crowds, and flying where they could for safety, Apphianus, who was not twenty years old, and of an opulent family of Berytus, distinguished himself in an eminent manner by his courage and constancy. On becoming a Christian he had left his relations, who continued Heathens, and came to Cæsarea, where he became intimately acquainted with Eusebius, and lived in the same house with him. This person, without communicating his design to any one, went of his own accord to Urbanus, and would have dissuaded him from sacrificing; but being seized by the guards, and cruelly beaten, he was thrown into prison, and being there tortured, he was brought before the governor. There, refusing to sacrifice, his flesh was torn to the very bones and bowels, and moreover so bruised by being beaten with leaden balls, that they who were the best acquainted with him could not know him. Not yielding at this torture, lint moistened with oil was put round his feet, and fire being set to it, the flesh was burned to the very bones. He was then remanded to prison, and three days after thrown into the sea. This was on the fourth of the nones of April.\*

About the same time a youth of the name of Ulpian, after being cruelly beaten, was put into a bag, together with a dog and a serpent, and then thrown into the sea. Ædesius, the brother of Apphianus, after enduring various tortures, was condemned to the mines of Palestine. But having by some means or other got his liberty, he went to Alexandria, and there seeing the governor insulting and abusing some Christians, in a shocking manner, he went to him, and behaving much in the same manner as his brother had done before him, he was exposed to various kinds of torture, and then thrown into the sea.†

In the fourth year of the persecution, on the twelfth of the calends of December, it being the birth-day of Maximin, splendid games were exhibited in his presence; and then

\* Euseb. Hist. l. viii. c. xv. p. 416. (P.)

† Ibid. c. xv. p. 416. (P.)

Agapius, who was mentioned before, as having been sentenced together with Thecla to be thrown to the wild beasts, was brought before the emperor, along with a slave who was said to have murdered his master. This slave had his life granted him, and the clemency of the emperor was greatly extolled by the mob; but Agapius, refusing his liberty on the terms of renouncing his religion, was first of all thrown into the way of an enraged she-bear, which he met of his own accord; and, then, after being torn by her, before he was quite dead he was carried back to prison, and the day following he was thrown into the sea, with stones fastened to his legs.\*

In the fifth year of the persecution, on the fourth of the nones of April, being Sunday, Theodosia, a young woman of Tyre, not eighteen years old, being at Cæsarea, went to some persons who were then acknowledging themselves to be Christians in the presence of the governor, probably to ask their prayers after their martyrdom, which was no uncommon thing at that time. Being noticed and presented to the governor, he first insulted her in the grossest manner, and then ordered her sides and breasts to be torn with iron hooks to the very bones; and while she yet breathed, preserving a serene and placid countenance, she was thrown into the sea. After this the governor, turning to the other confessors, ordered them to be sent to the mines of Phænus in Palestine.

On the nones of November, Sylvanus, then a presbyter and confessor, but afterwards a bishop, was condemned to the same mines, the joints of his feet being first disabled with hot irons. At the same time Domnius, a person distinguished by many confessions, was sentenced to be burned alive. The same cruel governor ordered three to fight as gladiators; a venerable old man, Auxentius, to be thrown to the wild beasts; and some persons of middle age to be first castrated, and then sent to the mines.

Others, after enduring cruel tortures, the same governor threw into prison, and among these was the excellent Pamphilus, to whom Eusebius was so much attached. The governor having heard of his character, expected to see a specimen of his eloquence and philosophy; but on his refusing to sacrifice, he was so much enraged, that he ordered him to be subjected to the greatest torture, and not yielding to it, though his sides were torn with the iron hooks, he was

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. vi. p. 417. P.

thrown into prison together with the rest.\* Eusebius observes, that not long after, this very governor, who had been in the highest favour with Maximin, was publicly disgraced by him, and then condemned to lose his head.†

In the sixth year of the persecution, ninety-seven men, with women and children, were sent from Porphyrites in Egypt into Palestine, where Firmilian, the governor who had succeeded Urbanus, ordered the joints and sinews of their left feet to be destroyed by fire, their right eyes to be dug out, and the sockets to be burned with a hot iron. Then he sent them to the mines, together with those who had been condemned to serve as gladiators, but who had refused to learn their proper exercises. These had been brought before Maximin himself, and, after having been tortured with hunger and scourging, had been condemned to this second punishment.

After these, others who had been apprehended at Gaza, in a meeting where the Scriptures were read, were treated in the same manner, with those from Egypt, with respect to their feet and eyes, and some had their sides torn besides. Of these, one woman, who reproached her judge for threatening her with violation, was first scourged, and when she was placed on the engine of torture, and they were tearing her sides with the hooks, another woman exclaimed against their proceedings, and asked how they could torture her sister in that manner. This so provoked the judge, that he ordered her to be seized, and on her refusing to sacrifice, she was instantly exposed to greater torture than any before her; and after that, both the women were burnt together. One of them was born in the neighbourhood of Gaza, and the other, who was called Valentina, was of Casarea.

Presently after followed the execution of Paulus, who being indulged with leave to pray before he was beheaded.

\* *Lardner*, III. pp. 338, 339, &c. See also "Reflections suggested by the Character of Pamphilus of Casarea," in *Miscel. Phil. Med. and Moral*, 1789, pp. 171—175. The ingenious author, Mr. Thomas Christie, with whom I was acquainted, and whom I mentioned, Vol. II. p. 75, Note, says of Pamphilus, p. 180, "At the contemplation of his character, even the cool imagination of the *First of Sacred Critics* is warmed, and for a moment excellent *Lardner*, forgetting the calm and uniform tenor of his learned researches, breaks out with Horace into a '*Quando reverentis patrem?*' Where can such a man as this be found in the heathen world? How rare were such examples, under the Mosaic institution, of men who employed their whole time in improving their own minds, and serving others, without noise and ostentation, and without worldly views; and, at last, quietly resigned their lives, rather than disown the principles by which they had hitherto been conducted and supported." See *Lardner*, III. p. 348.

† Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. xii. p. 415. P.

prayed aloud, first for the peace of the whole Christian church, and then for the conversion of the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles, that they might be brought to the knowledge of the true God. He prayed more especially for the company present, for the judge who had condemned him, for the emperors, and for his executioners, that what they were going to do might not be imputed to them. All were much affected by this prayer, but notwithstanding this, he was beheaded according to his sentence. This was on the eighth of the calends of August. Presently after, one hundred and eighty more were brought from Egypt, and being first maimed, as the others from the same country had been before, in their left feet and right eyes, were sent, by the orders of Maximin, some to the mines of Palestine, and others to those of Cilicia.\*

After this there was a little respite of the persecution, but it was soon renewed with as much violence as ever, fresh orders being given by Maximin to all the governors of provinces, and other officers, to restore the heathen temples, and to compel all persons, men, women, slaves and children, to sacrifice. Orders were also given that every thing that was sold in the market should be consecrated by libations, and that all who came to the public baths should be compelled by the guards to perform the customary rites. This appeared extravagant and unreasonable even to the Heathens themselves, so that no person would accuse any of the Christians. But they were forward, as usual, to declare themselves.

Three in particular went together to the president as he was sacrificing, entreating him to desist, and to worship the Creator of the world. On this, finding that they were Christians, he ordered them to be executed, but without previous torture. This was on the thirteenth of the ides of November. At the same time a young woman of the name of Emmathas, being brought before the judge, was first dragged in a cruel manner through the city, naked to the waist, and beaten with thongs, after which she was burned alive. This president, Firmilian, forbade the burial of the martyrs, and had them watched night and day for that purpose; so that the dogs being permitted to tear them, and drag them about, the whole city was full of bones and entrails, a horrid spectacle to every body.

The following month, on the fourteenth of the calends of

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. viii. p. 120. (P.)

January, some Egyptians, who had been sent to perform some kind offices to their countrymen, who had been mutilated, and sent to the mines of Cilicia, were seized at the gates of Cæsarea; and some of them were treated in the same manner as those whom they came to relieve, being lamed in one foot, and having their right eyes put out; but three of them, being sent to Ascalon, suffered in a different manner, two of them being beheaded and one burned alive. On the third of the ides of January, Petrus Apselamus, being exhorted by his judges to consider his youth, but preserving his constancy, was burned in the same fire with Asclepius, a Marcionite, whose zeal, says our author, was not according to knowledge.\* But did not this man die for the very same truth for which the rest suffered, viz. as a Christian, without any regard to his particular opinions with respect to Christianity? Such is the lamentable prejudice of some Christians, that they can allow no merit except to those of their own way of thinking.

Our author next proceeds to give a more particular account of the sufferings of his dear Pamphilus, a man distinguished by every virtue; his indifference to the world, his charity to the poor, his attachment to philosophy, and especially his study of the Scriptures, to whose life Eusebius devoted three entire books.† He then gives an account of his eleven companions in tribulation, among whom was Valens, an old man, a deacon of the church of Jerusalem, who greatly excelled in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and Paulus, who had been tortured before. When these three had been confined two years, they were joined by five Egyptians, who had been sent to visit their brethren in Cilicia, and, like the former, had been apprehended at the gates of Cæsarea, and the next day, which was the fourteenth of the calends of March, they were brought before the judge, together with Pamphilus and his friends.

At first the judge attempted to shake the fortitude of these Egyptians, by various kinds of torture; but this having no effect, they were sentenced to die. Then Pamphilus and his friends, being asked whether they would at length obey the emperor, and refusing to do it, were likewise ordered for execution. On this, one Porphyrius, a young man of the family of Pamphilus, called out of the

\* Euseb. Hist. l. viii. c. x. p. 426. (P.)

† "That work, to our great grief, is lost; but there is a passage of it in Jerome's *Cardian*. See the passage, III. p. 279.

crowd, begging that he might be permitted to bury his master. But the judge, finding him to be a Christian, ordered him to be tortured in the most execruciating manner; and when he expressed no sense of pain, he ordered him to be thrown into a large pile of fire; and thus he died before his master. The fate of this Porphyrius was told to Pamphilus by one Seleucus, a confessor, and who had been a soldier. This being observed, he also was carried to the president, and by him ordered to be executed.

After this Theodulus, a venerable old man, of the governor's own family, and who had been much esteemed by him on account of his faithful services, behaving as Seleucus had done, his master was more enraged at him than at any of the rest, so that he sentenced him to be crucified. The last of the twelve was Julianus, of Cappadocia, who hearing of the execution of these martyrs, ran to see it, and seeing their bodies on the ground, he, out of respect, kissed them. This being observed, he was brought to Firmilian, who ordered him to be burned alive, a sentence for which he gave God thanks. The bodies of all these twelve were watched four days and nights, that they might be devoured by wild beasts; but as they lay all that time untouched, they were ordered to be buried. While the case of these twelve martyrs was much talked of, Adrian and Eubulus, of Manganese, came to Cæsarea to see the other confessors; but being there apprehended, they were first tortured, and then sentenced to be thrown to the wild beasts. Two days after this, viz. the third of the nones of March, Adrian was exposed to a lion, and then run through with a sword; and on the nones of March, Eubulus was treated in the same manner. This closes the account of those who suffered martyrdom in Cæsarea only. Some time after, this governor, Firmilian, was himself beheaded.\*

Here our author says he might relate the degradation of some bishops and clergy to the servile offices of taking care of the emperor's camels and horses, &c., and the torturing of others by the governors of provinces, to make them discover the treasures of their churches; and also some things of a different nature, and less honourable to the Christians, especially their shameful dissensions among themselves in the very time of the persecution, referring to the Meletians, and the Donatists, of whom an account will be given hereafter; but he apologises for not entering

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. xi. p. 427. (P.) See *supra*, p. 230

into these particulars,\* and proceeds to give an account of the seventh year of the persecution, in which it was greatly relaxed through all Palestine, there being none to accuse the Christians. A great multitude of the confessors, having been condemned to the brass mines in that country; they had been indulged with great liberty, so that they formed themselves into regular churches. But the emperor, being informed of this by the governor of the province, gave orders that they should be divided into different companies, and in consequence of this, some were sent to Cyprus, others to mount Libanus, and the rest to different parts of the country, to be employed in different works. But four of the most distinguished among them were selected, and brought before the military commander of the place. Two of these, viz. Peleus and Nilus, had been bishops in Egypt, the third, supposed to be Helias, was a presbyter, and the fourth Paternuthius, a man eminent for his benevolence. All these, refusing to renounce their religion, were condemned to the flames.

Others, who, on account of their age or infirmity, were incapable of working, were sent to live in the country, at a distance from the rest. The chief of these was Sylvanus, bishop of Gaza, famous for his confessions from the beginning of the persecution to the end of it. There accompanied him several Egyptians, and among them one John, who had a most excellent memory, being able to repeat all the Scriptures by heart; so that when he was reciting *memoriter* in the public congregation, Eusebius, who was present, thought that he had been reading. Though he had been lamed and deprived of his eyes, he still enjoyed his memory. At length these mutilated and blind confessors, to the number of thirty-eight, were, by the order of Maximin, beheaded in one day, and this closed the persecution in Palestine, where it had raged eight years.†

This persecution was most severely felt in the East, as Lybia, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and thence to Illyricum. In the West, the Christians were more favourably treated. Constantius contented himself with demolishing their churches, and, in compliance with the disposition of his colleagues, he could not do less.‡ According to Eusebius, he did not even do this.§

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. xii. p. 434. (P.) † Ibid. C. xiii. p. 455. (P.)  
 ‡ De Mortibus Persecutorum, C. xv. p. 29. (P.)  
 § Hist. L. viii. C. xiii. p. 396. (P.)

## SECTION V.

*Of some Martyrdoms, the Accounts of which, though Ancient, are mixed with Fable, viz. that of Boniface, and those of Turachus, Probus and Andronicus.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the mixture of fable in the histories of the martyrdoms, which I shall relate in this Section, yet, as it can hardly be doubted but that they had a foundation in truth, I do not think it right wholly to omit them. But I shall not trouble the reader with all the fabulous circumstances with which they are mixed. Besides, it is no less instructive to us at this day to see the faults, than the virtues of the primitive Christians; and no fair writer has any motive to conceal them.

According to Eusebius, and the most authentic historians, Christians soon laid an undue stress upon martyrdom, as if the mere suffering for Christianity, independently of the temper of mind with which a man had lived, or with which he died, would certainly recommend him to God, and even give him a rank and influence in another world to which nothing else could raise men. Some of the martyrs themselves had the same ideas, and were led by them to a very improper conduct before their deaths, in their behaviour to the magistrates, and in the church, if they survived such sufferings as entitled them to the name of *martyrs*.

Christianity is no more answerable for this than for any other abuse of its doctrines or institutions. It was proposed to persons in all states of mind, and was embraced by many whose discordant principles and maxims it could not always eradicate, and therefore was held, together with them. Now, nothing had got faster hold on the minds of all men at the time of the promulgation of Christianity, than the notion of the efficacy of certain actions, independently of any temper of mind with which they were performed, to recommend them to the favour, and to secure the protection of the gods, those invisible powers by which the world is governed. With this view they had been used to do, and to suffer, the most extraordinary things, and had inflicted upon themselves, as well as upon others, the greatest cruelties. We see in the Fakirs of Indostan, and the tortures which the people of Mexico voluntarily endured, that this idea was not peculiar to the old world, but that it is general to the

same ignorance of the real causes of things, and of the nature of God, at all times.

Those, therefore, who make due allowance for the operation of foreign influence upon the human mind, will not be surprised, or offended, at a great mixture of similar superstition among Christians, who had been Heathens. They ascribed to the water of baptism a virtue similar to that of their former rites of purification, to the Lord's supper that of their mystical initiations, and to martyrdom that of those severities which the Heathens had sometimes been used to exercise upon themselves.

Also, the natural effect of having entertained these ideas of the value of suffering, and the high rank it gave to the sufferers, would lead some of the martyrs to behave with that contempt of pain, and that insolence towards those who inflicted it, which is very unbecoming Christians. There can be no true propriety of behaviour without just sentiments. In all other cases an abatement is to be made for the undue influence of superstition, or such motives as are foreign to true religion. On this account the heroism of Christ, and that of the early martyrs, is as much superior to that of many in the later ages, as pure Christianity is superior to that debased kind of it which possessed the minds of many of those who came after them.

Christ and the apostles had no superstition, that is, they did not connect the favour of God with any thing besides a good disposition of mind, and that upright conduct in life which springs from it; and therefore they considered martyrdom, simply as an act of obedience to the will of God, which requires that, in all events, we adhere to truth and a good conscience, from the persuasion that, if we have not our recompense in this world, we shall certainly find it in another. They did not teach men to rush upon persecution, but rather prudently, though with innocence, to avoid it; and Paul expressly says, that though he should give his body to be burned, it would avail him nothing without charity, or a principle of benevolence.

On the contrary, it cannot be denied that some of the martyrs exposed themselves to torture and death, from the idea that the mere suffering in that cause would cancel all their crimes, and entitle them to the most distinguished place in heaven, for which it is possible that their real dispositions would very little contribute to qualify them. However, the fortitude with which they died in this cause adds

to the evidence of Christianity, as it is a proof of such a general persuasion concerning its truth, as could never have been produced, I do not say in the minds of those particular men, but in those of the great body of Christians, without a real foundation in historical fact. These particular men might become Christians, and enter the list of martyrs, without being able to give a rational account of their faith; but if there never had been a well-grounded faith in it originally, their insufficient faith, if it may be so called, could not have had any existence.

Nor are we to wonder at the mixture of fabulous circumstances in the accounts of some of the ancient martyrdoms, even though they were written near the time of the transactions. Many of the Christians of that age, naturally enough, thought that these martyrs were as much the objects of the divine attention, as they were of theirs; and, consequently, every thing that appeared extraordinary relating to them, would be attributed to a divine interposition; and being often repeated, would soon be so magnified, and altered, without any intention to misrepresent, or deceive, that an honest historian, a little tinctured with the same superstition, would unavoidably be what we should call credulous, and not be able to separate the fabulous circumstances from the real ones. And yet, notwithstanding this mixture of fable, there may be no great difficulty at this day, when *our* minds are free from the superstition which misled *them*, to separate the fabulous circumstances in the narrative from those that are authentic, and to perceive a clear foundation for credit in the principal articles, through all the heterogeneous matter that has been transmitted along with them.\*

It was in the reign of Diocletian, that Boniface, of Rome, (of whose martyrdom an account was first published from a Latin MS. in the Vatican library, and afterwards from the Greek,) suffered at Tarsus. Leaving out some evidently fabulous circumstances, the story is as follows:

While one Simplicius was exercising great cruelties against the Christians at Tarsus, in Cilicia, there was at Rome a woman of the name of Aglaes, of a good family, and very rich. She had lived in criminal conversation with Boniface, who was her principal steward, a man addicted to all vices:

\* I have two editions of the following histories, the one in Latin, annexed to the history of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*, published by Valesius, in 1664; and the other in Greek, subjoined to Palladius's *Life of Chrysostom*, by Bigottius, 1680, both printed at Paris. The last contains also the abridged accounts of them by Simeon Metaphrastes. I drew up the following account from the Latin, which came to my hands first, and afterwards corrected it by the Greek. — P

except that he was very compassionate and generous; so that he would seek out objects of distress, that he might relieve them. After some time, Aglaes, being touched with remorse, represented to Boniface the enormity of their conduct, particularly reminding him of a future judgment, and that then those persons would be reckoned the friends of Christ, who should minister to the wants of his suffering servants. She then directed him to go into the East, where the persecution was most violent, and bring the relics of some of the martyrs; that by building oratories to them, and shewing them due reverence, she might be benefited by their means; making no distinction between services done to the living, and respect paid to the dead.

This office Boniface cheerfully undertook; saying to his mistress, "If I find any relics, I will bring them; but if my own body should come, receive it as such." She, thinking that he trifled, bid him leave off his drunkenness and folly, that he might be worthy to have the custody of the holy relics. He was, however, as serious as his mistress, and prepared himself for the journey by prayer and fasting.

When he was arrived at Tarsus, hearing that, at that very time, several were suffering martyrdom in the stadium or public place, he bid the servants look out for an inn, and take care of their beasts, while he went where he wished to go. When he came to the stadium, where the Christians were suffering, he saw some hanging with their heads downwards, and fire under them, some extended on four pieces of wood, by the separation of which by screws, their limbs were stretched; some with their features defaced, some torn with hooks, some with their hands cut off, and others with their hands tied behind them, and cruelly scourged, in all twenty men, while the spectators were filled with the greatest horror.

Boniface, however, without being terrified from his purpose, went and kissed some of them who were under torture, requesting that they would pray for him, that he might be worthy to be their associate; and then sitting down by them, he exhorted them to take courage, by reminding them of their approaching happiness.

The judge, perceiving him, inquired who he was who was shewing that contempt of him and of the gods, and ordered him to be brought before him. Being asked who he was, he replied that he was a Christian, and that by the help of God he should despise him and his tribunal. On his refusing to sacrifice, he was placed on the engine of tor-

ture, and his sides were torn till the bones appeared, while he shewed no sense of pain, and kept his eyes directed towards his fellow-sufferers.

After he had borne this torture an hour, the judge asked him again, if he would sacrifice; and as he persisted in his refusal, he had reeds thrust under the nails of his hands, and melted lead was ordered to be poured down his throat. The spectators seeing this, cried out, *Great is the God of the Christians, and of these holy martyrs*; and rushing with one accord, they overturned the altar, and threw stones at the judge, who was glad to make his escape.

The next day he again ordered Boniface to be brought before him, and reproached him for his folly, in putting his confidence in a man who had once been crucified. But he, returning his reproaches, though in a manner which did not become the meekness of a Christian, said that his master Jesus Christ had borne all these things before him, from a desire that all men might be saved. At this the judge was much enraged, and after enduring more torture, and an ineffectual attempt to stifle him in hot oil, Boniface was at length beheaded. This was on the ides of May.

In the meantime, the servants of Boniface were looking for him every where, expecting to find him in some tavern or stew; when they were informed that such a person as they described, had suffered martyrdom the day before, in the stadium. Finding it to be so, and paying five hundred solidi for the body, they wrapped it in spices, and conveyed it to Rome. Aglaes, being informed of this, met them five stadia from the city, on the Latin way, and there she built an oratory to receive the relics. After this she renounced the world, manumitted her slaves, and gave her wealth to the poor; and after living thirteen years, was buried with Boniface.

In this narrative we see sufficient traces of superstition in the times in which the martyrdom happened, but more in the writer, who probably lived in a later period, though the piece bears evident marks of considerable antiquity, on which account I thought I should not be justified in overlooking it.

Of similar character and authority with the preceding, is the account of the martyrdoms of Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus, which was sent by the Christians at Tarsus, where they suffered, to their brethren at Iconium, with a request that it might be transmitted to those in Pisidia and Pamphilia, and like the preceding, it was published first

from an old Latin version, and then from the Greek. That there were such martyrs cannot well be doubted; and if the piece be not a forgery, it must have been written about the time of the event, which makes it more difficult to account for the fabulous circumstances that are in it.

It was in the consulship of Diocletian and Maximian the second time, on the twelfth of the calends of June, that the three persons above-mentioned were brought before Numerianus Maximus, president of Cilicia. The first of them had been a soldier, but had procured his discharge upon his conversion to Christianity, which, with other cases of the same nature, shew that many Christians in the early ages considered the profession of bearing arms as unbecoming a Christian, and that on this account, though they might not think it absolutely unlawful, they declined it. Both he (Tarachus) and his two companions acknowledged themselves to be Christians, and resisted all the endeavours of the governor, whether by entreaty or torture, to sacrifice to the heathen gods; but, upon the whole, I am hardly more pleased with their behaviour than with that of the judge. He was insolent and brutal, but he was not answered with the meekness that became a Christian, but with a degree of contempt very unbecoming that character.

They had three hearings, the first at Tarsus, the second at Mopsuestia, and the third at Anazarbus; and after enduring the most dreadful tortures, they were carried (for they were not then able to walk) to the amphitheatre, and thrown in the way of several wild beasts; and when these could not be made to hurt them, they were beheaded. Their bodies, having been purposely mixed with many others, were diligently sought for by their brethren, and discovered, as they pretended, in answer to their prayers, by a bright star, which came from heaven, and rested upon each of them, and which afterwards conducted them to a place of safety. At length they were deposited in a mountain, where the three persons who wrote this account, viz. Marcion, Felix and Verus, fixed their own habitation, determined to be buried along with them. The particulars of the examination before the president, they say, they had from one of the guards, named Sebastus, who was present.

As many Christians at this period did behave as these martyrs are said to have done, it may not be amiss to relate the particulars of the behaviour of one of them. In some respects, it was, no doubt, proper, and worthy of commendation; and when it was improper, it may not be the less

instructive, as a feature of the times; and though much of it may be supposed to be in the language of the narrator, rather than that of the martyr, it will give us an idea of what was generally esteemed to be proper and heroic behaviour on such occasions. It is not my wish to magnify, or in any respect to disguise, the actions of Christians, but to represent them as they really were. For this purpose I shall, without any other reason for a preference, give the examinations of Tarachus, who was presented first; and for the sake of conciseness, I shall recite them in the form of a dialogue.

When the president had taken his place, Demetrius, the centurion, said, "There were presented to your highness at Pompeiopolis, by Eutolmius Palladius, one of your officers, some impious persons who do not obey the orders of the emperors, and they are now before your tribunal." Tarachus being then produced, the president said:—

*P.* What is thy name, for I interrogate thee the first, because thou art the oldest?

*T.* I am a Christian.

*P.* I did not as yet ask thee concerning that impious appellation. Tell me thy name.

*T.* I am a Christian.

*P.* Break his jaws, and bid him answer my question properly.

*T.* I do tell you my name, but if you ask what my parents called me, it is Tarachus, and when I was a soldier, I was called Victor.

*P.* Of what country art thou, Tarachus?

*T.* I am a Roman, but born at Claudiopolis in Syria, and because I was a Christian, I renounced the service.

*P.* Thou wert not worthy to serve, thou wicked wretch. But who gave thee thy discharge?

*T.* I applied to Polybio, my officer, and he granted it to me.

*P.* Then respect thy old age. I wish that thou mayest be one of those who comply with the wishes of the emperors, that I may distinguish thee by some honour. Wherefore come and sacrifice to our gods, which the emperors themselves worship.

*T.* But I say now, as I did before, that those gods were only men.

*P.* Sacrifice to the gods, and leave that subtlety.

*T.* I serve my God, and sacrifice, not with blood, but with a pure heart: for God does not want such sacrifices.

*P.* I have compassion on thy old age, and advise thee to lay aside all vanity, and sacrifice to our gods.

*T.* I do not forsake the law of God.

*P.* Wherefore, come and sacrifice.

*T.* I cannot be guilty of impiety. I said, that I honour the law of God.

*P.* There is another law besides that, thou wretch.

*T.* You, who are impious, worship wood and stone, the work of men's hands.

*P.* Give him a blow, and tell him not to be foolish.

*T.* I do not relinquish that folly which gives me salvation.

*P.* I will make thee cease from that folly, and teach thee wisdom.

*T.* Do what you please; you have power over my body.

*P.* Strip him, and beat him with rods on the ground.

*T.* Now you have made me truly wise, strengthened me with blows. I wished to be strengthened more and more, in the name of God, and of his Christ.

*P.* Wicked and cursed wretch; dost thou confess that thou servest two Gods, and yet deniest the gods?

*T.* I confess him who is truly God.

*P.* Thou now confessedst God and Christ.

*T.* For he is the Son of God, the hope of Christians, by suffering for whom we are saved.

*P.* Leave thy prating. Come and sacrifice.

*T.* I do not prate, but speak the truth. I have prayed in this manner sixty and five years, and do not depart from the truth.

Demetrius, the centurion, here said, O man, spare thyself, and sacrifice to the gods. Be persuaded by me.

*T.* Stand off from me with thy advice, thou minister of Satan.

*P.* Let him be confined in prison, with heavy iron chains, and bring in another.

#### THE SECOND EXAMINATION OF TARACHUS.

*P.* Call those impious wretches who obey a wicked law Demetrius the centurion. Here they are.

*P.* Old age is generally honourable, because it is attended with good sense. Wherefore if thou hast reflected with thyself, Tarachus, thou wilt no longer abide by thy former resolution. Come, then, and sacrifice to the gods, for the honour of the emperors, that I may confer honour on thee.

*T.* I am a Christian, and I wish that you and the emperor

themselves, would abandon that honour for the true, that they might receive strength and light from the true God.

*P.* Strike him on the mouth with a stone, and bid him cease from his folly.

*T.* If I was a fool I should be like you.

*P.* Thy teeth are already beaten out; have pity on thyself, wretch.

*T.* You will never persuade me. You are not stronger than he who makes me strong.

*P.* Believe me, it will be better for thee to sacrifice.

*T.* If I thought it was better, I would not suffer this usage.

*P.* Stretch him on the rack, and beat him with fresh thongs. Tarachus making no answer, he said, Strike him on the mouth, and bid him answer me.

*T.* My jaws are broken, how can I answer?

*P.* And dost thou still refuse to comply? Go to the altar, and sacrifice to the gods.

*T.* If you make me incapable of speaking, I shall think the same.

*P.* I shall try thy obstinacy, thou accursed wretch.

*T.* Try what you please, I shall conquer by him who strengthens me, that is in the name of my God.

*P.* Bring fire and burn his hands.

*T.* I do not fear thy temporal fire; but if I comply with thee, I should fear eternal fire.

*P.* See, now, thy hands are burned off. Cease from thy vanity, thou madman, and sacrifice to the gods.

*T.* You speak as if I should comply with your proposal; but I am able to bear whatever may be prepared for me.

*P.* Tie his feet, and then suspend him, and put fire under him.

*T.* I have despised thy fire, and do not fear thy smoke.

*P.* Now thou art suspended, consent and sacrifice.

*T.* Do thou sacrifice, as thou art used to sacrifice, to men. It is not lawful for me to do it.

*P.* Bring strong vinegar and salt, and pour it into his nostrils.

*T.* Thy vinegar is pleasant to me, and thy salt has no pungency.

*P.* Mix mustard with the vinegar, and put it into his nose.

*T.* Thy servants have deceived thee. They have given me honey instead of vinegar.

*P.* Against the next examination, I will think of other tortures, and cure thy folly.

*T.* And you will find me prepared to bear them all.

*P.* Take him down, bind him in iron chains, and commit him to custody.

At the third examination, after more questions and answers, in which Tarachus, in reply to the threats of the president, challenges him to do his worst, in a manner more becoming a North-American Indian than a Christian, he was again suspended, his face bruised with stones, hot irons applied to his cheeks, his ears were cut off, his head shaven, and hot coals put upon it. After this the hot irons were put under his arm-pits, and during the whole, he spake as if he felt nothing; and the two others are both represented as behaving in a similar manner, under different modes of torture.

The truth of the narrative in general I do not question, as there are the most authentic accounts of some Christians behaving in this manner, though this is probably exaggerated; but I cannot recite the particulars, as *Fleury* and others do, with approbation. Our Saviour left no such example as this. His sensibility was as great as his fortitude, and nothing dropped from him that savoured of boasting, or of insolence.\*

## SECTION VI.

*A general View of the civil Revolutions in the Empire, previous to the Settlement of it under Constantine.*

NOT choosing to interrupt the account of the persecution with more than was absolutely necessary, of the civil history of the times, I shall give a summary view of the whole in this place; and this is the more necessary, as, in the contest for power among so many competitors for the empire as arose presently after the persecution began, the revolutions, which had a great influence with respect to it, were so great and rapid, that it is not easy to retain them in memory.

In the second year of the persecution, Diocletian was seized with a disorder which affected his intellects, and this together with the management of Galerius, induced him

\* There are some excellent remarks on this subject, by Mr. T. Christie, in his *Miscellanies*, which I have quoted, *supra*, p. 205, Note 7. See pp. 174—180.

to abdicate the empire.\* And he prevailed upon his colleague Maximian Herculus to do the same. This was on the calends of April, A. D. 304. Diocletian retired to Salona in Dalmatia, and Maximian to Lucania in Italy.

In consequence of these resignations, the two Cæsars, Constantius (who had divorced Helena, by whom he had Constantine, and had married the daughter-in-law of Maximian) and Maximian Galerius (who had also divorced his wife, in order to marry the daughter of Diocletian) were proclaimed emperors: and of these the former, who discontinued the persecution, governed in the West, and the latter, who kept it up with great rigour, ruled in the East. A. D. 306, Galerius appointed two Cæsars, Severus and Maximin, his sister's sons, giving Italy to Severus, and the East to Maximin. All this time he detained Constantine, unwilling that he should be Cæsar. But the young man making his escape to his father, who was then at York in Britain, he was by the army saluted by the appellation of emperor.

On this, Maxentius, the son of Maximian Herculus, caused himself to be elected emperor at Rome, rejecting some proposals which had been made to him for an accommodation, by Constantine. Galerius, hearing of this difference, sent Severus with an army to Rome; but Maxentius, by corrupting his troops, defeated him, and besieged him in Ravenna. In the midst of these disturbances, Maximian Herculus went to Rome; and having procured himself to be proclaimed emperor a second time, joined his son before Ravenna; and not being able to force the place, he deceived Severus by a treaty, and got him assassinated. After this, Galerius marched to Rome, and finding his forces not sufficient for the enterprise, he appointed Licinius, an old friend of his, to be Cæsar. A. D. 307.

In the mean time old Maximian, after making a vain attempt to supplant his son, resigned the empire once more, but with a view to persuade Diocletian to join him in resuming it. Not succeeding in this, he went into Gaul, and joined Constantine, giving him his daughter Fausta in marriage. But afterwards, endeavouring to supplant his son-in-law, as he had before done with respect to his own son, he was besieged in Marseilles, and being taken was put to death.

\* Euseb. Hist. L. viii. C. xiii. p. 396. *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, C. ix. p. 17.

A. D. 310, Galerius who had before made Licinius *Cæsar*, gave him the title of *Augustus*, and *Emperor*; and on this Maximin took the same title, without consulting Galerius. Though Maxentius and Galerius were men of similar dispositions, both naturally cruel, and both of them persecutors of the Christians, they hated one another, and the empire was dreadfully ravaged by the civil wars between them; and the consequence of this was a severe famine at Rome.

A. D. 311, Galerius was seized with that dreadful disorder of which mention was made before, and which induced him to join Constantine in publishing an edict in favour of the Christians, not long before his death. On this event it was agreed that Constantine should have Britain, Gaul, Spain, and Germany; Maxentius, Italy, Sicily, and Africa; Licinius, Illyricum, Dacia, and Greece; and Maximin all the East, and Egypt. After this partition of the empire, the persecution of the Christians ceased for a short time, but it was renewed by Licinius and Maximin, in the countries which were under their dominion.

Maxentius rendering himself insupportable to the people at Rome, Constantine was invited to come to their assistance; and having in the mean time declared himself a Christian, he defeated Maxentius and his lieutenants in several battles, in the last of which, Maxentius flying over a bridge which he laid over the Tiber, it broke down under him and the crowd of his attendants, and he was drowned. After this victory Constantine published edicts in favour of the Christians, restoring to them their churches and goods, and excusing their ministers from all civil functions. This was A. D. 312.

Still Maximin and Licinius continued the persecution. But A. D. 313, Licinius married the sister of Constantine, and put a stop to it. Presently after this, Diocletian, who had been invited to attend the marriage, died; having seen Christianity in a more flourishing state after the persecution than it had ever enjoyed before. Maximin, to whom the edict of Constantine and Licinius in favour of the Christians had been sent, did not choose to refuse giving his sanction to it altogether; but having been deceived by his priests, who promised him a successful war against Licinius, and being worsted in it, he first put them to death, and then published an edict in favour of the Christians, restoring to them all that had been taken from them during the persecution.

The year following, A. D. 314, Maximin was seized with

a disorder which occasioned the loss of his sight, and reduced him to a skeleton; and of this, after languishing a long time, full of remorse, it is said, for his cruelty to the Christians, he died. After the death of Maximin, A. D. 315, Licinius declared war against Constantine, and not succeeding, they were reconciled again. The year following Licinius revived the persecution against the Christians; and quarrelling again with Constantine he was defeated in several battles, and in 324, was reduced to surrender at discretion. Out of regard to his sister, Constantine granted him his life, and fixed Thessalonica for the place of his abode; but Licinius having recourse to arms once more, A. D. 325, he was presently defeated, and put to death.\* From this time the whole Roman empire was united under one head, and that a Christian.

## SECTION VII.

### *General Observations on this great Persecution, and the Effects of it.*

WE cannot wonder that, after so long and dreadful a persecution, in which such numbers of Christians suffered death in extreme torture, many more were maimed for life, more reduced to great poverty and distress, and many dispersed in distant countries, there should be great joy over all the Christian world. The terminations of former persecutions had little in them that resembled this. Till this time Christians had never enjoyed more than a short respite from trouble: the emperors who had been the most friendly to them, having been Heathens, had only connived at them. From the time of Nero there had always been some laws in force against them; and in the most favourable times, they had been at the mercy of the populace, whose clamours the most resolute governors of provinces, and sometimes even the emperors themselves, had not been able to withstand. Whereas now, they not only found all the laws by which they had been oppressed repealed, but new laws made expressly in their favour, laws by which their religion was both

\* This account is probably too favourable to Constantine. See *supra*, p. 232, Note †. *Crevier* remarks, after *Tillemont*, "We may easily suppose that Constantine was influenced by a cruel and suspicious policy, when he ordered the death of Licinius, if we consider, that, after destroying the father, he killed the son, who was his own nephew, a young prince upon whom history does not throw the least shadow of blame, and who indeed is fully justified by his tender age, being but eleven years old when he was put to death." *Hist. X.* pp. 99, 100.

protected and encouraged, by an emperor who was a Christian as well as themselves; and what was more than all this, their numbers, and their respectability, were so much increased, that there was no danger of any emperor finding it necessary to sacrifice them to the security of his power. Their enemies, destitute of the aid of the civil magistrate, and in some measure even of that of the populace, could only hate and envy them, without being able to give them any material disturbance.

Constantine had fought and conquered as a Christian, and consequently those who fought under him must either have been Christians, or at least have had no objection to serve him as such; so that he had nothing to fear from any heathen competitor, which would certainly have been the case if any emperor in an earlier period had declared himself a Christian. This remarkable fact, viz. that of Constantine establishing himself in the empire, and reigning so long as he did, undisturbed by any heathen competitor, is an unanswerable proof of the great progress that Christianity had made in the Roman empire: a progress made by its own evidence only, and in the face of every difficulty that could possibly be thrown in its way, in the course of near three hundred years before his accession. If the majority of the subjects of the empire were not professed Christians at the accession of Constantine, they had at least been brought to think so well of Christianity, that they had no objection to its being the prevailing religion, and to its being countenanced by the emperor, in preference to Heathenism.

The issue of the war with Licinius, which was renewed at several periods, and before the determination of which the heathen subjects of the empire had time enough to recollect themselves, and to recover from any sudden consternation into which they might have been thrown by the rapid successes of Constantine, was the last and most decisive proof of the great superiority of the Christians, or of those who were disposed to favour Christianity, over the bigotted Heathens. Had the Christianity of Constantine given great and general offence, the several revolts of Licinius gave it the most favourable opportunity of shewing itself; so that the issue of this war clearly proves, that those who wished well to the ancient superstitions, and were zealous for the continuance of them, were comparatively few, and that the Roman world in general thought itself happy in a Christian emperor.

I would farther observe, that this state of things affords a

strong presumptive proof of the truth of Christianity. The heathen religion had every advantage of antiquity, learning and power; and yet could not prevail against the new religion, with the heavy disadvantage of having a crucified Jew for its founder. Christianity had no advantage from power, till by its own evidence only, and in opposition to every kind of power, it had prevailed so much, as to make it the interest of the ruling powers to espouse it.

With respect to the conduct of Divine Providence, I would observe that the sufferings of Christians, as well as those of Christ himself, though so great, and of such long continuance, were necessary to the firm establishment of Christianity; and that this was necessary to the happiness of mankind in future ages. For, to the confirmation of their faith it was absolutely necessary, that no person, to the end of time, should ever be able to say, that Christianity had established itself in the world by means of power, of policy, or of learning; and that its evidences had not been rigorously examined at a time when every means of examination were existing, and also when both its friends and enemies were sufficiently interested in the examination.

Now the persecution of Christians, from the very origin of their religion at Jerusalem, in the very midst of its most inveterate enemies, and for more than two centuries after this, through the whole extent of the Roman empire, (the power of which over all its subjects was, by its constitution, perhaps greater than any that had ever existed in the world before, or that has existed, even since,) a period also that was far from being unfavourable to learning and inquiry, not preventing, but evidently promoting the spread of Christianity, is the most incontestable proof, that neither *arguments*, nor *force*, though both were exerted to the utmost, could prevail against it. On the other hand, the Christians, who had no alternative but abandoning their religion or their lives, would not certainly choose the latter without what appeared to them to be sufficient reason, and such as they had not taken up lightly, and without the most careful examination. Because we do not see that, in any other cases, men deliberately throw away their lives; and especially that they submit to long-continued torture, without cause.

This was the state of things between the friends and the enemies of Christianity, while the facts were recent, capable of the most easy investigation, and the witnesses were numerous. And that they who did inquire with a proper temper of mind were really satisfied with respect to these

facts, is evident from their continuing to profess themselves Christians notwithstanding all the discouragements they lay under, and by their daily making converts of others. It is of the greatest importance to observe, that the things to be examined were plain *facts*, with respect to which one man's understanding is just as good as that of any other. Whatever learning or genius could do, was at first entirely against Christianity, because its origin was wholly with the illiterate; but at length the learned themselves, of every class, attached as they were to their respective favourite systems, were induced to abandon them, in favour of a religion which, both on account of its tenets, and of its founder and preachers, they had at first held in the greatest contempt.

A man who can say that, in these circumstances, Christianity made its way in the world, as it is known to have done before the reign of Constantine, without its being founded on truth, must say that human nature was not the same thing then that it is now. And the man who can seriously assert this, will not be much attended to by other men. He must, in fact, believe infinitely more miracles, and of a more stupendous nature, than the Christian admits, and these both without evidence, and without an object. He must be a believer in the absolute and proper infatuation of the greater part of the subjects of the Roman empire for the three first centuries: nothing less than this will account for unquestionable facts, upon his hypothesis.

I must observe again, and enlarge a little upon the observation, that the things to be examined into by the friends or the enemies of Christianity, were not truths of an abstract or metaphysical nature, with respect to which any man, or any number of men, may form wrong judgments, and become tenaciously attached to them, but simply the truth of *facts*, which it requires nothing more than common sense to judge of, and likewise such an application of common sense, or understanding, as all men are continually exercising, and therefore with respect to which they are the least liable to make a mistake, and form a wrong judgment.

What they had to inquire into was simply this, whether Christ, with whom many of them were personally acquainted, wrought real miracles, whether he rose from the dead, and whether the apostles and others, continued to work miracles in support of his divine mission afterwards. With the truth or untruth of these facts, the apostles themselves, and all their contemporaries, must either have been acquainted, or might easily have satisfied themselves. They could not

therefore have been imposed upon themselves with respect to the facts; nor can it be imagined that the thousands of that generation who suffered, and many of whom died, in the cause of Christianity, could have any motive to impose upon others. We do not indeed think it necessary to trouble ourselves to investigate the causes of the sentiments and conduct of single persons, or of a few persons; because their faculties may be deranged, or they may have been subjected to such particular influences as cannot possibly be known, except perhaps to those who have attended them from their infancy, and have been acquainted with their whole history. But this can never be said of so many persons, of all descriptions, as are well known to have embraced Christianity in the very age of the apostles, except by persons whose own minds are deranged, and therefore whose objections it is to no purpose to consider, or reply to.

But supposing the thousands and tens of thousands who embraced Christianity in the age of the apostles, to have been properly infatuated, so as to believe that they actually saw and heard things that had no existence, the next generation had sufficient leisure, and sufficient opportunity, to inquire into the facts, and this most extraordinary one, of the infatuation of their predecessors. among the rest; and they were sufficiently interested so to do, when, if they embraced Christianity, they had nothing before them but the fate of preceding Christians. Yet we see that the inquiries that were made in the second generation, and all the succeeding ones, after the apostles, continually added to the number of Christians, who kept uniformly increasing, among the learned and unlearned, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, till, notwithstanding all their hardships, they, or their friends, became the more powerful part of the Roman empire.

To suppose that Christianity could have propagated itself in this manner, without being founded in truth, is to suppose, as I observed before (and because it cannot be too much attended to, I mention it again) more miracles, and those of a more extraordinary nature, than are believed by Christians; miracles of which no evidence can be given, and for which no reason can be assigned. For it must be supposed that all these innumerable converts to Christianity in the early ages imagined that they had heard and seen what they never had heard or seen, or that they had inquired into the truth of recent facts, when they had made no inquiry at all, and that they sacrificed their ease, their liberty, their property, and

many of them their lives, for a mere fancy, an illusion of the brain. Their minds must therefore have been under a proper and miraculous infatuation, and for no purpose but to subject them to the most grievous sufferings, and to delude mankind in all future ages.

Now, between this strange and incredible supposition, and the truth of the gospel history, there is no medium. Admitting the facts which are related by the evangelists, and the author of the Acts of the Apostles, every thing that has followed to the present times is easy and natural. The conversion of the first Christians, obstinate and reluctant as many of them were, the conversion of others, by them, and all the subsequent events, have an adequate cause, so that without supposing any farther miracles, all things have come by a regular progress, each step of which is perfectly intelligible to the state in which we see them to be at present. But on no other hypothesis can *present appearances*, what we ourselves now see, be accounted for. On the other supposition (which, if they reflect at all, must be that of all unbelievers) we see the most wonderful change in the history of the world, a revolution in the minds of men, of all nations and all descriptions, produced by supernatural delusion—that is, a great effect without any cause, that a man in his sober senses would think of alleging for it.

## SECTION VIII.

### *Of the Meletians and the Donatists.*

WITHIN the period of which I am now treating arose the different sects of the *Meletians*, *Donatists*, and *Manicheans*; the first of small consequence, but the two others very considerable, both for extent and duration, and especially the last of them.

Meletius was a bishop of Lycopolis, in Egypt, who was said to have been deposed for various causes, but especially for having denied the faith, and sacrificing, in time of persecution, by a council, in which Peter, bishop of Alexandria, presided.\* Meletius, however, thought that he had reason to complain of the proceedings against him, and having many friends, he continued to act as bishop in defiance of the council. He even said that he had been deposed, not for apostacy, but merely on account of a difference of opi-

\* *Gregory, I. c. 3. viii. p. 13. P. London, III. pp. 607, 808.*

nion between himself and Peter, on the subject of receiving apostates, and thought that Peter was too easy in this respect. As there can be no doubt of his having alleged this in his own defence, it is in the highest degree improbable that he himself should ever have been an apostate; and it must be observed, that we have no account of the Meletians, but what we can collect from the writings of their bitter adversaries. This schism commenced A. D. 301.\* Afterwards Meletius, continuing in opposition to the bishops of Alexandria, took the part of Arius; and notwithstanding the interposition of the council of Nice, the sect of the Meletians continued till the fifth century, and they were Arians to the last.

The origin of the *Donatists* was very similar to that of the Meletians, but the schism they made in the church was much more extensive, affecting the greatest part of Africa; whereas that of the Meletians extended no farther than Egypt. Upon the death of Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, probably A. D. 306, the neighbouring bishops, without calling in those of Numidia, who had been used to assist on those occasions, chose Cæcilianus, a deacon of the church, and he was ordained by Felix, bishop of Aptungus. But two of the presbyters of the same church, Botrus and Celesius, who were of a superior order, are said to have been displeased at this preference; and the new bishop having given offence to a woman of fortune, named Lucilla, by reproving her for her superstition, in kissing the bones of some supposed martyrs before she received the communion, she joined them in forming a party against him; and a synod being called, at which the Numidian bishops were present, Cæcilianus was deposed, and Majorinus, a reader in the church, and a domestic of Lucilla, was ordained bishop in his place. It was alleged against Cæcilianus, that he had not given the assistance which he ought to have done to those who had suffered in the late persecution, and that Felix, who had ordained him, was a *traditor*, or one who had given up the sacred books when they were demanded in order to be burned, which was deemed to be a heinous offence, of the same nature with apostacy itself.

The party of Majorinus was also joined by some persons who had the custody of the sacred vessels of the church, which had been concealed in the time of persecution. And

\* *Jardner*, III. pp. 357—360.

the report, true or false, that Cæcilianus was a favourer of the traitors, induced many to join the opposite party, and among these were almost all the bishops of Mauritania. Majorinus soon dying, and being succeeded by Donatus, a man of learning and eloquence, and esteemed a saint by his followers, his name was given to the whole sect, as was that of Socinus to the Unitarians of later ages. This account of the origin of the name is much more probable than that of its being derived from another Donatus, a bishop of Numidia, but no ways eminent, who, along with others, took the part of Majorinus.

The Donatists thought it was a sufficient reason for their separation, that Cæcilianus had not been regularly ordained: saying, that the part which the traitors had in his ordination vitiated that proceeding, and all that followed upon it. They agreed with the Novatians, in pretending to great purity, but on a very different principle: the purity of the Novatian, consisting in their churches being free from impure members, but that of the Donatists in their not partaking of the impurity which was supposed to have been derived from the ordination of an impure person, which, in their idea, affected all the churches which held communion with them. Consequently, they considered all their administrations as invalid, so that baptism administered by them was, in reality, no baptism at all. The Donatists by no means acted upon the great principle of the Novatians, in refusing to admit penitents, nor did they condemn second marriages.

The Donatists are sometimes charged with being Unitarians; but it does not appear that they were any more so than the Montanists, who are likewise charged with it. The original difference between them and the Catholics had nothing to do with any particular opinion concerning the person of Christ; but many of the Donatists, perhaps Donatus himself, as well as many of the Montanists, were no doubt, Unitarians; and their doctrine being deemed heretical, it was sometimes ascribed to the whole body by way of reproach.

From the acknowledgment of Austin, the great opposer of the Donatists, it is evident, that they were not, in general, deficient in any article of what was deemed to be orthodox faith. "Every thing," he says, "may be had without the church, except salvation. They may have the sacrament and the gospel. They may have faith, and preach, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but they

cannot have salvation, except in the Catholic church."\* "Whoever," he says, "is separated from the Catholic church, though he may think he lives well (*laudabiliter*) yet for this crime only, that he is separated from the unity of Christ, he cannot have life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."† It is barely credible that so great a man as Austin in many respects was, should avow a sentiment so uncharitable, and so miserably misinterpret the Scriptures, to support it. But it is the duty of an historian to exhibit every thing that is instructive; vices as well as virtues, the weakness as well as the strength, of the human understanding.

The Donatists were a separate body of Christians for near three centuries, and in almost every city in Africa there was one bishop of this sect, and another of the Catholics. All this would have had no serious consequence, if the jurisdiction of one bishop, or a set of bishops, founded upon the idea of the importance of the unity of the church, had not been, in a great measure, established at this time. But in this age a bishop, who had not been ordained by the neighbouring bishops, and according to the usual forms, was deemed to be a schismatic; and, as if he had been a heretic, he was excommunicated by those who disapproved of his election. And those who took upon them to promote this supposed necessary unity of the church, left no means untried, even that of force, where it could be applied, to heal what they took to be a breach in it.

Unfortunately, there is not extant any writing of the Donatists, and we must never expect an impartial account of any sect of men from their professed enemies. We have, however, an account of a public conference between the Donatists and the Catholics, in the reigns of Honorius and Theodosius, of which an account will be given in its proper place. Against the Donatists we have several tracts of Austin, and a large treatise in seven books, addressed to Parmenianus, by Optatus, bishop of Milevi.‡

## SECTION IX.

### *Of the Manichæans.*

THE sect of the Manichæans was of a much more serious nature, and had more lasting consequences than that of the

\* "Super Gestis cum Emerito," Opera, VII. p. 681. (P.)

† *Epist.* clix. Opera, II. p. 696. (P.)

‡ See *Lardner*, IV. pp. 92—99.

Donatists. The founder of it was one Mani, as he is called in the East, Manes by the Greek writers, and commonly Manichæus by the Latins. The account that Eusebius gives of this person, is so manifestly a mere invective, and so full of absurdity, that I shall only insert it, in Dr. Lardner's translation, in the notes.\* It may serve however, as a specimen of the manner in which this writer, and others, commonly treated those persons whom they considered as heretics, and may shew us how little we can depend upon their accounts, when there are no facts, or circumstances, by the help of which we may be able to correct them. The larger account of Socrates, † besides being equally an invective, has so much the air of a fable, that I shall neglect it altogether, and content myself with giving a summary of the more temperate and probable accounts of this extraordinary man by Beausobre and Lardner, without entering into the discussion of any particulars.

According to these writers, Mani was a person born in the dominions of the king of Persia, rich, learned, educated among philosophers, and one who attended the Persian court at an early age. He became a convert to Christianity, and openly professed and taught it. At what time he appeared as a public teacher in his native country is uncertain, but his doctrines spread into the Roman empire about the end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth century. His principles were contained in books written by himself, but generally ascribed to Buddas, Addas, or Adimantus. One of them was entitled *Mysteries*, another *Chapters* or *Heads*, and another *the Gospel*. He also wrote many epistles: and after spending his whole life in teaching what he thought to be genuine Christianity, it is probable that he died a martyr to his profession.

The doctrine of Mani was, in many respects, the same with that of the Gnostics who preceded him: only, instead of supposing evil to have arisen ultimately from inferior and

\* "About the same time, that madman, fitly named Manes, formed the wild heresy, call'd after his name, being set up for the ruin of many, by Satan, the adversary of God. This person was a barbarian in every respect, both in his speech and in his manners. As for his disposition, it was diabolical and furious, for he made an appearance of being Christ himself. Sometimes he gave out that he was the Comforter, and the Holy Ghost himself. To madness he added excessive pride, and as if he had been Christ, he chose twelve to be companions with him in his innovation. His scheme was patched up of many false and impious heresies long since extinct. This venomous principle was brought into our world, the Roman empire, from Persia. From that time the impious doctrine of the Manichees has infected many. Such was the use of that science falsely so call'd. Euseb. Hist. l. vii. c. xxxi. p. 365. *Credibility*, VI. p. 17. Works, III. p. 376. P.

† L. i. c. xxii. p. 24. P. Lardner, III. pp. 370—370.

subordinate beings, the offspring of the Supreme Being, he held the doctrine of two original, independent principles, the one immaterial and supremely good, the other material and the source of all evil, but actuated by a soul, or something of the nature of intelligence, the origin of which he does not appear to have clearly explained. The former of these principles he usually termed light, the latter darkness.

This world, which contains a mixture of good and evil, Mani supposed to have had its origin from an attempt that was made upon the kingdom of light by the kingdom of darkness. The Supreme Being, seeing this invasion, detached from himself a power which formed man, investing him with the five elements. But the prince of darkness overpowered him, and seized upon the soul, or portion of light, that was in him. On this event the Supreme Being sent a living spirit, which rescued a portion of this light, and out of it formed the sun, moon and stars, and then the earth from matter. In other words, says Beausobre, the soul is a celestial substance, which God thought fit to mix with matter for the making of the world, and this was occasioned by some enterprise of the material principle, which God foresaw, but did not think proper to prevent; and he created the sun, moon and stars, out of those portions of light, which, though they had been mixed with the darkness, had preserved their original purity.

Mani ascribed the formation of the body of man to the devil, and supposed that as, in the general system itself, there were two principles, there were in man two souls, the one the source of good purposes, and the other of evil ones. Adam, the Manichæans said, had much light and little darkness, and therefore he lived holily a considerable time; but the adverse part prevailing, he had commerce with his wife, and so fell.

Man having fallen, they said that God sent a Saviour like himself, or of the same substance with himself, and therefore properly called *God*, and that he was man only in appearance; that he had no birth at all, not even a miraculous one, nor any baptism, and only seemed to die. Such was their opinion of Christ. They also believed that the Holy Spirit was another emanation from the Supreme Being, but inferior to him.

The office of Christ, the Manichæans said, was to conduct souls back again to the kingdom of God, or of light, from which they originally came; but that since his ascension, he dwells in the sun by his power, and in the moon by his

wisdom, as the Holy Spirit resides upon earth. They therefore, when they prayed, bowed towards the sun in the day-time, and towards the moon in the night. They believed in a future judgment, but probably not in the eternity of hell torments; and, indeed, believing the doctrine of transmigration, and allowing to each soul five bodies, and consequently as many different states of trial, they could not well suppose that many would be finally lost, though they supposed that God had prepared an eternal prison for the mansions of pure darkness.

The public worship of the Manichæans was very simple. They read the Scriptures, they baptized, even infants, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and partook of the Lord's supper. They observed the Lord's day, but fasted upon it. They likewise celebrated Easter, and had a regular church discipline and censures. They rejected the books of the Old Testament, but not those of the New, excepting some parts, as those which relate to Christ's birth, circumcision, baptism, &c., and they paid great respect to certain apochryphal books, ascribed to Peter and Andrew, Thomas and John, or the travels of the apostles, the gospel of Thomas, and the acts of Paul and Thecla, probably written by one Leucian, who, though not properly a Manichæan, was one who entertained similar principles, and lived about A. D. 140.

The sect of Manichæans was divided into *the elect*, and *the auditors*, of whom the latter might eat flesh, drink wine, bathe, marry, traffic, possess estates, bear magistracies, &c., all which were forbidden to the elect. But these were maintained by the auditors, who revered them so much, that they always kneeled down to ask their blessing. However, many of the auditors endeavoured to imitate the elect, and their austere manners gained them many admirers, so that there were Manichæans in many parts of the world, though there were not many of them in any one place. Austin was an auditor among the Manichæans nine years, and he promoted their cause very much among men of letters, and persons of considerable rank in life.

Besides the books ascribed to Addas, Buddas, or Admantus, but which were probably written by Mani himself, and which were held in the highest esteem among them, mention is made of another Manichæan writer, called Agapius; and it is probable that we have almost the entire treatise of Faustus, another of them, in Austin's answer to it. Of the writers against the Manichæans, Fabricius enumerates forty,

and his catalogue is by no means complete. Among them Epiphanius enumerates Eusebius of Cæsarea, Eusebius of Emesa, Serapion of Thmuis, Athanasius of Alexandria, George of Laodicea, Appollinaris of the same place, and Titus of Bostra.

It may be said with respect to the Manichæans, as I observed of the Gnostics, that the historical evidences of Christianity must have been very clear and strong, to induce those who held such philosophical principles as theirs to embrace it.\*

## SECTION X.

### *Of the Constitution of the Christian Church before the Time of Constantine.*

As there was no material alteration, that we can distinctly trace, in the constitution of the Christian church, from the period in which I last mentioned the subject, till the time of Constantine, I shall in this place give a general view of it, in all the intermediate periods, as far as will be necessary to my purpose, which is not to be particular or critical; and in this I shall make great use of Lord Chancellor King's treatise on this subject.†

Originally there were several bishops, or presbyters (for it is evident that they meant the same thing) in most Christian churches; but in the period of which I am now treating there was only one person who had the title of *bishop*, in a church, though the whole jurisdiction of that bishop was called *one church or parish*, and never *diocese*, comprehending several churches.‡ Let a city have been ever so large, and have contained ever so many Christians, we never read of more than one bishop in the place. This arose from the natural custom of directing particular presbyters to preside in those assemblies, which, on account of the increasing number of converts, were obliged to be held separately from the original place of meeting, but which were still considered as so many branches of the original church. It is probable also that villages very near a large town would often be served in the same manner, viz. by presbyters sent from the town, and not

\* Lardner's *Cred.* VI. p. 17, &c. Works, III. p. 375, &c. Beausobre's *Hist. de Manich.* (P.)

† *Enquiry concerning the Primitive Church*, 1691. See Vol. II. p. 389. *Notes.*

‡ "As for the word *diocese*, by which the bishop's flock is now usually expressed, I do not remember that ever I found it used in this sense by any of the ancients. But there is another word still retained by us, by which they frequently denominated the bishop's cure, and that is *parish*." Lord King, *Pl. i. C. ii. Sect. i.*

have bishops of their own, though others at a greater distance would of course have them. These were called *choroepiscopi*.

When the Christians, either in a remote part of a town, or a neighbouring village, were very few, it would be a convenience to them to have their affairs managed in this manner; and if, as their numbers gradually increased, no sensible inconvenience arose from it, this custom of particular congregations being governed by presbyters would naturally be continued, till at length the bishop of the original congregation in any place, would insensibly become a diocesan bishop, having several distinct congregations under his care. This was the case with the Goths, who, in all this period, and long afterwards, had no more than one bishop. Still, however, the members of these several congregations, united under one head, might assemble, either in person, or by their deputies, for the choice of a bishop, or any other business which concerned them all.

The Lord Chancellor King supposes that, excepting the city of Alexandria, no bishop had the care of more than a single congregation, or as many people as could meet in one place, till near the time of Constantine.\* But this is in the highest degree improbable, and utterly inconsistent with what is well known to have been the number of Christians in many cities within that period. His chief argument is, that the members of each church are often said to meet *in one place*. But this might as well apply to the church of Jerusalem. For we read that when Paul was at Jerusalem, A. D. 58, *the whole multitude must needs come together*, Acts xxii. 21; though it is certain that there were not less than ten thousand Christians at Jerusalem in the very year of our Saviour's ascension; and it cannot but be supposed that they must have more than doubled or tripled their numbers between that time and this.

These bishops, as well as the presbyters, and the other officers of the church, were chosen and appointed by the whole body of Christians in the place; and at first no other *ordination* would be thought necessary. But by degrees it was thought proper, for the sake of preserving harmony and keeping up the favourite idea of the unity of the church, that some of the neighbouring bishops should concur in the ordination of those who were to be considered as their colleagues. Consequently their concurrence in the choice of

\* *Enquiry, C. iii. sect. xi.*

a bishop became necessary; and at length it was settled that three of the neighbouring bishops at least should assist at the ordination, and that one of them should lay his hands upon him and pray, recommending him and his labours to the divine blessing; a ceremony which was afterwards called *consecration*. But even in this the presbyters of the church joined the bishop, doing what themselves had been used to perform before it was thought necessary to ask the concurrence of others. After the consecration it was usual to give notice of it to the bishops of other sees.\*

Still, however, the original idea of a bishop being the same with a presbyter, prevailed so far, that when he was appointed he was not supposed to have any new powers. He presided, indeed, in the council of the presbyters, and would, no doubt, have much personal influence, but he had only a single vote in their decisions. In the time of Firmilian and Tertullian, presbyters had the power of baptizing, confirming and ordaining, but this was with the permission of the bishop. The presbyters as well as the bishops were required to be exempt from all secular employments; and, consequently, if they had not wherewith to maintain themselves, they must have been maintained out of the funds of the society.

The office of deacon continued as before, but they ranked with the *clergy*, when these came to be considered as a distinct body from the *laity*. In large churches there were also many inferior officers, as those of sub-deacons, readers, acolyths and exorcists. The title of sub-deacon and acolyth are similar; but the latter are by some thought to have had the care of the lamps, and of providing bread and wine for the eucharist. The exorcists had the care of insane persons, and were, no doubt, taught to pronounce over them the usual words of adjuration, in the name of Christ, &c., for it was the general opinion in this age, as well as in that of our Saviour, that insane persons were possessed with evil spirits: and though they were no longer cured in a miraculous manner, yet the same forms might be continued with the idea of their having some invisible good effect.

The ordinary Christians were not admitted to baptism till they had been some time in the class of *catechumens*, in which they went through a course of instruction; and in case of gross offences, and especially of apostacy in time of persecution, they were excommunicated, or rejected from

the society; and they could not be restored to communion with it without going through a state of penance, and then they were not admitted without the consent of the whole church.

Though the people had the power of deposing, as well as of appointing and ordaining their bishops, they did not, in general, choose to do this without the sanction of the neighbouring bishops; and as in various other transactions, single churches wished to have the sanction of their brethren, this gave occasion to the calling of *synods* or *councils*, and by degrees to the idea of a right in synods and councils to interfere in the business of particular churches, and to decide not only on the conduct, but also on the orthodoxy of particular persons. And as great deference was naturally paid to the bishops of the greater sees, as in those of Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Rome, Carthage, &c., the calling of synods or councils, in the provinces of which those cities were the capitals, became in time appropriated to them. Of course they presided in them, and had the chief influence in directing their proceedings. This custom of meeting in synods, which was afterwards the cause of so much mischief, had a very innocent origin, and began, it is said, in Greece, where the people of neighbouring cities had been used to assemble for the purpose of consulting about their common interest.

This was the natural progress of things, before the interference of the civil power in the affairs of the church; and notwithstanding the great evils which in a course of time arose from this system, especially in the obstruction of free inquiry, and in giving occasion to much violence and injustice, it was what the wisest men of that age could not well have foreseen. The idea of the unity of the church, and consequently the uniformity of its faith and practice, as opposed to those of schismatics and heretics, was in the infancy of things a very flattering one; and it was always known, that there could be no great and general good, without some partial evils. It was also thought the part of modesty in a few to acquiesce in the judgment of many.

In some provinces synods were held frequently. Thus Firmilian says, that in his province they met every year, and it appears from the writings of Cyprian, that in his they sometimes met oftener. Those who were convened on these occasions were not only the bishops and the clergy, but also laymen, to represent the people; the power of a synod being naturally lodged in the same hands as that of particular churches. But it is probable that, on these

public occasions, very few would attend, or at least have much influence, besides the clergy.

The method of public worship among Christians in these early times was generally this. They began with reading the Scriptures, and sometimes other useful writings, after which they sung psalms, chiefly those of David, and then the bishop, or any other person appointed by him, gave a discourse, or sermon, which was generally an exposition of the portions of Scripture which had been read. Then followed the prayer which preceded the celebration of the eucharist, and the superstitious custom of looking towards the east while they prayed, soon became general. In this prayer they sometimes introduced the Lord's prayer, but they had no prescribed liturgy; every person who officiated prayed according to his ability; and indeed in that age no public speaker used any notes. After prayer the people joined by saying aloud, *Amen*.\*

When persons were baptized, they answered to certain questions that were put to them, the first of which was, whether they would lead a good life; which was commonly expressed by saying, that they renounced the devil and all the his works, or the world, &c. They were then asked whether they believed the articles of the Christian faith, which were repeated to them in the order of what is commonly called the apostles' creed. At first this consisted but of very few articles, but afterwards more were added, in order to exclude the Gnostics. In consequence of this, though the baptismal creed consisted of nearly the same articles in all the catholic churches, yet, as it was not committed to writing, there were some variations in it in different churches.†

That infants were both baptized, and also partook of the eucharist, there seems to me to be no reasonable doubt; ‡ since it is impossible to trace its rise, or any variation in the practice; and occasions occurred, at least in the time of Austin, on which learned and ingenious men might have availed themselves of the consideration of the novelty of the practice, if they could have proved it to be novel.

At baptism adult persons answered for themselves; but for children there were appointed sponsors, whose office it was to instruct them in the principles of the Christian religion when they were capable of it. The superstitious custom of exorcising, or casting out evil spirits, which were

\* Lord King's *Enquiry*, Pl. ii. C. i. n.

† *Ibid.* C. iii. Sect. iv.—vi.

‡ *Ibid.* Sect. ii. See also Vol. II. pp. 334, 335, 337, 338. Vol. V. pp. 238, 266, 267, 270—275.

supposed to possess or haunt persons, also preceded baptism in this period. The minister then prayed, and his prayer was very soon supposed to convey some purifying virtue to the water, by which it could actually wash away sin, and on this account some superstitious persons deferred baptism till they apprehended that they were near death. In the act of baptizing it soon became the custom to immerse the person three times, corresponding to the successive invocation of the names of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.\*

In cases in which the dipping of the whole body was inconvenient, as of sick persons, &c, sprinkling was thought to suffice; and though this was not deemed to be so regular a baptism as that by immersion, it was not denied that it had the same consequences; and they who had been baptized in this manner were never baptized again.†

After baptism the Christians put on white raiment, and were then anointed with oil called the chrism, which was applied to the forehead by signing them with the sign of the cross;‡ and after this the person who baptized put his hands upon them, praying that they might receive the Holy Ghost. The superstitious origin of these customs will easily be conceived. Anointing was a ceremony of consecration borrowed from the Jewish ritual: and the sign of the cross was to shew that they should be ready to take up their cross and follow Christ.§ To the above-mentioned ceremonies were sometimes added the eating of milk and honey, as a token of the new converts becoming again children, and commencing a new life ||

The public service of every Lord's-day concluded with the celebration of the Lord's supper: but it was occasionally administered early in the day, and sometimes twice a day.¶ It soon became the custom to exclude the catechumens, as well as those who were in a state of penance, from attending this part of the service, on the idea of its being a *mystery*, resembling the heathen *initiations*. Previous to the celebration in some places, and in others after it, those who attended made their oblations, of things proper for the use of the poor, and for other purposes. After this the minister

\* *Enquiry*, Pt. ii. C. iv. Sect. 1—v. See Vol. V. p. 278.

† *Ibid.* Sect. vi.

‡ There was no unction before baptism in the time of Tertullian, but only after it, and this was begun in his time, probably to represent the unction of the Holy Spirit. *Bingham*, p. 630. P. *Enquiry*, Pt. ii. C. v. Sect. i. v.

§ *Enquiry*, Pt. ii. C. v. Sect. iii. —v. See Vol. V. p. 278.

¶ *Enquiry*, Pt. ii. C. vi. Sect. i.

made a discourse suitable to the occasion, and then prayed. When this was done, he brake the bread, and the deacons distributed it to all who were present. But in some places this was done by the presbyters, or by the bishops themselves, the people coming to the table, and receiving it standing. Lastly, they sung a hymn, which closed the service.\*

The Christian churches in this age were generally built with one end pointing to the east, but they were not considered as *holy*, no ceremony of consecration being then used. The chief day for assembling in these places for public worship, was the first day of the week, or the *Lord's-day*, which was considered as a festival; and on it they neither fasted nor kneeled, but performed their devotions standing. It was also the custom in many of the eastern churches, to assemble for divine worship on Saturday, which was the Jewish sabbath.

The bishops appointed occasional fasts, as they saw reason, and on these days it was the custom to abstain from food till the evening. But it was generally the custom to have two weekly fasts, viz. Wednesdays and Fridays, commonly called *stations*, in allusion to the military stations, or soldiers standing on their guard; and on these days the fasting ended with divine service, at three in the afternoon. The fasting on Friday was in commemoration of the crucifixion; but the reason for fasting on Wednesday is not so well known. Perhaps it was the day on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas. Besides these weekly fasts, which were voluntary, there was an annual one, with us called *Lent*, which was soon considered as necessary to be observed. It lasted from Friday, the day of the crucifixion in Passion week, to the Sunday following, which was the day of the resurrection; and because this fast generally continued forty hours, it was thence termed *quadregesima*. In the progress of superstition this fast of forty hours was extended to forty days. The strictest of all the fasts was called *superposition*, and continued till the morning of the next day, as on Easter eve, and with some on every Saturday.

The most ancient festival among Christians was that of Easter, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. The next was that of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, in remembrance of the descent of the Holy Spirit. This is mentioned by Origen and Tertullian. Christmas was not observed in

this period, but the Epiphany, or the day of Christ's baptism, was observed by the Basilidians. Besides these festivals, every church celebrated its own martyrs on the day of their deaths. All these festivals were spent in religious exercises.

The revenues of any particular church was one gross fund, to which all contributed voluntarily, according to their ability; and, with the consent of all the members, it was appropriated to particular uses, as the maintenance of their clergy and other officers, the relief of the poor, the repairs and other expenses attending the place of worship, &c. In this distribution, as in every thing else, the bishop, without having nominally any more power, would of course have the most influence; and before the close of this period the great sees were possessed of large revenues.\*

## SECTION XI.

### *Of the Doctrines of this Period.*

OF those doctrines which have been deemed to be most important, those concerning the person of Christ continued without any sensible variation from the time of Justin Martyr to that of Constantine. The common people were in general Unitarians, as indeed we find them to be in a later period; but there was, no doubt, an increase of Trinitarians, especially among the more learned clergy, who were struck with the flattering idea (the same, in fact, which had misled the Gnostics) of the natural superiority of the founder of their religion to any thing merely human. They thought that to the complete man Jesus there was superadded the uncreated *Logos* of the Father, which had assumed a proper personality at the time of the creation, and was inseparably united to him from the time of his conception. It was, however, universally acknowledged, that there was a time (if that could be called *time* which preceded the creation) in which this *Logos* had not been emitted from the Father; so that, in the whole eternity which preceded this event, God was the same being that the Jews and the Unitarians held him to be, viz. absolutely *one* and *without a son*.

That Christ had no human soul besides this *Logos*, and that this human soul had pre-existed when the souls of other men had not, and that this created *Logos* (which afterwards

\* See the authorities for the various articles in this Section, collected in Le Clerc King's *Enquiry*, Pt. I.

became the proper soul of Jesus) had been the instrument in the hand of God in making the world, consisting of all things visible and invisible, material and immaterial, is an opinion that, as far as appears, was not started in this period, but we shall see it to rise, and be the cause of great commotions in the Christian world, in the very beginning of the next.

With respect to every doctrine of a properly practical tendency, it cannot be doubted that it was the opinion of all the Christian world within this period, that every man has a natural power to do the will of God; and that God, without the intervention of Christ, is naturally placable to returning sinners; so that the doctrine of supernatural grace, of original sin, of predestination, and of atonement, were then unknown: nor, indeed, did any of them appear till a much later period. It seems, however, to have been generally thought, that God afforded extraordinary aid on extraordinary occasions, as in the time of martyrdom, &c.

There began, indeed, to prevail some obscure notion that, when it is said that Christ died a *ransom* for us, there was something more than a mere figure of speech intended. But that this ransom had been paid to God, and that he had been thereby rendered placable, so that, on this account, repentance had become available to pardon, had not been supposed by any one. If this had been the case, the system of the Gnostics in general, and that of the Manichæans in particular, would have been objected to, as providing no proper atonement for the sins of men. But whatever else was then urged against that scheme, this argument is never mentioned, not even by Austin, in a much later period.

To make something real of the ransom that is said to be given for us, in two or three passages of the New Testament, it was supposed that, since God is the person who is said to have paid this price for us, it must have been given by God to that being in whose power we then were, viz. the devil. But the power that he had acquired over the human race by the sin of Adam, was simply that of making men mortal; death, or mortality, having been the original penalty of sin. By paying this ransom, therefore, it was thought that we were recovered out of the power of the devil, and restored to our former condition of immortality; not indeed to take place immediately, but after death, so that all persons who partook of the redemption by Christ Jesus would be rendered immortal in a future state.

Consequently, this vague notion (which, however, does

not seem to have been much attended to, for it is very seldom mentioned,) had no connexion at all with the pardon of sin, with respect to individuals of the human race. Besides, they who thought that God had paid this price for the redemption of mankind from the power of the devil, were universally of opinion, that, if he had pleased, he might have redeemed, or delivered, men from the power of the devil, or their subjection to death, in any other way. He might have done it, they said, at his arbitrary pleasure, or by mere power, without giving any ransom at all; but that he chose to deliver men in this way, that he might appear just and equitable in his proceedings.\*

\* See "The Opinion of the Fathers till after the Time of Austin," in Vol. V pp. 135—138.



## PERIOD VII.\*

FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSTANTINE IN THE  
EMPIRE, A. D. 313, TILL HIS DEATH, A. D. 337.

WE have now seen the full establishment of the power of Constantine, in conjunction with Licinius, by the deaths of Maxentius and Maximin. I shall now proceed to recite all the subsequent transactions, in which the power of the state was employed in the affairs of the church,† that we may have a distinct view of the situation of the two rival powers, *Christianity* and *Heathenism*, and also of the different sects of Christians, from the beginning to the end of this important reign.

### SECTION I.

*Constantine's first Edict in Favour of Christianity, and of the Union of the Christian Church.*

THE first edict of Constantine and Licinius in conjunction, was issued from Milan, A. D. 313. By this, liberty was given to every person to profess, unmolested, whichever of the two religions he pleased. It was also provided, that the places of public worship, and any other kind of property which had belonged to the Christians, but of which they had been deprived in the late persecution, should be restored to them; and that if any part of their property had been given to others, indemnification should be made to

\* Vol. II. Ed. 1790, and 1803.

† On this interference, the first *Alliance between Church and State*, the judgment of *Milton* is well worthy to be here recorded. He had complained that Truth "is like to find small credit with us for what she can say unless she can bring a ticket from *Craumer*, *Latimer* and *Ridley*: or prove herself a retainer to *Constantine*, and wear his badge." Then speaking of the earlier periods, of Ecclesiastical History, he says, "But it will be objected that this was an unsettled state of the church, wanting the temporal magistrate to suppress the license of false brethren, and the extravagancy of still new opinions, a time not inevitable for church government, where the temporal and spiritual power did not close in one ball, as under *Constantine*. I am not of opinion to think the church *avine*, in this respect, because, as she take it, she cannot subsist without clasp'g about the chair of worldly strength and felicity, as if the heavenly city could not support itself with the poor and buttresses of secular authority." *Of Reformation*, 1723, N. 2. c. 1. pp 174, 179

them out of the public treasury. This was afterwards confirmed by Constantine, in a rescript addressed to Anulinus, the proconsul of Africa.\*

By another rescript, addressed to the same Anulinus, the Christian clergy were exempted from all civil offices, that they might attend without distraction, to their spiritual functions.†

Besides allowing the Christians the full exercise of their religion, and restoring to them whatever they had been deprived of in the late persecution, Constantine likewise ordered large sums of money to be given to the more eminent of the bishops, to defray such expenses as they should deem to be most necessary. A letter of this kind, addressed to Cæcilianus, bishop of Carthage, is preserved in Eusebius.‡ In it Constantine informs him, that Ursus, the treasurer of Africa, had received orders to grant him three thousand *folles*, or purses, (each supposed to contain three pounds and a half of silver), and saying that if any thing more was wanting, he should apply to Heraclides, his steward, and receive it of him. In this letter Constantine likewise informs Cæcilianus, that he had heard of the Catholic church in Africa being disturbed by a faction, and that he had given orders to Anulinus, the proconsul, and to Patricius, the deputy of the prefect, to attend to this business, and to act in it with vigour; and that, if he found any more refractoriness in the party that was hostile to him, he must give information of it to those officers, who would act in it according to his orders.

Constantine had certainly the best intentions in this business, and in every thing else that he attempted of a similar nature,§ and never imagined that he was going beyond the bounds of his proper province, and still less beyond his power, in his endeavours to heal the divisions of the Christian church. Had he adhered to his first edict, by which he gave liberty to all persons to profess, and to practise, whatever religion they pleased, all had been well: but by interposing his own civil authority in matters of religion, he, unknown to himself, was laying the foundation for such an union of civil and ecclesiastical power, as in after ages produced infinite mischief in the world, corrupting that religion to which he was a well-wisher, and doing whatever was in

\* Euseb. Hist. l. x. c. v. p. 480. (P.) Lardner, IV. pp. 164, 165.

† Ibid. c. vii. p. 487. (P.) Ibid. p. 163.

‡ Ibid. c. vi. p. 486. (P.) Ibid.

§ See Constantine's *Virtues and Vices*, estimated by Lardner, IV. pp. 1. — 129

the power of man to render those corruptions perpetual. We shall soon see the issue of this first attempt that was ever made by any christian prince to put an end to difference of opinion among Christians; but we must first attend to similar measures with respect to the heathen religion, and then to other differences among Christians, of more importance than this.

## SECTION II.

### *Of the Part which Constantine took in Favour of the Christians against the Heathens.*

BESIDES the edict for the toleration of the Christian religion, the restoration of whatever had belonged to the churches, and the largesses to different places, according to their occasions, Constantine did all that was in the power of man to do in favour of those who had suffered in the persecution. Those who had been banished were recalled; those who had been condemned to the mines, or any other drudgery, were set at liberty; those who had been degraded, were restored to their honours; or if they did not choose to resume their former offices, they were permitted to enjoy the profits of them, and to live as they pleased.\* The goods and estates of the martyrs, which had been confiscated, were all restored to their natural heirs, or if no heirs could be found, to the churches; and in whatever manner the property had been disposed of, or through whatever hands it had passed, the public treasury was responsible for it.†

The Christianity of Constantine naturally enough led him to examine into the state of Christ's sepulchre, and finding that it had been buried under heaps of rubbish, and that a temple of Venus had been erected on the place, he ordered it to be cleared; and the sepulchre itself being found uninjured, he built over it a magnificent Christian church.‡ He also built a church at Bethlehem, in honour of our Saviour's nativity, and another on the Mount of Olives, the place from which he ascended to Heaven. These churches were built at the particular request of his mother, Helena, a woman of great piety and benevolence, who afterwards visited the churches and ornamented them.§

\* *Vita Const.* l. ii. c. xx. p. 546. (*P.*) *Lardner*, iv. pp. 165, 164.

† *Ibid.* c. xxi. p. 546. (*P.*) *Ibid.* p. 164.

‡ *Ibid.* l. iii. c. xxv. p. 593, &c. (*P.*) *Ibid.* pp. 165, 166.

§ *Ibid.* c. xli. &c. p. 600, &c. (*P.*) *Ibid.* *Sandys*, pp. 124, 138, 156.

He also commissioned Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine, to build a church at Mamre, the place where God appeared to Abraham.\* The building of churches in these particular situations, discovers the superstition of the age, from which Constantine was far from being exempt. Besides these he built a magnificent church at Nicomedia, and in other cities of the empire.†

With respect to Constantinople, the place of his residence, he not only built in it many magnificent churches, but, (*ὁλοῦς ἐμπνεύσει Θεοῦ σοφίας*) wholly inspired by the wisdom of God, as Eusebius says, (but as he ought rather to have said, taking upon him to do what ought to have been left to God himself,) he abolished all idolatry within its precincts, so that no trace of the heathen worship, no temple, altar, sacrifice, or festival, remained in it.‡

The sooner to abolish Paganism, he took away the vestibules, or doors, from some of the temples, and the roofs from others. Some brazen images, which had been revered by the superstition of ages, he removed from their former situations into the public market place. Here you might see the Pythian Apollo, says Eusebius, and there the Sminthian. The sacred tripods of Delphos were placed in the Circus, and the Muses of Helicon in the palace, so that the whole city of Constantinople was filled with the best statues, collected from all the provinces; and those images to which hecatombs had once been sacrificed, were now exposed to public ridicule.

So little was there of zeal for the heathen religion left, that to do all this, Constantine had no occasion to employ an army. He only sent his pious friends to make the circuit of the provinces; and wherever they came, they did every thing they wished to do without the least danger, even from the mob. They obliged the priests to produce their idols, and, stripping them of their gorgeous dresses, publicly exposed their interior deformities. Taking off the precious metals with which some of them were covered, they melted them into useful utensils; but things that could not be converted to any use, they left to be exposed, as monuments of ridiculous superstition.§

Constantine totally demolished a temple of Venus at Aphaca, on Mount Libanus, a place remote from any city, and infamous for the impure rites of prostitution and so-

\* *Vita Const.* l. vi. c. li. p. 107, &c. (P.) — Ibid. c. l. p. 106. (P.)

† Ibid. c. xlvii. p. 66. (P.) — *Laclaur.* IV. pp. 66, 67, 68, 69.

‡ Ibid. c. lxxv. p. 109. (P.) — Ibid. p. 108.

domy.\* In the same manner he treated a celebrated temple of Æsculapius at Ægæ, in Cilicia,† and a much more celebrated temple at Heliopolis in Syria, where the most abominable prostitutions had been practised in honour of Venus, and he erected a handsome church in the place.‡

Our historian observes, that when the Heathens saw all this to be done with impunity, and that the soldiers entered without fear, and without danger, into the most sacred recesses of their temples, and exposed to light what had long been concealed in darkness, many of them were convinced of the folly of their ancient religion, and became Christians.§ In many places the people, of their own accord, destroyed their temples, and built Christian churches in their places.||

At length Constantine ordered all the heathen temples to be shut up, and forbade all sacrifices to the heathen gods through all the Roman empire.¶

He particularly forbade all the secret rites of initiation, all the arts of divination, and the spectacles of gladiators. Whereas the Egyptians imagined that the increase of the Nile depended upon some religious ceremonies in which sodomy was practised, he abolished those abominable rites; and it was observed that, when some superstitious Heathens imagined that the Nile would not overflow as usual, it even rose higher after this.\*\* Thus Constantine acted the part of a bishop with respect to things out of the church, a title which he pleasantly gave himself when he entertained the bishops at his table, while they were bishops with respect to things within the church.†† In this character he acted when he forbade any Jew to have a Christian slave, but more especially when, by his imperial authority, he enforced all the decrees of the councils.‡‡

It is pleasing, however, to find that, notwithstanding the zeal of Constantine in favour of Christianity, and against Heathenism, we do not read of his offering violence to the person of any man; owing perhaps not so much to his lenity, as to the general indifference of the Heathens with respect to their religion, in consequence of their having no

\* *Vita Const.* l. iii. C. iv. p. 610. P. *Lardner*, IV. p. 168.

† *Ibid.* C. lvi. p. 611. P. *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* C. lvi. p. 613. P. *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.* C. lvii. p. 612. P. ¶ *Ibid.* l. iv. C. xxxix. p. 617. P.

¶ *Ibid.* C. xxiii. p. 638. P. “How should Constantine have a right to prohibit his subjects to sacrifice, and worship at the temples? Would he have liked this treatment if some other prince had become a Christian at that time, and he still remained a heathen?” *Lardner*, IV. p. 180. See also *Le Clerc*, quoted by *Lardner*, pp. 181, 182.

\*\* *Ibid.* l. iv. C. xxv. p. 650. P. *Lardner*, IV. p. 198.

†† *Ibid.* C. xxiv. p. 638. (P.) ‡‡ *Ibid.* C. xxvii. p. 646. P.

attachment to it but what arose from their having been educated in it, and a confused idea that the observance of its rites was, in some unknown manner, connected with their temporal prosperity. They did not pretend to have any proper evidence of its truth, and they shewed their zeal for it only by persecuting the Christians, and not by their readiness to suffer any thing themselves; so different was the operation of their zeal and that of the Christians; a difference which can only be accounted for from the Christians knowing, and being fully persuaded of, the great truths for which they suffered, as being founded on evident facts, for which they could produce the clearest historical evidence, whereas, the Heathens could say nothing in favour of their religion, but that it had been practised by their ancestors, on what grounds they could not tell.

It is evident, however, from the subsequent history, that the edicts of Constantine were by no means carried into rigid execution, for the heathen worship was continued in most places, and especially in the villages; the common and illiterate people, who have the least intercourse with the world, and who are the least disposed to speculate, being always the last to change their opinions or practices. On this account, the Heathens being for the most part to be found in the villages, and not in the cities, they got the name of *paganis*, pagans, from *pagus*, a village.

It is evident, from the life of Constantine by Eusebius, that all who chose to worship the heathen gods were at liberty to do it;\* and in his oration to the Christians, he bids the Heathens go to their sacrifices, festivals and debauches, if they chose it; telling them, however, that, under pretence of celebrating their sacred rites, they only indulged their own lusts.†

\* Euseb. Hist. l. in. c. lxx. p. 68. *P.*

† *Ibid.* c. xi. p. 68. *P.* "He expresseth his desire, that the Gentiles, who are in error, may enjoy the same peace and quiet with believers, as being conducive to the bringing them into the right way. 'Let every one do,' says he, 'what his soul desires.' He wishes that all were unanimous in the truth, and in obedience to God's holy law. Nevertheless, if any dissent, and withdraw themselves, let them have the same liberty of lies, since they choose them."

‡ The heathen emperor expressed himself with so much mildness—yet certainly he did not intend to leave the temples to the heathen people, and let them enjoy their worship there.—Eusebius, comparing Constantine with other emperors, says, 'The emperor reformed the temples to be magnificently adorned: he demolished them to the foundation, especially such as were most respected by superstitious people'—but it seems, that as Constantine's government and the Christian religion were established, the severity of the laws against the heathen people increased.

"A prince has the advantage of a right to do many things, for the service of truth and virtue—But for a prince to pull down men's temples, where nothing is done contrary to the peace of society, to deprive them of their statues and other conse-

Constantine did real service to Christianity by writing to Sapor, king of Persia, in favour of the Christians in his kingdom, of whom he had been informed there were great numbers, but where they had probably been much persecuted at different times, as well as in all the provinces of the Roman empire, and indeed wherever they were settled, though we have no particular account of their sufferings, or of the number of martyrs among them. But the spirit of Heathenism, and also that of Christianity, being the same in all places, we may safely conclude that the treatment of the Christians in one country was in general pretty much the same in all the rest. In this letter he informs the Persian monarch, that by the help of God he had established the true religion from the utmost boundary of the West, and through all the provinces of his empire; that in the captivity of Valerian, and in the overthrow of the persecuting emperors over whom he had triumphed, God had shewn himself to be the enemy of haughtiness, superstition and cruelty. He concludes with expressing his satisfaction in hearing of the multitude of Christians there were in his dominions, and recommending them to his favour and protection.\*

As a proof that Sapor had nothing to fear from tolerating or embracing Christianity, the argument of Constantine was, no doubt, very proper; but he mistook the nature of Christianity if he imagined that (excepting peace of mind and inward satisfaction) any part of the rewards of it are in this life.

In this letter there is no allusion to any persecution of the Christians by Sapor, and whether he had exercised any severities against them at this time does not appear; but afterwards he carried on a very cruel persecution of them, of which an account will be given in the reign of Constantius, though Sozomen refers it to the time of Constantine.

### SECTION III.

#### *Of Constantine's Interference in the Business of the Donatists*

WHEN Constantine wrote the letter above-mentioned, the famous Donatus, from whom the whole sect was denominated, had succeeded Majorinus; and the Donatists, perceiving that

crated ornaments, and to forbid them to worship in the way they approve, and that under heavy penalties: what is it but to vindicate, so far as he is able, by his conduct, all instances of persecution in times past, and to encourage and excite to the like injustice in times to come?" *Lardner*, IV. pp. 164, 165, 167, 168, 181.

\* *Vita Const.* L. iv. C. ix p. 631, &c. (*P.*) *Lardner*, IV p 184

they were aimed at in the letter, and being much offended at it, applied to the proconsul to depose Cæcilianus, and to give the bishopric of Carthage to Donatus.\* But he, not choosing to act by his own authority, referred them to the emperor, who appointed three bishops of Gaul, or Germany, and Miltiades, bishop of Rome, to hear and decide in the case. At the same time he wrote to Miltiades a letter, which is preserved by Eusebius, in which he expresses his concern that the Christians and their bishops, should be divided among themselves; and informs him, that he had given orders that Cæcilianus, with ten bishops to be named by himself, and ten others chosen by the Donatists, should go to Rome, and that he had appointed that he and three other bishops should examine into the affair, and decide between them; saying, that such was his concern for the most holy catholic church, that he would not suffer any schism to remain in it.†

In consequence of this, the ten bishops of each class repaired to Rome; and Miltiades having called a council of fifteen other bishops of Italy, they, in conjunction with three others particularly appointed by the emperor, heard the complaints of the Donatists against Cæcilianus, and not only acquitted him, but passed a censure on Donatus for having rebaptized Catholics, and for having ordained bishops who had apostatized in the late persecution.

With this decision the Donatists were by no means satisfied, and they applied again to the emperor, complaining of the partiality of those who had been judges in their cause. On this, Constantine sent two bishops to Carthage to see if the difference might not be compromised on the spot; but they returned without having seen any reason to condemn the decision of the Council of Italy, though without having been able to give any satisfaction to the Donatists. Constantine then condescended to hear the parties himself at Brescia, but neither was he able to accommodate their differences.

The disturbance increasing, rather than being lessened, after the return of the parties to Africa, Constantine ordered a general council to meet at Arles; and one of his letters on this subject, addressed to the bishop of Syracuse, is preserved by Eusebius.‡ In it he informs him of the steps which he had taken to heal this breach, and that since the

\* Augustine, *Hist.* l. x. *Verbock*, W. p. 92.

† *Hist.* l. x. C. v. p. 141. *P.* *Ibid.* pp. 93—97.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 136. *P.*

Donatists (whom he does not mention by name, but by a description which shews that he was much displeas'd with them) had complain'd of the small number of bishops who had decid'd against them before, he had summon'd a greater number to judge in the case; and therefore order'd that he and two of his presbyters, and three servants, travelling at the public expense, should meet his brethren at Arles, on the calends of August following.

Accordingly, two hundred bishops attend'd, one of whom was Restitutus, from *London*; and Martin, the bishop of Arles, presid'd in it. In this council, held A. D. 311, Cæcilianus was acquitt'd, and the Donatists condemn'd again. But even this solemn decision did not put an end to the schism. The Donatists appeal'd once more to the emperor himself; and two years after this, viz. A. D. 316, he gave them another hearing, at Milan, or Arles, when he again declar'd Cæcilianus innocent, and order'd that they should give him no farther trouble on the subject. But they complain'd, and perhaps justly, that the emperor had been prepossess'd by their enemies (and indeed all his orders respecting this business sufficiently shew it), return'd to Africa in as bad temper as ever. They even violently seiz'd upon a church which had belong'd to the Catholics, but probably one of which they had been unjustly dispossessed. This, Constantine order'd to be restor'd, and moreover intend'd to go in person to Africa, to put a final end to this schism, which had given him so much trouble. But this not being convenient to him, he contented himself with giving orders that all the Donatists should be banish'd.

Afterwards, finding that this harsh measure had been productive of more mischief than good, and perhaps being, upon reflection, more favourably dispos'd towards the Donatists, he relented in their favour, and A. D. 321 recall'd them from banishment, but without permitting them to build churches, or to hold any public assemblies. In consequence of this, the Donatists, who consider'd themselves as in a state of persecution, and did not choose to abandon the exercise of their religion, were oblig'd to live in the mountainous parts of the country, where, in a course of time, many of them degenerat'd into a kind of banditti, and got the name of *Circuncelliones*. Then, considering themselves as exiles from their country, they committed the most horrid depredations on the inhabitants of the plains; though it is probable that the accounts of these disorders are much exaggerat'd

by their enemies, from whom alone we have all that we know of them.

This was the first attempt of a Christian emperor to decide a controversy in religion, and the issue shews how very unpromising the precedent was. However, the intention of Constantine was unquestionably good.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *The History of the Arian Controversy till the Council of Nice.*

IN the course of this period of my history there arose a controversy in the Christian church, the consequences of which were far greater, both with respect to extent and duration, than those of any that were of a merely speculative nature, from the origin of Christianity to the present day. The commotion occasioned by it was so sudden, and spread so fast, that Eusebius compares it to a large conflagration arising from a small spark. Beginning at Alexandria, it presently spread over all Egypt, the extreme parts of Thebais and Lybia, and then over other cities and provinces;\* so as not only to divide the bishops, and engage them in eager controversy, as with swords, says our historian, but the common people also; some of them taking part with one side, and some with the other. The scandal it gave was so great, that it even furnished a subject for comedy on the theatres of the Heathens.†

This was the famous *Arian controversy* relating to the person of Christ. And it is not a little remarkable, that Christians should have interested themselves more to determine who Christ was, than what he did or taught: which, as a prophet, or a messenger from God to man, it certainly most concerns his professed disciples to inform themselves of.

Till this period we have seen only three distinct opinions concerning Christ. The first, and by universal confession the oldest, that of his being simply a man, the Messiah of the Jews: the second was that of the Gnostics, who thought him to be a super-angelic spirit, either superadded to a man, or assuming only the appearance of one: the third was that of the Platonizing fathers, who thought that, to the man Jesus, who consisted of a body and soul, like other men, there was superadded not a super-angelic spirit (which

\* Socrat. Hist. Eccl. C. vi. *Lambert*, IV. p. 109.

† *Vita Const. Eccl. C. lxi.* p. 369. *P.*

had the same origin with other derived spiritual substances), but the *logos* of the Supreme Being himself, a principle that was uncreated, and properly divine.

This attribute was supposed to have been originally the same with respect to God, that *reason* is with respect to man; but that it had been detached from him, as a ray of light from the sun, first for the purpose of creating the material worlds, then to form those appearances with which the patriarchs were favoured, and lastly that it resided permanently in Jesus Christ; so that, with respect to the superior part of his composition, he might be said to have existed before the creation of the world, though not long before that event. This, however, being before the commencement of what is usually called time, might be said to be, in the way of speaking which was customary in this period, from eternity. According to this system, Christ was God, and likewise the being who made the world, and who had been the medium of all the intercourse which the Divine Being had with it in all ages.

But in this period we find at least the principal elements of another distinct opinion concerning the person of Christ, viz. that the *logos*, which was one part of him, was not an uncreated principle, but had been made, like other things, *out of nothing*, and was not superadded to a complete man, but was a proper soul to the body of Jesus. To this created *logos* were ascribed all the functions of the uncreated one, viz. that of having made all things, and of having been the visible Jehovah of the Old Testament, or the medium of all the divine communications of God with mankind. We shall find, however, if we attentively consider the following history, that it was a long time, not less than half a century, before this new opinion was completely formed, and maintained by any considerable number of persons. For it is resolvable into several distinct parts, and the connexion there is between them was not distinctly perceived at first, so that they were adopted one after another, and were held with much inconsistency and hesitation, as has generally been the case with other new systems of doctrine.

Radically different as this opinion is from that of the Platonizing fathers, the learned world was in some measure prepared for it, by the gradual evanescence of the philosophical doctrine of the *emanation* of all spirits from the substance of God, which was thought to render him too much like material substances, and by the scriptural idea of a proper *creation out of nothing*, which philosophers had never

admitted. Also the Platonizing fathers, in the apologies which they made to the common people, for their new doctrine of the divinity of Christ, had been led to speak of him as greatly inferior to the Father; and, in their controversies with the learned Unitarians, they had even said that he was of a *different substance* from the Father; the divinity of the Father and that of the Son not being *the same*, as the Sabellians were charged with making it.

Now it clearly followed, that if Christ was of a different substance from the Father, he could not be properly divine, but must have been created like other things, and, like them, out of nothing. And since it had always been supposed that the logos did not assume personality till just before the creation of the world, there must have been a time when he did not exist at all. These natural consequences, however, had not been attended to, but they gave a great advantage to the defenders of the new opinion, and contributed greatly to embarrass the advocates of that doctrine which, by the decision of councils, was deemed to be orthodox.

The little spark, as Eusebins calls it, which occasioned the great conflagration, arose as follows: Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, who excelled in logic (a science which was much cultivated by the learned of that age), having advanced an opinion concerning the person of Christ which occasioned some dispute among the clergy, Alexander, the bishop, at first neglected it; but, at the persuasion of his friends, he at length gave both parties a hearing, and though towards the beginning of the conference he did not seem to favour one party more than the other, at length he took part against Arius. This is the account of Sozomen.\*

But Socrates says, that as Alexander was discoursing in an ostentatious manner (*ἐπιφανιστικῶς*) on the subject of the Trinity, in the presence of his presbyters, and (using philosophical language) said that there was an *unity in the Trinity* (*ἐν τριῶνι μοναχία εἰς τρία*), Arius, one of his presbyters, replied, that such language savoured of Sabellianism, which undoubtedly it did; for the Sabellians had always been charged with contounding the persons of the Trinity, and making them to be only one.

In the course of the debate Arius likewise said, that if the Father beget the Son, there must have been a beginning to the Son's existence; and consequently a time when he

was not. This was the language of standard orthodoxy, if by the existence of Christ was meant his existence *as a son*. For Tertullian, in conformity with the doctrine of his age, said, "There was a time when God was neither a father nor a judge; since he could not be a father before he had a son, nor a judge before there was sin." But the language of Arius was not orthodox, if by the existence of Christ, or of the Son, was meant that principle or attribute in the Father, which, before the creation of the world, became the Son; and therefore what Arius added, viz. that since there was a time when the Son was not, he must have been created out of nothing, did not follow.\*

Such was the doctrine that Arius advanced in this casual, but famous conference, which is supposed to have been held A. D. 315. What was at that time urged in defence of the old, or of the new opinion, is not recorded; but the particulars being reported abroad, very great consequences soon followed. The opinion of Arius appeared so plausible, that it spread rapidly in Egypt, the Upper Thebais and Lybia, and even to more distant places, especially in the East, where it was patronized by many, and especially by Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, one of the most distinguished prelates of that age.

They who took the part of Arius at Alexandria were Aithalas, Achilles, Carpones, Sarmata, and another Arius, who were all presbyters, and Euzoius, Macarius, Lucius, Julianus, Menas and Helladius, who were deacons. They were also joined by a great part of the laity of the city, and by Theonas and Secundus, bishops in Egypt.†

Alexander, offended at the great and unexampled popularity of his opponent, called a council of about a hundred bishops, in which the opinion of Arius was condemned, and himself and his friends of the clergy were degraded. Also, according to the custom of the times, he sent an account of the resolutions of this council to the bishops of distant sees. The letter is preserved in Socrates, and is to this effect:

After speaking of Arius as the forerunner of Antichrist, and warning those to whom he wrote against regarding any thing that should be said in his favour by Eusebius of Nicomedia (who, he said, had taken his part only to promote his own purposes), he mentions the followers of Arius in Egypt, and then gives an account of his faith; as asserting that Christ was of a substance different from that of the

\* Socrat. Hist. L. i. C. v. p. 9. (P.) *Larbuér*, IV. pp. 111, 112.

† *Ibid.* C. vi. p. 11. (P.)

Father; that there was a time when he was not; that he was a creature, and not the true wisdom of the Father; that he was liable to change like other creatures; that he does not perfectly know the Father, who was invisible to him; that he was not able perfectly to comprehend himself, that he was made for our use (viz. that by his means God might create us); and that he might even change for the worse, as the devil had done.

In this account there is either much exaggeration, or the bishop must have taken advantage of expressions which dropped from Arius in the heat of debate, and which he retracted afterwards.

In answer to these positions, real or supposed, of Arius, the bishop proceeds to say, that they are inconsistent with what John says of the *logos*, which was in the beginning with God, and that all things that were created, were created by him; so that, on his hypothesis, the Son must have made himself; that he could not have been made out of nothing, because it is said that the *logos* comes from the heart, the womb, or the substance of God; that he cannot be of a substance dissimilar to that of the Father, because he is said to be the express image of his person, and because he said, *he that seeth me, seeth the Father*. If the Son was the reason and the wisdom of the Father, there could never be a time when he was not, for then God must have been without reason or wisdom; Christ could never have been liable to change, because he said, *I am in the Father and the Father in me, I and the Father are one*; and the apostle says of him, that he is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. He must know the Father, because he expressly said, *the Father knows me, and I know the Father*.

I mention these particulars of this letter, because they tend to explain the nature of the controversy, and are such arguments as were always alleged by the Catholics against the Arians, and therefore need not be repeated on any future occasion. The bishop concludes his circular letter with violent invectives against Arius and his followers,\* and again warning all persons against paying any regard to what Eusebius of Nicomedia might write in his favour.†

Alexander, seeing that Arius was not discouraged by his degradation and excommunication, but that he and his friends

\* Whom "he calls apostates, and enemies of Christ, and impious. He says they had done their utmost to exceed all past heresies, and approach nearer to Antichrist." *Lardner*, IV. p. 104.

† Soerat. L. i. C. vi. p. 10. (P.) *Ibid.* pp. 109, 150.

formed separate congregations, wrote a longer letter on the subject to Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, in which he complains of being even persecuted by the Arians (which implies that their numbers were very great), and in which he argues much more largely against their opinions. But as in this letter he says that their doctrine was the same with that of Ebion, Artemas, Paulus Samosatensis and Lucian of Antioch, in which he was certainly mistaken, it is the more probable that there might be some misrepresentation in the first account that he gave of the opinions of Arius. To the same purpose he wrote to Philogonius, bishop of Antioch, and to Eustathius, bishop of Berea.\*

On the other hand, Arius, in vindication of himself, wrote to his friend Eusebius of Nicomedia, complaining of his persecution by Alexander, for not assenting to the following assertions, viz. That the Son was always, that he existed in God in an unbegotten state, that he was always begotten (*αειγεννης, αγεννηλογενης*), that the Father did not precede the Son a single moment, and that he derived his being from the substance of God himself. He says that all the bishops of the East agreed with him in saying, that God, who alone was (*αγεννηλος*) without origin, preceded the Son, except Philogonius of Antioch, Hellanicus of Tripoli, and Macarius of Jerusalem, of whom the first said that the Son was an *eructation* from the Father, the second a *projection* from him, and the third that he was equally with himself unbegotten (*συναγεννηλον*); impieties, which he says he could not bear, though those heretics should threaten him with a thousand deaths.

As to himself, he says, that he had always professed that the Son was not unbegotten (*αγεννηλος*) in any sense, nor produced from any thing that pre-existed, but was made by the will of the Father before the ages, complete God, the only begotten, and immutable; but that he did not exist before he was begotten or created. I am persecuted, he adds, because I said the Son has an origin (*αρχην εχει*) but God has none (*αναρχος*): that the Son is from the things that were not, not being part of God, or made of any pre-existing matter. Here I would observe, that Arius allows the title of God to the Son, though in an inferior sense, but

\* Theod. Hist. L. i. C. iv. p. 9. (P.) "Alexander, in his letter, speaks as if there were many women at Alexandria who sided with Arius: and their zeal is represented by him as very great; though afterwards, to diminish their credit, as it seems, he speaks of the women that had been deceived, as few, or considerable." Lardner, IV. p. 108.

denies what was laid to his charge, of Christ being liable to change. In this letter Arius enumerates among his friends, Eusebius of Cæsarea, Theodotus of Laodicea, Paulinus of Tyre, Athanasius of Anazarbus, Gregory of Berytus, and Ætius of Lydda.\*

On receiving this letter, and after colling it is said, a council of the bishops of Bithynia, in concurrence with them, Eusebius wrote to Paulinus, bishop of Tyre, desiring that he would write to Alexander, not doubting the weight of his authority with him, and expressing his surprise at the novelty of his assertions and the weakness of his reasons. "We never heard," he says, "of two that were unbegotten, or of one being divided into two, which would suppose them to be of a corporeal nature; but of one unbegotten, and another produced by him, but not from his substance, or in any respect of the same nature with him. We read in the Scripture that Christ was created, as when he says (Prov. viii. 22), *God created me in the beginning of his ways.* If the term begotten must be understood of the derivation from the substance of God, other beings have the same origin with Christ, for they are said to be begotten by God, as, Isa. i. 2, *I have begotten children.*" †

Arius also and his friends wrote to Alexander, asserting that the doctrine which they held was the same that he himself had openly taught in their hearing, viz. that there is one God, who alone is unbegotten, immutable, &c., who begat his Son at his own pleasure, before all time, a perfect creature of God though not like any other creature, and that when, at his creation, he imparted all glory to the Son, he could not be supposed to divest himself of his prerogative, of having all things originally in himself, for he is the fountain of all. There are therefore three hypostases, the Father, the Son and the Spirit; but that though Christ was begotten before all time, he was not therefore eternal, or co-eternal with God; and that, on the principle of Christ being of the same substance with the Father, God must be corporeal and divisible.

Almost all the language of this letter might have been used alike by the orthodox and the Arians. For the Platonic fathers had frequently called the *generation* of the Son a creation, and by the phrase *before all time* they meant before the creation of the world, but not properly *from all*

\* Theod. Hist. Eccl. C. vi. p. 22. P. V. *Tarbitio*, IV. pp. 19, 20, 21, 22.

† Ibid. Hist. C. vi. p. 22. P. "Nothing remains of Eusebius, than a undoubtedly genuine, except *this letter.*" *Lordser*, IV. p. 130.

*eternity*. They had also uniformly represented him as greatly inferior to the Father, and as having derived all things from him. But it is evident, from their writings, that, notwithstanding this, they considered the Son as the personified reason of the Father, and therefore as, *in him*, properly eternal.

Eusebius of Nicomedia also wrote to Eusebius of Caesarea, and Patrophilus of Scythopolis, requesting, at the same time, that they would permit Arius, and those of his friends who were of the rank of presbyters, to preach in congregations belonging to their churches, as was the custom in Alexandria. To this request the bishops above-mentioned, and also the other bishops of Palestine, consented.\*

While Alexander and Arius were thus exerting themselves to strengthen their respective parties, all the Christian world was full of contention, churches being divided against churches; and persons of the same neighbourhood and family were also divided, and exasperated against each other.†

The pious and well-meaning emperor, for such undoubtedly he was,‡ was deeply concerned that the religion which he had embraced should be disgraced by such altercations, on a subject which, whether he well understood or not, at that time appeared to him to be of a very trifling nature; and that he might not neglect to do every thing in his power to prevent the farther spread of the mischief, he himself wrote to the parties concerned, by Hosius, bishop of Corduba in Spain, one of the most respectable prelates of his age, and for whom the emperor had very justly a great esteem.

He begins with saying, that the great object of his reign was to accomplish two things, first to establish the uniform worship of God among all nations, and then to correct all abuses of a civil nature. The former of these he hoped to compass by address, and in the latter he meant to employ force; but he said that he should more easily accomplish the latter, if he could first succeed in the former. Then, having expressed the deep concern which the disturbances in Africa (meaning those concerning the Donatists) had given him, and the measures which he had taken to put an end to them, he observes, that the dissensions which had now arisen among

\* Sozom. Hist. l. i. c. xv. p. 22. (F.) † Ibid. p. 23.

‡ See *supra*, p. 276. Lardner does "not in the least doubt but that Constantine became a sincere Christian." Yet he argues, from the manner in which he employed his new religion, as a powerful instrument of *State-craft*, "that Constantine was a politician as well as a Christian." *Lardner*, IV. p. 158.

them were of a much more threatening nature than those; and yet, that when he endeavoured to trace the cause of them, it appeared to him to be very inconsiderable. He therefore hoped, that, by making himself a moderator in the dispute, it might be brought to an amicable termination.

He then blames both the parties, Alexander for proposing questions on such a difficult subject, and Arius for entering into the discussion of them; but he hoped that, by mutual acknowledgments, and mutual forgiveness, they might be reconciled, especially as, in reality, they held the same opinions. He farther observed, that if philosophers could adhere to the same sect, notwithstanding several differences of opinion, much more might Christians hold communion with each other, notwithstanding such differences as were among them. He therefore earnestly intreated them to restore to him the tranquillity of his days and nights, which had been much interrupted by this affair, and without which he should be overwhelmed with grief.

As a proof of this, he said, that it had been his intention to make a progress into the East, and that he had proceeded as far as Nicomedia (which was just after the defeat of Licinius, A. D. 324), but had been prevented from going any farther by the afflicting news of this dissension, not being able to bear the sight of that, which it had given him so much pain to hear of.\*

No mode of address, it must be allowed, could have been better calculated to compose this difference, than this of Constantine, especially as, at this time, he was careful not to exasperate either of the parties by declaring himself in favour of one more than the other, as perhaps he might think he had unfortunately done in the case of the Donatists. And he might naturally imagine, that, after so much as he had done in favour of the Christian religion, it was not too much to expect that, in return, the ministers of it would oblige him by living in peace with one another, especially as, in his opinion, they had so little to contend about.

But, in the eyes of the contending parties, the matter in question appeared in a very different light. As Eusebius observes, the business was of too great magnitude to be managed by a letter; and notwithstanding all the address of the emperor, the impression which a sense of his merits must have made upon their minds, and the apprehension which some of them might have of his power, the conten-

\* Euseb. *Vita Const.* L. ii. C. lxiv. p. 367, &c. (P.) *Lardner*, IV. pp. 187, 188.

tion increased every day, till it inflamed all the provinces of the East.\* If any thing in the following history can serve as a lesson to princes not to interfere in the business of religion and conscience, this may. No other prince can ever have so many or so great advantages for composing differences among Christians as Constantine was possessed of; but he failed of gaining his end, as all others have done since.

In reply to this letter of Constantine, Alexander addressed one to him, but the contents of it are not mentioned.† Arius, no doubt, wrote likewise. The result was, that Constantine summoned Arius and his friends before him, when he was attended by some bishops, who were probably no friends of Arius. For Epiphanius says, that, in this conference, Arius denied what was laid to his charge, and that Constantine said to him, “I trust that if thou dissemblest, or deniest any thing, thou wilt be detected by that God whom thou callest to witness.”

It is also said that, though Eusebius of Nicomedia did every thing that he could in favour of Arius, the emperor some time after this conference wrote a long letter, addressed to Arius and his friends, but circulated through the empire, composed in the form of the most violent invective, in which Arius is called the very image of the devil, &c.‡ The whole of this letter Baronius says he found in Latin in the Vatican library, and he gives it at full length. It is so full of the grossest abuse, that if this emperor had not expressed himself in a similar manner on similar occasions, as we shall see in the course of this history, I should have concluded, without hesitation, that this letter had been composed by some of the catholic party a long time after the transaction; and I still own that I much doubt whether Constantine wrote this letter, at least in this stage of the business.

If there be any truth in what is related by Epiphanius, we must say that, by some means or other, Constantine had now taken his part, and that he was as decidedly against Arius as he had been against Donatus, and consequently that all that he did afterwards was only a measure of his own to suppress what he thought to be a faction in the church; and from this we may judge of the temper with which the holy fathers would meet him at Nice, and what justice Arius had to expect from them.

\* *Vita Const.* L. ii. C. lxxiii. p. 572. (P.) *Lordner*, IV. p. 188.

† *Epiph. Hær.* lxxix. Sect. ix. Opera, I. p. 734. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

## SECTION V.

*The History of the Council of Nice. A. D. 325.*

THE emperor, finding that the letter which he had sent to Alexandria had produced no good effect, and deeply reflecting within himself on the subject, determined to make another war, as Eusebius says, against the invisible author of so much evil; and presently raising as it were a divine phalanx against him, convoked a general council, summoning the bishops from all quarters to attend him at Nice in Bythmia, as speedily as possible, and furnishing them, at the expense of the state, with every convenience for their journeys. Upon this, he says, the hope of advantage, the convenience of the present peace, and the desire of seeing so great an emperor, made them rush from their homes as chariots from a goal.\* Going, therefore, with so much eagerness to see the emperor, and with the hope of such favours as he alone could confer, there can be no doubt with respect to the previous dispositions of these bishops to comply with his wishes, whenever they should be known to them.

On this summons the chief of the bishops, says Eusebius (but by what rule the selection was made does not appear), flocked to Nice from all quarters of the Roman empire, from all the provinces of Asia Minor, from Thrace, Macedonia, Achaia and Epirus; from Cilicia, Syria, Phenicia, Arabia, Palestine, Egypt, Thebais, Lybia, Mesopotamia; one from Persia; one, or perhaps more, from Sicily, and one from Spain, † viz. the celebrated Hosius. The bishop of Rome could not attend on account of his age, but he sent presbyters to supply his place. In all, Eusebius says, there were above 250 bishops, that the presbyters, deacons, acolyths, and others, were without number, and that they were all entertained at the expense of the emperor. ‡

\* Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* C. v. p. 522. — *P. L. Tardier*, IV. p. 130.

† Rome was not in the opinion that there were British bishops in this council. *Hist. d'Asie*, II. p. 141, 147.

‡ *Vite Cost.* I. c. 2. C. 1. v. 11, pp. 370, &c. Considering the 2100 number of bishops in the Christian Church at this time, 250 or 318, as they are more commonly reckoned, was 10<sup>th</sup> of the population of the whole, and is a circumstance that gives some degree of credit to the account given by Eusebius, who is said to have consulted the archives of the church of Alexandria. He says there were more bishops invited to Nice, and that Constantine, having heard their opinions, which were very various, but approving those of the 518, who held the same doctrine, he appointed them to meet in a large room, and gave them power

On the day appointed for the holding of the council, the bishops and all the inferior clergy above-mentioned were assembled in the largest room in the palace, rows of seats being placed on each side of it; and all having taken their places, they waited standing in respectful silence for the emperor, who, being preceded by several of his friends, at length made his appearance, as Eusebius says, like an angel of God, exceeding all his attendants in size, gracefulness and strength, and dazzling all eyes with the splendour of his dress; but shewing the greatest humility and modesty in his manner of walking, gesture and behaviour. Having taken his station in the middle of the upper part of the room, near a low chair that was covered with gold, he did not sit down till the fathers desired it.

All being now seated, the bishop, says Eusebius, whose place was the first at the right hand of the emperor (meaning, it is probable, himself),\* rose; and addressing the emperor, gave thanks to God on his account, probably congratulating the church on its prosperous condition, brought about by his means. Then he sitting down, the emperor himself addressed the company in Latin, expressing his happiness in seeing them all met on so glorious an occasion as the amicable settlement of all their differences, which, he said, had given him more concern than all his wars; but that all these being at an end, he had nothing more at heart than to be the

to make decrees. The same account Selden, the publisher of Eutychius, found in an Arabian and Christian writer named Joseph, and also in a celebrated Mahometan historian, Ismael Ebn Au.

This account Beausobre thinks may be reconciled with that given by the Greek writers, if it be supposed that the bishops of villages, presbyters, and those who were deemed to be heretical, were not allowed to have a seat with the rest. Wormius says, that no sectary was allowed to give his opinion in that council. *Histoire de Manichéisme*, I. p. 531.

Mr Gibbon, collecting the account from Bingham, and others, says, that the Catholic church was governed by 1800 bishops, of whom 1000 were seated in Greece, and 800 in the Latin provinces of the empire. *Hist.* II. p. 213. And, besides these, the number of *choroepiscopi*, or village bishops, must at that time have been very great. According to Bingham *Summary*, I. p. 298, Basil, some time after, had 50 of them under him; and, as Eusebius says, that presbyters, &c. without number attended, those could not surely be excluded. That these presbyters, however, had no votes, is evident, because the decrees were signed by no other than 318 bishops; and if they retired without making any remonstrances, that have come down to us, the inferior bishops may have done the same. (P.)

"318 is the number which has been generally followed. And divers ancient writers have observed a mystery in it, that the synod should consist exactly of the same number of men with which Abraham Gen. xiv. 14. overcame his enemies. Beausobre, who did not implicitly embrace the prevailing opinions of the times in which he lived, observes, that the number was not fixed at 318 till after the mystery of it had been found out." *Lardner*, IV. p. 189.

\* Some think that it was Eustathius, who was first bishop of Beroea, and afterwards of Antioch, who made this speech. (P.) See *Lardner*, IV. p. 190.

means of settling the peace of the church ; and he concluded with expressing his earnest wish that they would, as speedily as possible, remove every cause of dissension, and lay the foundation of a lasting peace. What he said in Latin was interpreted to the fathers in Greek.

Immediately after this speech, this excellent emperor was witness to a scene which must have afforded him a very unpromising prospect as to the success of his project for peace. For, before they entered upon the discussion of any thing that related to the great object of their meeting, the bishops began with complaining to the emperor of each other, and vindicating themselves ; but of what kind these mutual accusations were, our author does not say, but only that to every thing that was said the emperor gave a patient hearing, and that by his mildness, and great address, speaking to them in Greek (which he was in some measure able to do) he at length prevailed upon them to come to an agreement, not only, adds our author, with respect to their private differences, but also with respect to the two great objects of their assembling, viz. the rule of faith (meaning what related to the Arian controversy) and the time of celebrating Easter.\* This implies that the emperor attended all the debates of the council, which continued a considerable time, and that he took an active part in them.

Socrates says that the bishops, having put into the emperor's hands written libels, containing their complaints against each other, he threw them all together into the fire, advising them, according to the doctrine of Christ, to forgive one another, as they hoped to be forgiven themselves. † Sozomen says, that the bishops having made their complaints in person, the emperor bade them reduce them all into writing, and that, on the day which he had appointed to consider them, he said, as he threw all the billets unopened into the fire, that it did not belong to him to decide the differences of Christian bishops, and that the hearing of them must be deferred till the day of judgment. ‡ According to any of these accounts, the story gives us a favourable opinion of the emperor, but a very unfavourable one of those Christian bishops, who, after a time of grievous persecution, had learned no more of the Christian temper than they appear to have done, and whose mutual animosities were so great, that they could not prevent them from breaking out

\* Euseb. *Vita Const.* l. iii. c. xiii. xiv. p. 584. (P.) *Lardner*, IV. p. 190

† Hist. l. i. c. viii. p. 29. (P.)

‡ Ibid. c. xvii. p. 35. (P.)

on this solemn occasion, in the presence of the emperor himself.

When the chief subject, for the decision of which they were assembled, came to be debated, the principal persons who appeared on the side of Arius, who was also present himself, were Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nice, and Maris of Chalcedon; and the person who chiefly opposed them, and who will make a great figure in the subsequent part of this history, was Athanasius, then only a deacon of the church of Alexandria, but much confided in by Alexander the bishop. But it is probable that in this, as in almost every other public transaction, every thing of consequence was previously settled by the principal actors, who were in the confidence of the emperor.

According to Philostorgius, Alexander bishop of Alexandria, and Hosius of Corduba (who is well known to have been in the good graces of the emperor) meeting with some others at Nicomedia, settled among themselves, that, in the ensuing council, Christ should be declared to be *consubstantial* with the Father, and that Arius should be banished.\*

It is said that, after the fathers in this council had debated some time in the forms of logic, a plain layman, a confessor, stood up, and observed that Christ and the apostles did not speak in this manner, but preached faith and good works; and by this he is said to have silenced the logicians.† But certainly they had occasion for all their logic to compose such a creed as they at length determined upon. In what manner the debate proceeded till they came to this agreement is not known, but the creed itself, as far as we are at present concerned in it, is as follows:

“ I believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made,” &c.

To this creed was subjoined the following anathema.

\* Hist. l. i. c. vii. p. 478. (P.)

† The following is probably another representation of the same story. “ It is memorable that, in the Council of Nice, a shrewd pagan philosopher, that withstood and perplexed all the learned bishops, was confuted and converted by a plain, honest layman. (Ruffin, l. i. c. iii. Hist. Trip. l. ii. c. xxxi.)” *Hist. of Popery*, 1755, l. p. 25.

“The Catholic and Apostolic church of God anathematizes those who say that there ever was a time when the Son was not, or that he did not exist before he was generated, or that he was made out of nothing, or out of any other substance, or that he is subject to change.”\*

The clauses in this creed which are particularly opposed to the opinions of Arius are those which assert that Christ was not properly *made*, so as to come under the denomination of a *creature*, but that he was *begotten*, and that his essence or substance was the very same with that of the Father himself. By their asserting that he was *begotten before all worlds* they also probably meant to decide against Arius, who said that there was a time when the Son was not. But, as I have observed already, the phrase is indeterminate, since it may not express a proper eternity, but only the indefinite space before the commencement of what they call *time*, or the creation of the world. At the same time, by saying that Christ was only *God of God*, and *light of light*, the fathers of this council shew that, in their opinion, his divinity was derived from the Father, and that he was not (*αναρχος*) without origin, or (*αυτεθεος*) God of himself, as the Father was; so that they had no idea at this time of Christ being properly *equal* to the Father. We shall not find this language, or any thing equivalent to it, till a later period in our history.

This famous creed was signed by three hundred and eighteen bishops. Philostorgius says that Secundus of Ptolemais, who with Theonas bishop of Marmarica refused from the first to subscribe the Nicene creed, told Eusebius of Nicomedia, that *he* had subscribed only for fear of banishment; but that God had revealed to him that notwithstanding this, he would be banished within a year; and accordingly three months after this, Eusebius was banished.† As the orthodox made great boasts of their miracles, we see that the Arians also were not without pretensions of the same kind.

Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognus of Nice, Maris of Chalcedon, Theonas of Marmarica, Secundus of Ptolemais,

\* Nicoph. Hist. Eccl. c. xxvii. p. 618. — *P.* — Bismago, without naming any authority, says, “that the Bible of the New Testament at least, was placed upon a table in the midst of the council.” Tillotson takes this for a story of his sermons. “There is nothing remaining of this council, but the creed, the synodical post, and *canons*.” *Tract. de IV.* pp. 190, 191. One of these canons, according to *Palmer*, p. 150, is, “The name of the clergy, out of ambition, or covetousness, should leave a rest to the bigger church.” *Hist. of Popes*, c. 17, s. 1. p. 23.

† Hist. Eccl. c. ix. s. p. 178. — *P.* — *Laobar*, IV. p. 197.

Menophantus of Ephesus, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, and Narcissus of Neconias, a city of the second Cilicia, afterwards called Irenopolis,\* the friends of Arius, being desirous that their resolutions might be unanimous, presented a creed, in which no use was made of the term *consubstantial*, but which, in every other respect, expressed the sentiments of the enemies of Arius. They had no objection to saying the Christ was a true God, *God of God*, or that he was not a creature, but the power and wisdom of the Father, his eternal image, like to the Father, and unchangeable.

But Athanasius and his friends, supposing that they did this on the idea that all these expressions might be used with respect to a man; and with a view to cut off all their subterfuges, that is, in fact, intending to express themselves in such a manner as they knew that the other party could not concur with them, with great indignation tore the paper on which it was written, and introduced that obnoxious term, † though they acknowledged it not to be a Scripture phrase; alleging, that their adversaries also made use of expressions which were not to be found in the Scriptures, as that the Son was made out of nothing, &c. Willing, however, to agree with their brethren, and dreading, no doubt, the resentment of the emperor, whose disposition and resolution were by this time sufficiently apparent, they all consented to admit that term, except Theonas of Marmarica, and Secundus of Ptolemais, who were therefore excommunicated along with Arius. ‡

Eusebius of Cæsarea hesitated, but at length he subscribed the creed; and when he sent a copy of it to his church, he explained the meaning of the word at which he had demurred; saying that by *consubstantial* was not meant that Christ was any part of the Father, so as to imply that the Father was corporeal, and had been divided. He also said that by the phrase *begotten, not made*, was only meant that Christ was of a nature different from that of those creatures which he him-

\* Niceph. L. viii. C. xviii. l. p. 569. (P.)

† That the enemies of Arius introduced this term, as one that the Arians could not admit, is acknowledged by Ambrose, *De Fide*, L. iii. C. vii. Opera, III. p. 159. However, meaning as they did to condemn the doctrine of Arius, there was no other way of doing it, than by such language as the Arians could not admit. To compose a creed which all parties might equally subscribe, would have answered no purpose at all. The Scriptures would then have been sufficient. It would have been happy indeed, if this would have satisfied the contending parties; but for this purpose there would have been no occasion for the Council of Nice. Being assembled for a particular purpose, it was consistent not to separate without gaining that purpose. They would else have incurred the ridicule of their adversaries. (P.)

‡ Niceph. Hist. L. viii. C. xxi. l. p. 571, from the writings of Eustathius and Athanasius. (P.) *Lardner*, IV. p. 191.

self had made, and more excellent than they. That these phrases were to be understood in these senses, was, he said, the opinion of the emperor, and of the fathers themselves. As to the *anathema*, he said it was nothing more than a condemnation of all unscriptural phrases, which had produced almost all the confusion and sedition in churches.\*

However, as the two bishops above-mentioned were not able to satisfy themselves in this manner, and therefore refused to subscribe the creed; and as the council ordered that Arius, and all who thought as he did should be excommunicated, and that he should not be permitted to enter Alexandria; the emperor, in giving his sanction to their decrees, sent both of them, as well as Arius himself, and the rest of his adherents, among whom was Euzoius, into banishment.†

In this council it was also decided, and, as far as appears, unanimously, that Easter should be observed not in the Jewish manner, on the fourteenth day of the month, but on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox, which had been the custom of all the western churches. Even this want of uniformity in the practice of Christians had given serious disturbance to the mind of Constantine, who had conceived that the Christian religion would not appear to advantage with this variety in the customs of its professors.‡

We have seen, in the account of the origin of the monks, that superstition had already given uncommon merit to several acts of austerity, and especially to celibacy. By this time the idea of a kind of impurity was annexed to the commerce of the sexes, and it was thought particularly unsuitable to the clerical character. At this solemn council it was proposed, that those who should be chosen bishops, presbyters, or deacons, after they were married, should from that time abstain from all commerce with their wives. But this proposal was overruled by Paphnutius, a bishop of Upper Thebais, and an old confessor, one of whose eyes had been put out in the late persecution, and whom, on that account, the emperor held in high veneration. "Marriage," said this venerable old man, "is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled," and commerce with a lawful wife is real chastity." He added, that the chastity of the divorced wives would be

\* Nieph. Hist. L. viii. C. xxi. pp. 578, 583. — *P.* — On the question, "whether *Incarnatus* was an Arian," see *Lardner*, IV. pp. 213, 214.

† Soerat. Hist. L. i. C. viii. p. 22. — *P.* — *Lardner*, IV. p. 191.

‡ See the remarks of *Lardner*, IV. pp. 193, 194.

in danger, and it was sufficient that a man should not be permitted to marry after he should be chosen into the body of the clergy. To this all assented, and Paphnutius was allowed to have the more merit on this occasion, as he had never been married, and being educated a monk, had distinguished himself by his perfect chastity.\*

The great object of this council being to put an end to all differences of opinion or practice among Christians, and, as far as possible, to prevent all dissension in future, the members of it came to a decision concerning the Meletians, † and to appearance with a great prospect of success. For Meletius himself acceded to their decision, which was, that he should remain at Lycopolis, with the title of bishop, but without the functions, and that all those who had been ordained by him should be re-ordained to the same rank by other bishops.

Another great object of the council was to settle the rights of the bishops of different sees; and it was agreed that every bishop should be ordained by at least three of the bishops of the same province, and that the election should be confirmed by the bishop of the metropolis. This was regulated according to the division of provinces in the Roman empire, and seems to be explained by another canon of this council, which says, that to the bishop of Alexandria, is given the superintendency of Egypt, Lybia, and the Pentapolis, according to ancient custom; and that a similar jurisdiction is given to the sees of Antioch, of Rome, and the chief cities of the other provinces. From this it is evident, that no particular preference was yet given to the see of Rome. ‡ It is said, indeed, that particular honour should be given to the bishop of Jerusalem, saving the honour that is due to the metropolis. But by this was probably meant either Antioch, or Cæsarea, the metropolis of the province in which Jerusalem was.

With respect to the Novatians, it was agreed that, if they returned to the Catholic church, the rank of their clergy

\* Socrat. Hist. l. i. c. xi. p. 38. (*P.*) *Hist. of Popery*, I. p. 21. "Canon IV of the Council of *Gangra*, (a town of Galatia), held not long after [or more probably, a year before] this of Nice" decrees, "If any man make a difference of a married priest, as though, through occasion of his marriage, he ought not to offer, let him be accursed." *Ibid.* p. 23.

† See *Lardner*, III. pp. 357—359. IV. p. 193.

‡ "The bishop of Rome, by reason of his great age, was not able to be there, but he sent two presbyters, who, in his name, might subscribe, (*Theodoret*, l. i. c. 7,) and it is recorded by the same author, that the first bishop who delivered his opinion was *Eustathius*, bishop of Antioch. In Canon VI. express provision is made that "every church shall retain her due honour." *Hist. of Popery*, I. p. 20.

should be preserved, provided it did not interfere with that of the other clergy of the place; so that a bishop was to become a presbyter, &c.

Among other incidents attending this celebrated council, Socrates gives an account of a conversation between the emperor and Acesius, a bishop of the Novatians who attended it, and for whom he had a particular respect. Being asked by the emperor whether he had any objection to the decrees of the council, he said he had none. Why then, said the emperor, do you separate yourself from the communion of your brethren? To this the bishop replied by reciting the history of the persecution of Decius, at which time his sect commenced, and by observing that, in their ideas, any sin committed after baptism was what the apostle John calls *the sin unto death*, and therefore that, though those persons who are guilty of such sins should be exhorted to repent of them, that they might obtain forgiveness of God, they ought not to be received into the communion of the church. On this the emperor pleasantly said, "Erect a ladder then, Acesius, up to heaven, and mount it alone."\*

At this time, though the Novatians had many churches in Asia Minor, and the neighbourhood of Constantinople, as well as in other places, and especially in Africa; yet, as they were peaceably disposed, the emperor might not apprehend much inconvenience from so small a breach in the unity of the church. Besides, his own mind must have been impressed with ideas very similar to those of the Novatians: for nothing else could lead a professed Christian to defer baptism till near the hour of death, which himself and many others in that age did. †

With respect to the followers of Pantaenus of Samosatesis, it was ordained that, if they returned to the Catholic church, they should be re-baptized, evidently because they did not baptize *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, ‡ but generally *in the name of Christ only*, which was not deemed to be a valid baptism. These Unitarians, no doubt, believed that much superstition was kept up by the usual form of baptism, and that it was not the original method of administering it by the apostles themselves.

The other canons of this celebrated council relate to former articles of discipline. When the whole was concluded,

\* *Lardner*, III. pp. 221, 222.

† *Socrat. Hist. Eccl. C. xi. p. 7.* P. *Lardner*, IV. p. 160.

‡ "Yet it appears from Athanasius, *Orat. II. Contr. Genit. p. 510. E.* that the Padians so baptized." *Lardner*, III. p. 9.

the members of it addressed a letter to the church of Alexandria, and to the churches of Egypt, Lybia and Pentapolis, giving them an account of their determinations. In this they observed, that the first question related to the impiety and perverseness of Arius and his associates, and informed them that they had agreed that his impious and blasphemous opinion should be anathematized, that they had not even had patience to hear his impiety, madness and blasphemy; but that he had received the reward worthy of his wickedness, &c., alluding to his banishment. They then give an account of the principal of their other proceedings, and conclude with congratulating them on the extinction of heresy, and desiring their prayers for the permanence of their regulations.\*

Constantine himself wrote three letters upon this occasion, one addressed to all the churches, acquainting them with the reasons of his calling the council, in which he says he had acted as one of their body, and their fellow-servant, and that now there was no more room left for dissension, or controversy concerning the faith.† So little did this great man know of human nature, and so little could he see into futurity! In the same letter he gives an account of the proceedings of the council with respect to the uniform celebration of the festival of Easter.

His second letter is addressed to the church of Alexandria, congratulating them on the removal of all error, and the restoration of unanimity in all the churches; observing that he considered himself as one of them, and that he also had examined into the truth. He then mentions the impudent blasphemies of that impudent minister of the devil, and enemy of the truth, Arius; and says, that the decision of three hundred bishops, who had been assembled on this occasion must be the decision of God himself. He concludes with exhorting them to return to the way of truth, and commends them to the divine keeping.‡

The third letter is addressed to the bishops and people. It is full of the same invectives against Arius, treating him as another Porphyry, the declared enemy of Christianity, and desiring that his followers might be called Porphyrians.

\* Socrat. Hist. L. i. C. 9. p. 26. (P.) Lardner quotes from this historian "these modest, or artful expressions of the synodical epistle—'And the things that have been decreed concerning him [Arius], either you have already heard, or will hear; that we may not seem to insult a man, who has received the just reward of his iniquity.'" *Lardner*, IV. p. 192.

† Euseb. *Vita Const.* L. iii. C. xvii. p. 586. (P.)

‡ Socrat. Hist. L. i. C. ix. p. 30. (P.)

He moreover orders that the writings of Arius should be burned, in order that no monument of them might be left to posterity, and declares that, if any person should find any book of Arius, and not immediately burn it, he should be put to death.\* This is the first case of death being threatened by any Christian magistrate for any thing relating to heresy; and it is so manifestly absurd and extravagant, that surely it can be no recommendation of such unchristian conduct.

Before Constantine dismissed the fathers of this council, as twenty years of his reign were then just completed, from the time that his father died, and the period was celebrated with much festivity in all the provinces, he invited all the bishops to an entertainment in the palace, when some of them dined with the emperor himself, and others in rooms particularly prepared for them, so that nothing being wanting in point of respect and attention, it seemed to these good fathers, just being emerged from persecution, to be, as our historian says, an image of the reign of Christ upon earth, and appeared more like a dream than a reality.

The emperor also made presents to each of the bishops according to their rank; and when he took his leave of them, he addressed them in a speech, in which he exhorted them to live in peace with one another, not to envy one another on account of any superior endowments which some of them might possess, and to forgive their mutual injuries, lest they should expose themselves to the ridicule of the Heathens. He concluded with desiring their prayers for himself.†

## SECTION VI.

*From the Council of Nice, A. D. 325. to the Death of Arius  
A. D. 336.*

THOUGH this good emperor flattered himself that his great labour, address and expense, on occasion of this celebrated council, had not been in vain, and had hoped that by means of it, an end would be put to all dissension in the Christian world, he soon had reason to see (whether he actually saw it or not) that neither kings nor councils are omnipotent, and that there is something in the mind of man, that opposes itself to arbitrary authority, by whomsoever it is usurped. This appeared with respect to every article of consequence that had been decided by this council.

\* Socrat. Hist. Eccl. C. ix. p. 4. — P. — Lardner, IV. pp. 199, 191.

† Euseb. *Vita Const.* L. iii. C. xv. p. 89. — P.

The Arians in Egypt were far from being pacified.\* It has indeed been seen, that they were treated with too much haughtiness and contempt to be disposed to conciliation or submission. The emperor, provoked at this refractoriness, summoned some of them before him, to reprove them; and what provoked him the more was, that Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Theognis of Nice, received those very Arians into their communion. A synod being held on the subject, these two bishops were deposed, and Constantine banished them into Gaul. This was within three months after the holding of the council, and they continued in this state of exile three years.

In order to justify his conduct, Constantine wrote to the church of Nicomedia, explaining the reasons of his proceeding, moreover accusing Eusebius of treasonable practices with respect to himself, and of favouring Arius in the council, which he says he had called in order to expel the mischief to which the madness of Arius had given rise. He concludes with advising the churches of Nicomedia and Nice to choose good and orthodox bishops in the place of those who had been deposed.† From the tenor of this letter we may easily perceive what had been the state of free discussion in the preceding council.

As Eusebius was always considered as the head of the Arian party, it is not impossible that this circumstance, of his being supposed to have favoured the enemies of Constantine, might have great weight in his mind in taking so determined a part as he did against Arius. For, neither long before, nor long after, the council, did Constantine appear to shew much zeal for the question in dispute. His object was to reconcile the opposite parties, and by any means to preserve the peace of the church.

When Constantine acted with so high a hand in procuring the condemnation of Arius and his doctrine, he little foresaw the change that would take place in his own mind with respect to them. The change, however, is remarkable, and historians account for it in the following manner: A presbyter, whose name does not appear, had the confidence of Constantia, the sister of the emperor, and who had been married to Licinius. By him she had been brought to think well of Arius and his friends, and upon her death-bed she earnestly recommended him to her brother, who had a great affection for her; and this presbyter persuaded the emperor

\* See *Lardner*, IV. p. 19.† *Theod. Hist. Eccl.* c. xx. p. 19. P

that both the conduct and the faith of Arius had been much misrepresented by his enemies.

Upon this Constantine (supposed to be A. D. 330), sent for Arius from the place of his banishment, whither Euzoius, a deacon of the church of Alexandria, who had also been deposed by the bishop, had accompanied him.\* After some conference, by which it is probable that the emperor was still more disposed to favour him, Arius presented a confession of his faith, in which he professed his belief that the Son was *begotten of the Father before all ages*, and expressed his hope that, as this simple faith was the doctrine of the church, and agreeable to the Scriptures, he might be re-admitted into communion without entering into matters of doubtful disputation. †

With this Constantine was satisfied. But not taking upon himself to do what belonged to the clergy, he sent him to a number of bishops, who were then assembled at Jerusalem, upon occasion of opening a new church there, desiring them to examine his faith, and if they had no objection to it, to receive him and Euzoius into communion with them. He also requested that they would inform the church of Alexandria, and all the churches of Egypt, Lybia and Thebais, of their sentiments on this subject, and exhort them to give Arius and his friend a cordial reception among them. ‡

It is pretty evident from this transaction, that Constantine was now returned to the same state of mind in which he had been, before the council; thinking that the question which had been agitated with so much warmth was of very little importance. His resentment was therefore now turned against those who had disturbed the peace of the church for such a trifle; and as Arius was willing to communicate with his adversaries, notwithstanding their difference of opinion, he thought that they acted a more unchristian part than he.

Before this time, viz. A. D. 328, Eusebius and Theognis, declaring that, having considered the import of the word *consubstantial*, they did not object to it, but to the anathema pronounced by the council, (because, having known Arius very well, they were satisfied that he was not deserving of such a censure,) they were recalled from banishment and reinstated in their respective sees, § which had been occupied by other persons; and Eusebius having great influence with the emperor, had no doubt used his good offices in favour of

\* Socrat. Hist. l. i. c. xxv. p. 60. P.

† Ibid. Sect. xxvi. p. 61. P. *London*, IV. p. 199.

‡ Ibid. l. ii. c. xxvii. p. 8. P. *See Le Clerc*, V. p. 10.

Arius. By his means, also, the Meletians were brought into favour with the emperor, and allowed to hold their separate congregations, in which they had been disturbed by the violence of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria.

The Arians succeeded also in deposing a bishop who had been exceedingly hostile to them, viz. Eustathius, who had been removed from the see of Beræa to that of Antioch, and who, at the Council of Nice, had been so much the enemy of the Arians, that he was by them charged with Sabellianism. On the other hand, he had accused Eusebius of Cæsarea, with adulterating the Nicene Creed. But Eusebius not only repelled the accusation, but charged his adversary with Sabellianism, and many bishops wrote for and against him. He was himself a considerable writer, and is by Theodoret styled the Great. What made him still more obnoxious to the friends of Arius, was his having refused to admit among his clergy several persons who were of that party, as Stephen, Leontius, Eudoxius, George, Theodosius, another Eustathius, whose names will occur in the subsequent history, and others, as they have been collected by Tillemont.\*

At length a synod being called at Antioch,† Eustathius was examined and deposed, as a person who was more of a Sabellian than a believer in the Nicene creed; but according to other accounts, he was condemned for some immoralities that were laid to his charge. Asclepas of Gaza, was probably deposed at the same time, and it is generally thought on the same account. The decree of this synod was followed by great disturbances at Antioch, especially when they proceeded to choose a new bishop; some being desirous of retaining Eustathius, and others of having Eusebius of Cæsarea. Eusebius, however, declined the invitation of the party which was for him, and the emperor himself wrote to the people of Antioch, exhorting them to peace, and approving the reasons which had been alleged by Eusebius for not choosing their see. At the same time he speaks of him as a person for whom he had the highest esteem, yea, as one who was worthy of the bishopric of the whole world. The see continued vacant eight years.‡

Constantine's letters to the people of Antioch, to Eusebius, and to the synod assembled on the occasion, are all preserved by Eusebius. They shew the greatest anxiety in this well-

\* *History of the Arians*, Sect. xiv. (P.) Lardner, IV. pp. 279, 280.

† Supposed by Dr. Lardner [IV. p. 279] to be about A. D. 328. (P.)

‡ Socrat. Hist. L. i. C. xxiv. p. 58. (P.)

meaning emperor about preserving the peace of the church which had been much better secured by his not interfering in the business.

In the mean time, Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, being dead, Athanasius had been chosen in his place; and not being disposed to adopt the sentiments of the emperor, or to pay any regard to the recommendation of the bishops assembled at Jerusalem. (who had acted as the emperor wished them to do,) refused to admit Arius into communion with his church, though the emperor threatened him with deposition and banishment. This obstinacy, together with some accusations, which Eusebius of Nicomedia, and other friends of Arius, had brought against him, induced Constantine to appoint a synod to hear him at Tyre, which was the more convenient, as it was in his way to Jerusalem, whither he was going to the consecration of a church which he had built there; and he hoped that, when this affair was settled, he should enjoy the festival, without alloy. This was A. D. 335.

Athanasius at first refused to obey the summons, but being threatened to be brought by force, he thought proper to comply. About sixty bishops attended this synod, and before them he was obliged to defend himself. One of the charges which had been brought against him was, that he had cut off the hand of one Arsenius, a bishop of the Meletians. But Arsenius being produced with both his hands, sufficiently proved his innocence. He was also charged with having whipped, or imprisoned, six other bishops of the Meletians.\* Another accusation was, that one Macarius, a person sent by him to expel Ischyras, who acted as a presbyter in a church of Marcotis, had, by his orders, rushed upon him in a violent manner, overturning the table in his church, breaking the chalice, and burning the sacred books. To this accusation Athanasius pleaded that he had no occasion to reply, because in the form of the indictment, Ischyras was stated to be a presbyter, whereas it could not be proved that he was one. In this, however, he was overruled, and the fact itself coming to be inquired into, it was thought proper to send a deputation to Marcotis to make the inquiry upon the spot. It consisted of Theognis of Nice, Mans of Chalcedon, Theodorus of Heraclea, Macedonius of Mopsuestia, Valens of Mursa, and Ursacius of Smigidunum. But Athanasius suspecting some artifice

because Macarius was detained in bonds, and because they were his enemies who were gone to make the inquiry, withdrew himself. In the mean time, the persons who had been sent to Egypt returned with a confirmation of the charge; and the absconding of Athanasius being interpreted into a confession of his guilt, the synod pronounced the sentence of his deposition. But some of the bishops, and among them Marcellus of Ancyra, refused to subscribe the sentence.

After this the bishops who had composed this synod went to Jerusalem, to solemnize the dedication of the church, and there they received Arius into communion, as a person who had given the emperor satisfaction concerning his faith; and, in a letter to the church of Alexandria, alluding to the deposition of Athanasius, they added, that all ground of disunion was now removed.\*

Athanasius, on the return of the emperor to Constantinople, had fled to him, who was much surprised and concerned to see him; but as he begged to have his cause examined in his presence, Constantine wrote to the bishops, who were still at Jerusalem, expressing his extreme chagrin, that, while he was doing every thing in his power to promote the cause of Christianity, they should be quarrelling among themselves, and he desired them to come without delay to Constantinople. Accordingly some of them attended, viz. Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nice, Maris of Chalcedon, and other friends of Arius; and without repeating their former accusations, they now charged him, on the evidence of four bishops, with threatening to stop the usual exportation of corn from Egypt to Constantinople, which was then in distress for want of it. On this the emperor banished him to Trier, in Gaul, not so much, it is said, because he believed the charge, as thinking thereby to preserve the peace of the church, Athanasius appearing the only obstacle to the restoration of Arius and his friends.† This was A. D. 336. He continued there, or in Italy, twelve or thirteen years.‡

Anthony, the famous monk of Thebais, to whom Constantine, out of the great respect that he had for him, sometimes condescended to write,§ took the liberty, in return, of writing several letters to the emperor in favour

\* Socrat. Hist. L. i. C. xxix. &c. pp. 66, &c. (P.)

Ibid. C. xxxiv. xxxv. pp. 69, &c. (P.)

† Epiphani Har. lxxviii. Opera, l. p. 725. (P.)

‡ "And made his children write.—The holy solitary received with great indifference the mark of his sovereign's regard—till his disciples represented to him the danger of indisposing princes zealous for the honour of the Christian name." *Athan. de Vit. Anton. in Crevier; X. p. 157.*

of Athanasius, entreating him that he would not pay any regard to the representations of the Meletians, who had joined the party of Arius, and who were of course hostile to Athanasius. But it was without any effect. For after this, the emperor, writing to the people of Alexandria, reproached them for their folly and levity, and assured them that he should not change his opinion concerning Athanasius, or recall him from banishment, for that he considered him as a seditious person, and one who had been justly condemned by an ecclesiastical sentence.

To Anthony he replied, that he could not think lightly of the decree of the synod which had condemned Athanasius, for though a few persons might be influenced by prejudice and pique, it was not credible that so many bishops, men of good character and moderation, as had concurred in this sentence, should have decided from such a principle. Athanasius, he said, was abusive and arrogant, the author of sedition and discord. However, notwithstanding Constantine's unconquerable aversion to Athanasius, he would not suffer the see of Alexandria to be filled by his rival John, who had succeeded Meletius, and whom the enemies of Athanasius would have put in his place, but sent him also into banishment.\* This the emperor probably did, because his being appointed a bishop was in express contradiction to the decrees of the Council of Nice, according to which Meletius himself, indeed, was to retain the title of bishop, but without the functions, and certainly without having any successor.

There was in this reign another synod, called for the purpose of deposing another bishop, of a character very different from that of Athanasius, though he had on some occasions taken his part. This was Marcellus of Ancyra. The offence that he had given to the Arians, whose party was now prevalent, was in his answer to a book written by Asterius, who had been a teacher of rhetoric in Cappadocia, and on becoming a Christian, had written in defence of Arianism, and who was much caressed by the Arians. In his answer to him, Marcellus appeared to be not a proper consubstantialist, but an Unitarian, such as Paulus Samosatensis had been, maintaining that Christ, in himself considered, was a mere man.

As Marcellus had attended the Council of Nice, and had subscribed the Nicene Creed, it is probable that other Unitarians

rians had done the same, on the same principle, whatever it was. He would never have been known to have been an Unitarian, if he had not been a writer. This fact, however, sufficiently shews, that in this celebrated council the bishops were far from giving their real opinions, or at least from expressing them as they naturally would have done, if they had not been under some controul.

It is said that, being threatened with deposition, Marcellus promised to burn his book, but that when the bishops met afterwards at Constantinople, A. D. 336, he refused to do it, and that then he was deposed. The business was wholly conducted by the Arians, and Basil, an Arian, was put in his place. The book of Marcellus is unfortunately lost, together with every thing else that was written in defence of Unitarianism in all the early ages. But we have a large answer to it by Eusebius, of which are preserved many valuable extracts, in which I have availed myself in my *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ*. In the next reign we shall see Marcellus come upon the stage once more, and recover his see.\*

After this, in the 31st year of his reign, Constantine, finding that Arius could not be received into the church of Alexandria without exciting dangerous tumults, sent for him to Constantinople. But here also Alexander, the bishop of the place, refused to receive him into communion, notwithstanding all the pains that were taken by Eusebius of Nicomedia, and his friends, for that purpose. The emperor, however, being no doubt satisfied both with respect to his faith and his conduct, (though Arius's adversaries say that he imposed upon the emperor,) gave orders that he should be received the next day, it being then Saturday. But it happened, that as he was walking in the city, accompanied by his friends, he was suddenly seized with an occasion to ease himself, and being shewn to a necessary in the neighbourhood, he was found dead in it of a *prolapsus ani*, and what the Greek physicians called *απεφθισμα*.

This event was interpreted by the Catholics as a just judgment of God upon Arius.† It was moreover said by some to be in answer to the prayers of Alexander, who had

\* Socrat. Hist. l. i. c. xxxvi p. 72. (P.) Lardner, III. p. 38. IV. pp. 208, 276 —278. See *infra*, Per. viii.

† Dr. Maclaine remarks, that these "will find little credit in our times, among such as have studied with attention and impartiality, the history of Arianism." He concludes, that Arius "was a victim to the resentment of his enemies, and was destroyed by poison or some such violent method." Trans. of Mosheim, l. p. 340. Note.

shut himself up in the church, and begged of God that he would interpose, though it should be by his own death, to prevent his receiving Arius into communion. Had Alexander himself died in the same manner, and not Arius, it would have been said to have been a still more exact answer to the same prayer; so ready are persons to imagine not only that men, but that God also, thinks just as they do, and enters into all their resentments.\*

So much was Constantine changed before his death, that the Arians said (and though Sozomen says it was a lie, I cannot think it wholly improbable) that he intended to have called another council, in order to introduce the term (*ὁμοιωσις*) of *like substance*, for (*ὁμοουσις*) of *the same substance* into the creed, and that Constantius, who thought exactly as his father did at the time of his death, in calling the Council of Ariminum, did the very same thing that he had recommended to him.†

It is, at least, highly probable, that whatever Constantine might really think of the person of Christ, he became dissatisfied, as many others were, with the term *consubstantial*, both on account of its being unscriptural, and of its implying not only an original, but a continued unity, such as the Sabellians had maintained. It is said that when Eusebius of Nicomedia, was first accused to him of disapproving this term, the bishop shewed his garment, and with firmness replied, "If this garment should be torn into two pieces, could it be said that both the parts were of *the same substance*?" The emperor made no reply, but seemed much disturbed at it, finding himself disappointed in his expectations of putting an end to the discussion of all questions of this kind.‡

This was before the banishment of Eusebius, and is said to have been the immediate cause of it. But as, when he recalled him, he admitted of his explanation of the term *consubstantial*, consistent with his own ideas, and Eusebius had his confidence afterwards, and till the time of his death, while all the Consubstantialists were entirely out of favour, it is almost certain that, for some reason or other, he wished to have that word omitted in the creed, and that he would probably have changed that term (*ὁμοουσις*) of *the same substance*, for (*ὁμοιωσις*) of *like substance*, as less exception-

\* Soer. d. Hist. L. i. C. xxxvii. p. 73. Sozom. Hist. L. ii. C. xxix. xxx. pp. 55. 56. (P.)

† Sozom. Hist. L. iii. C. xix. p. 124. (P.) See *infra*, Pet. viii. sec. v.

‡ Theil. L. i. C. xxi. p. 32. (P.)

ible, being a term that the consubstantialists themselves could not well object to, since what is of the *same* substance with another, must of course be *like* it. The great object of Constantine from the first, was merely to preserve the unity of the church, and he probably never had much zeal for the question itself.

## SECTION VII.

### *Of the Measures of Constantine to suppress Heresy.*

IT is remarkable that none of the measures of Constantine to compose the troubles of the church, and to remove all dissensions from it, had complete success, notwithstanding all the advantages of which he was possessed; having both general councils and power on his side.

Even the difference of practice in the celebration of Easter continued after the Council of Nice. The Audeans, a sect in Mesopotamia, so called from Audeus, who was at the head of them, persisted in their former practice of celebrating Easter as they had always done, viz. at the time of the Jewish passover. The writers who treat this Audeus as a sectary, give him the highest commendations for the strictness of his morals, and say that he was originally driven out of the church in consequence of the liberty that he took in reproving the irregularities of the bishops and clergy. On this they say that he formed a separate church, the members of which, the clergy as well as the laity, lived by the labour of their hands, and professed the most rigid morals. As they are said both to have celebrated Easter at the time of the Jewish passover, and also to have been *Anthropomorphites*, which many of the Jews are also said to have been, they were probably either Jewish Christians, or, living as they did in their neighbourhood, very much influenced by them.\*

The Audeans paying no regard to the decision of the Council of Nice, which they thought to have been dictated by complaisance for the emperor, Audeus himself (who is allowed to have been a venerable old man) was sent for by Constantine; but not being moved by any thing that was said to him, he was banished into Scythia, where he continued many years, instructing the Goths in the Christian religion; and, as it is said, founding many monasteries.† In this manner has persecution very often been the means,

\* Theod. Hær. Fab. L. iv. c. x. Opera, IV. p. 241. Epiph. Hær. lxx. Opera, I. p. 311. (P.)

† Lardner, IV, p. 304.

in the hands of Divine Providence, of extending the knowledge of Christianity. Both the Indians and the northern nations were, in an eminent manner, benefited both by Diocletian's persecution of Christians, and by Constantine's persecution of the Arians, and other heretics.

Even the order which had been established with respect to the rank and the prerogatives of the different sees in the Council of Nice, did not prevent all disputes and disturbances on that subject. For there was a violent contention between Acacius, who succeeded Eusebius in the bishopric of Cæsarea, in Palestine, and Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, which Theodoret says was the cause of much mischief, and that, on some slight occasion, the latter was deposed, and banished from Jerusalem by the former.\* Cæsarea had, no doubt been the seat of the Roman governor; but the council had ordered that particular respect should be paid to the city of Jerusalem, and had not defined that respect with precision.

It seems extraordinary that any Christians who had suffered so much, and so lately, by persecution themselves, should enter so warmly into the persecution of others. But this has been the case from the time of Constantine to the present day; and indeed was the same before that time, when the Christians had any power. Constantine, who had done so much for the church, seems to have thought that he had a right to regulate every thing relating to it; and though he modestly enough said, that the bishops were judges of things *within* the church, and that he was bishop only with respect to things *without* it, he must have thought himself qualified to decide who were the true and orthodox bishops, whose decrees he chose to enforce, as he so openly patronized some, and took their part so violently against others. And, what is more extraordinary, the right he assumed was not questioned.

As Constantine's laws respecting heresy have unfortunately served as a model to his successors, I shall give a particular account of them, by nearly translating what Eusebius has related concerning them; and, it is remarkable, that he does it without the least censure, and indeed with evident approbation. By this means we shall have a view of the laws themselves, of the spirit by which they were drawn up, and also of that of the times in general.

The emperor, he says, having removed the dissensions

\* Theod. Hæc. Fab. L. ii. C. xxvi. p. 109. P.

among Christians, and reduced the church of God to a perfect harmony, thought it his duty entirely to extinguish another race of atheistical men, as the deadly poison of mankind, who were laying waste whole cities, under the false appearance of modesty and gravity, but whom our Saviour calls false prophets and ravening wolves. Wherefore, having sent orders to the governors of provinces, he expelled and dispersed this race of men; and besides that general law, he made a salutary provision with respect to the heretics by name, exhorting them to repent, and to come into the church. The following is his rescript for this purpose:

“The Emperor, Constantine, the Great, Augustus, to the heretics.

“Know by this law, O ye Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulians and Cataphrygians, who all of you make up your heresies for your peculiar congregations; in what lies is your folly involved, and with what deadly poisons do your doctrines abound, so that the healthy are made sick, and the living are brought to everlasting death by your means! O ye enemies of truth, adversaries of life, and counsellors of destruction, every thing with you is hostile to truth, and congenial to the most abominable wickedness, being full of absurdity and fiction, by which you fabricate your lies. You afflict the innocent, and withhold light from the believers: continually offending under the pretence of piety, you defile every thing. You wound the innocent and pure conscience with deadly blows. You in a manner deprive the eyes of men, of daylight. What occasion is there to mention particulars? For to treat properly of your mischiefs would require much time, and is inconsistent with my engagements. For so large and immense is your wickedness, and so full of all abominations, that a whole day would not suffice to describe it. Besides, we ought to turn away our ears from hearing such things, and our eyes from seeing them, not to defile our own sincere and pure faith with the particular enumeration of them. Why, then, should we any longer bear such mischiefs: especially since long forbearance, as in a pestilential disorder is a means of infecting those who are well? Why, then, should not I, as speedily as possible, cut up by the roots, as we may say, so great wickedness, by public interadversion?

“Wherefore, since it is not possible to bear your most deadly and destructive tenets any longer, we declare by this law, that none of you presume to hold any public assembly

for the future. We have therefore given orders to demolish all the places in which you hold your meetings. We carry our provision so far, as to forbid such assemblies of superstitious madness to be held, not only in a public place, but not even in a private house. Wherefore, as is much more honourable, you who wish for the true and pure worship, come to the Catholic church, and partake of its sanctity, by which you may come at the truth. But let the deceit of your perverse understanding be far removed from the happiness of our times: I mean the accursed and destructive madness of heretics and schismatics. For it becomes me, on account of the happiness which I derive from God, to provide that they who pass their lives in good hope may be brought from all error into the right way, from darkness to light, from folly to truth, from death to salvation.

“Wherefore, to give necessary force to this law, I give orders, as was said before, that all places of assembly for your superstition, I mean all houses of prayer belonging to heretics, if they can be called houses of prayer, be, without appeal, taken from them, and immediately given to the Catholic church, and all other places to the public, and that no opportunity of meeting in them again be allowed: that in no place, public or private, your unlawful assemblies may, from the present day, be held.”\*

“In this manner,” says our Christian historian, “were the heterodox dislodged from their lurking holes† by the imperial orders, and the wild beasts themselves, the authors of the impiety, put to flight. Of those who had been deceived by them, some, terrified by the imperial threats, dissembled their sentiments, and came to the church: and since the laws had provided that their books should be sought out, they who practised their forbidden arts were caught. On this account they did every thing in their power to provide for their safety by artifice, but others, with great sincerity, came over to a better hope. The bishops, making a distinction in these cases, removed those who acted hypocritically, as being only covered with sheep’s clothing, far from the sheep: while after a sufficient trial they received all the sincere converts into their churches. Thus,” says he, “they acted with respect to the intemperate heretics. As to those who had nothing impious in their tenets, but had only been separated from the Catholic

\* *Eccl. Hist. Conc. Const. T. iii. C. lxxix. c.* p. 69. (P. 1.)

† “The dens of the heretics were laid open.” Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* IV. p. 290.

church by factious persons, (meaning the Novatians, Donatists and Audeans,) they received them without hesitation. These, returning in crowds, as from a distance, found their proper home and country in the mother church, and as returning after a long time, they came back with joy. Thus," says he, "were the members of the common body united together in perfect harmony, and the Catholic church of God, being compacted within itself, shone with peculiar splendour, no heretical or schismatical congregation being left; and that prince, who alone was the care of God, was the sole author of this great and singular benefit." \*

Thus, says Galgacus, in *Tacitus*, speaking of the Romans, *Ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem vocant*, when they have laid all waste by war, they call it peace. Thus, Nero and Diocletian boasted of having exterminated the Christians, and Lewis XIV. the Hugonots; and the flattery and untruth were the same in all the cases. Happy is it for the world, that men, who have no right to judge concerning truth, and who are wholly unqualified for the office, have it not in their power to establish what they hastily take to be the truth, let their intentions be ever so good. Human nature revolts against usurpation, as that must always be denominated which endeavours to establish any opinion by external force. And if Constantine, who could boast such singular merit with respect to the Christian church, was not able, with his uncontroled power, to establish an uniformity of opinion among his subjects, can we wonder at the ill success of those who followed him in the same rash enterprise?

All that power could do Constantine completely effected. The public creed was just what he chose it to be, and great numbers were made to refrain from writing or speaking against it; but private opinion was not within his reach. So popular were Arius, and his opinions, at the time of the Council of Nice, that there cannot be a doubt, but that if he and his friends had had the same influence with the emperor which those of the other party had got, an Arian creed would have been the standard of orthodoxy, and a *created logos* have been the *shiboleth* of the times. And had such men as Marcellus and Photinus been Constantine's instructors, the plain doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ, as a man approved of God, by signs and wonders which God wrought by him, and whom God raised from the dead, (which was the creed of Peter and the other apostles,)

\* Euseb. *Vita Const.* L. iii. C. lxxv. lxxvi.

would have had the same advantage of being protected by imperial power; and the whole doctrine of Christ being the *logos*, created or uncreated, of his having existed before the creation of the world, and of his being the instrument of the creation, would, I doubt not, have been treated with ridicule, as the most absurd and unscriptural jargon.

But this pure Christian doctrine was then, and always has been, saved from so great a disgrace. Truth does not stand in need of such foreign and heterogeneous supports. It disdains them, conscious of being able to do infinitely better without them. Civil power began at this time to do, and it has ever since continued to do, whatever it could to overthrow this simple truth. But it is founded upon a rock, and neither the power of man, nor the gates of death, can prevail against it.

In Constantine's law against heretics, no mention is made of the Arians, and Sozomen says, it was because they were not then formed into separate societies, but held communion with the Catholics. He also says, that, though the other sects suffered much in consequence of this law, the emperor relaxed of its rigour with respect to the Novatians, who were orthodox in their belief of the Trinity, and very numerous. And Acesius, a bishop of that sect at Constantinople, was much in favour with the emperor.\*

## SECTION VIII.

*Of the Circumstances attending the Death of Constantine, A. D. 337.*

CONSTANTINE built a magnificent church in Constantinople, and dedicated it to the Twelve Apostles,† with a view that when he was dead he might be interred within it.

\* Sozom. Hist. L. ii. C. xxxii. p. 90. (P.)

† "Eusebius says, that to perpetuate the memory of the apostles, he began to build a church, in the city called after his own name. When he had built the church to a very great height, he beautified it with stones of all kinds, and inlaid it with variety of the most delicate marble, from the pavement to the top of the church, and having closed the roof with arches of the best workmanship, he gilded it over. The top of the church, on the outside of it, was covered with brass, to secure it from the violence of the weather, part of which was also gilded; so that the amazing splendour of it reflected the rays of the sun to a very great distance. The inward part of the church he covered with net-work, which was artificially made of brass and gold. Thus beautifully was the church adorned by the great care and application of the emperor. Before it stood a spacious court, with an open gallery round it. The church and the gallery were wholly surrounded with porticoes. This church, for the reverence he bore to it, was repaired by Justinian, where the masons and workmen found three wooden chests or coffins, which proved, by their inscrip-

and enjoy the benefit of the prayers that would be put up in their honour, not doubting but that he should derive much advantage from them. The good dispositions and intentions of this pious emperor, notwithstanding his mistaken policy, will, I doubt not, avail him more than his being buried in the church of the Apostles, or than all the prayers that have been made in that place. This is an evident proof of its being the opinion of the times, that the dead might be benefited by the prayers of the living; and that all this should be gravely related by one of the most enlightened christian writers of that age, and without any censure, is the strongest proof of the great growth of superstition. But this will be still more evident from the last scenes of this emperor's life.

Not long after Constantine had accomplished his purpose with respect to the building of this church, and his own tomb in it, he was seized with a disorder which carried him off in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and in the thirty-first of his reign. He had just celebrated the festival of Easter with the greatest splendour, when he first complained of a slight indisposition; but his illness growing more serious, he had recourse to the hot baths of the city, and then to those of Helenopolis, a city so called from his mother Helen. This having no effect, and perceiving that he drew towards his end, he was determined to be baptized; firmly believing, as the historian says, that, by virtue of the mysterious words of this institution, the offences of his whole life would be expiated. Then, falling upon his knees, he confessed his sins, and begged pardon of God. Then also he first received the imposition of hands, with solemn prayers; that is, he then entered into the regular class of catechumens, which, according to the established rules of church discipline, preceded baptism.

After this he went to the suburbs of Nicomedia, and having assembled the bishops, he said the time was then come, when, according to his most ardent wishes, and by means of their prayers, he hoped to secure his salvation. "Now," said he, "is the time when we receive that sign which confers immortality. It was my intention to have

tions, that the bodies of St. Luke, St. Andrew and Timothy, were interred there, and which were viewed by Justinian, and the Christians of those times, with the greatest admiration."—*Constantinople, as it stood in the Reigns of Arcadius and Honorius, published from the Notitia Utriusque Imperii. Translation*, 1729, pp. 44, 45.

Of this church there is no trace remaining, unless it be the same as the *Mosch*, which was once "the church of the Holy Apostles." The Greeks had, in 1669, a church at Constantinople, dedicated to St. *Constantine*. See Smith's *Account*, pp. 55, 59. *Sandys*, in 1610, found "the reliques of the palace of *Constantine*, made a stable for wild beasts." *Travels*, Ed. 7, p. 27.

been baptized where our Saviour himself was baptized, in the river Jordan. But God, who knows what is best for us, has determined otherwise; and if the arbiter of life and death should prolong my life, and I be permitted to join your Christian assemblies, and partake of your prayers, I promise to observe those rules of life which shall be worthy of God."

When he had said this, he was baptized in the usual forms, was clothed with white garments and reclined on a white bed. After his baptism (which he had, no doubt, deferred till this period from the superstitious idea of its efficacy to wash away sin, and of the impossibility of receiving so complete a purification more than once, or by any other means) he would have nothing more to do with purple, but was always dressed in the white garment, which the superstition of the times had prescribed as the emblem of purity.

When he first put on this dress, he gave thanks to God with a loud voice, calling himself happy, as being then qualified for immortal life, and those miserable, who were deprived of such a blessing. When his military officers lamented their condition, in being deprived of him, and wished him a longer life, he replied, that he then only attained the true life, that he alone knew best what blessings he partook of, and that he did not wish to defer his departure to God any longer. All this was transacted in Pentecost, and on the last day of this festival, which was Monday, he expired. A. D. 337.\*

Eusebius describes at large the grief of all ranks of people at Constantinople, at Rome, and through the whole empire upon the death of this extraordinary man, and also the ceremonies of his funeral, which was conducted by his second son, Constantius. He had deposited his last will in the hands of that Arian presbyter whom his sister Constantina recommended to him, and who enjoyed his favour to the last; and this presbyter had delivered it to Constantius, who was nearest to him at the time of his death. He was buried, as he wished to be, in the church of the Twelve Apostles.†

According to the common rules of estimating happiness, Constantine may be pronounced to have been one of the happiest of all his predecessors, from the time of the commencement of the Roman empire. He was never defeated in any one of the many battles that he fought. He triumphed

\* Euseb. *Vita Const.* L. iv. C. c. 33. pp. 609, &c. (P.)

† "In a golden chest, the twelve apostles, standing round his tomb. This is testified by Socrates." *Constantinople*, &c. p. 15. See *supra*, p. 318. Note.

over all his rivals, and, except the feeble attempts of Licinius, enjoyed a long reign, uninterrupted by foreign wars, or internal rebellions, and of greater length than that of any of the emperors, since Augustus. In short, he succeeded in every thing, excepting one project, which to him could not well have appeared impracticable, viz. to put an end to all differences among a set of men whom he had rescued from a state of grievous persecution, and who, owing their safety to him, he might presume would, out of gratitude, sacrifice to him, if not their private opinions, at least their animosities, and be contented to live easy and happy under him.

The purity of Constantine's intentions, and the sincerity of his piety, cannot be doubted; \* and though he was superstitious, he was not more so than some of the wisest men of his time appear to have been; every thing which wears that aspect about him being related not only without censure, but with entire approbation, by all the historians who have recorded them. Besides, why should we esteem christian superstition, in the case of Constantine, more reproachful than that of the heathen emperors, Trajan, Marcus Antoninus and Julian, who are generally thought to have been great men notwithstanding? They certainly were not destitute either of good sense, or strength of mind, with respect to the common conduct of life, or the affairs of the empire; and if we judge by events, we must pronounce Constantine to have been as great a man as any of them.

So great was the piety of Constantine, that he converted his palace into a kind of church, by introducing a regular religious service into it. † He likewise prescribed a form of devotion for the army every Lord's-day. But his superstition appeared in ordering the sign of the cross to be put upon their shields. ‡ He ordered the Lord's-day, and likewise Friday (the former being a festival, and the latter a fast,

\* Yet these have been doubted. See *Lambert*, IV. p. 178, Note.

† Euseb. *Vita Const.* L. iv. C. xvii. p. 631. (P.) "Where lectures were read upon the Holy Scriptures, and divine service was performed; at which the emperor assisted with all his court. He composed discourses upon religion, which he afterwards pronounced by way of exhortations to those about him," and "could not fail to have a numerous audience." Eusebius has preserved "one of Constantine's Discourses." *Oratio*, pp. 156, 157. Thus our *Christian* king, James I. of blessed memory, expounded Scripture in speeches to his parliaments, wrote learned theological treatises, and acted the divine at the *Hampton-Court* Conference, till an archbishop exclaimed, that his Majesty was certainly inspired.

‡ Euseb. *Vita Const.* L. iv. C. xix. xx. p. 636. (P.) Constantine had "a kind of portable chapel always carried with him in his campaigns, into which he retired frequently to pray with the bishops who accompanied him. He established the same custom among the legions, each of which he ordered to have its oratory, with the necessary number of priests and deacons. These chapels were for the use of the Christian soldiers. But even the Pagans in Constantine's armies bore the cross

among the more zealous Christians), to be kept holy, by abstaining from labour.\* He had stated hours for his own private devotions. Easter he celebrated with peculiar solemnity, and on the preceding vigil the whole city was illuminated with columns of lamps, which gave a light almost approaching to day.†

It could not be supposed that Constantine should be exempt from the prejudice in favour of celibacy, which appears to have prevailed among all Christians of his time. He shewed it by giving unmarried persons of both sexes even when they were under age, the power of making a will which was in favour of those who devoted themselves to a single life for the sake of religion.‡

Great men have generally had great faults, and Constantine was certainly not free from them. If ambition be a crime—perhaps no conqueror, or founder of a great family, can be said to have been innocent, and the desire of acquiring dominion is necessarily accompanied with jealousy in keeping possession of it; and in more cases than that of Constantine this jealousy has been excited towards those who have had it most in their power to seize it, though they have been their sons or brothers.

Unfortunately, Constantine was led, probably by the insinuations of artful and ill-designing persons, especially his wife Fausta, to see his son Crispus by a former wife in this dangerous light. He is said to have been an accomplished youth, and to have been greatly assisting to his father in his victories over Licinius, and on this account to have been very popular in the empire. The consequence, however, was the death of Crispus, and his friends, among whom was the son of Licinius by his sister. But we ought not to condemn Constantine till we have certain proofs of the innocence of Crispus; and the subject is now covered with impenetrable darkness.§

That Constantine was not so prone to jealousy and cruelty as many conquerors have been, is evident from his brothers being not only permitted to live, but to enjoy the most honourable stations in the empire; and the last fourteen

upon their arms, and were subjected to the observance of the sabbath. They were assembled in a plain, and there recited a prayer which the emperor had devised up for them." *Cron.*, X. p. 178.

\* Euseb. *Vita Const.* l. iv. c. xviii. § 635. (P.) "He exempted only the necessary work of the husbandmen in seed-time and harvest." *Cron.*, X. p. 144.

† *Ibid.* c. xiii. p. 637. (P.)

‡ Sozom. *Hist.* l. i. c. ix. p. 21. (P.)

§ See *Tillemont* on Eusebius's suspicious silence as to the death of Crispus *Levins.*, IV. p. 175; or the son of Licinius, *supra*, p. 253, Note.

years of his life, in which the government of the provinces was committed to those who were next in order of succession to it, were passed without any symptoms of jealousy, and with the most entire and well-placed confidence. The temper of Constantine was naturally so far from being cruel, that he was charged with the opposite extreme of too great indulgence to those who acted under him.

## SECTION IX.

### *Of Constantine's Conversion to Christianity.*

AFTER having gone over the reigns of so many heathen and persecuting emperors, it is natural to inquire into the causes of Constantine's becoming a Christian; especially as the Christianity of his successors, which gave an entire new turn to all the subsequent history of the Roman empire, and in a manner to that of the world, was, in a great measure, the natural consequence of it. As we have no other account of this change than that which Eusebius has given us, as from the emperor himself, confirmed, as he says, by a solemn oath,\* I must lay it before my readers.

He told Eusebius, that after the death of his father, when he was marching against Maxentius, being sensible that he stood in need of some assistance besides that which his troops could give him, (especially as his adversaries had called to their assistance various magical arts and charms, which derived all their power from the heathen gods,) and that the help which he wanted must come from some god or other, to whose providence arms are only subservient, he considered with himself the confidence and the faith of the several emperors who had preceded him, and compared them with those of his father. They had put their trust in a multitude of gods, whom they had endeavoured to render propitious to them by sacrifices and donations; but though their oracles had promised them every thing, they had all come to an untimely end. On the other hand, his father, alone, who had taken a different course, condemning their errors and worshipping all his life no other than the one supreme God, as the guardian of his empire, had been remarkably successful. By this means, he said, that he had

\* "The oath, or oaths, of Constantine, upon this occasion, rather being laid upon him, than being taken by him, is not a sufficient ground of suspicion. A man of virtue and reputation can seldom be induced by necessity to corroborate what he says with an oath: especially when he is speaking to a friend, who too, if the thing were true, must have known it long before from the report of general fame and many credible accounts." *Historia, lib. 1. c. 28. p. 172.*

been led to give the preference to the God of his father, and to worship him only.

These reflections led him to pray to the God of his father, desiring that he would make himself known to him, and afford him aid in his present difficulties: and while he was praying, which was towards the setting of the sun, but in clear day-light, there appeared a luminous figure of a cross, fixed upon the sun, visible not only to himself, but to all the soldiers who were with him, with this inscription. *Τηλεια, ενα, By this conquer.\** Being astonished at this extraordinary appearance, and not knowing what to make of it, the night following, Christ appeared to him in a dream, with the very same sign which he had seen in the heavens, ordering him to make a military standard like it, and assuring him that it would be his security in his battles.

Early in the morning he called his friends together, and informed them of the prodigy: and having assembled his jewellers, he described to them the form of the standard, and ordered them to execute it in gold and precious stones, which they accordingly did. Eusebius says that he had seen it, and he gives a very particular description of it.† He says that the emperor always used it in battle, and that he had others made like it, and carried at the head of all his armies.

Being then determined to worship no other God besides him who had appeared to him, he sent for those who were the best acquainted with the mysteries of his religion, to ask them what God it could be, and what was the sign that he had seen. They told him that the God he had seen was the only begotten Son of the one true God, and that the figure was the symbol of immortality, and the trophy of the

\* Eusebius renders this whole account suspicious, by not mentioning the place of his wonderful sight; a necessary and proper circumstance to be taken notice of in such a history. It hence appears to be probable, that Eusebius himself did not believe this story, nor intend to vouch for the truth of it. Constantine's army, he says, was following him in a certain march. This expression seems to me designed as a hint to the reader, not to depend upon the truth of what had been said. So that if, notwithstanding this caution of Eusebius, any believe the story, he is scarce accountable for their mistake; it is to be ascribed to their own credulity. *Eusebius*, V. p. 153.

James Tollus, in his Preface to Longinus, says, of the stratagems of Antigonus, Constantine, and a king of Portugal, who all pretended to singular visions. “*Je ne saurois sçavoir tous ces miracles, comme des finesses militaires des grand capitaines.*” *Ibid.* p. 151. Or “the natural dream of a general and an emperor,” see *Moshem de Reb.* translated. *Ibid.* VII. p. 388.

† “The sign which was put upon the standards was not the cross, but the combination of the name of Christ, the letter X, with the letter P transverse, for thus it was Eusebius’, and standards with this sign upon them are to be seen on the reverse of several coins of this emperor and his sons.” *Hist. of Pop.* C. p. 11.

victory which, while he was on earth, he had gained over death. At the same time they explained to him the cause of his coming, and the reason of his incarnation. He heard them with pleasure; and comparing their discourse with what he had seen, he was satisfied that it was by the interposition of God himself that he had been led to this knowledge. From this time he applied himself to the study of the Scriptures, he made the priests of that God his associates, and thought he ought to worship no other than the God whom he had seen. Therefore, confiding in him, he prepared to encounter the tyrant Maxentius.\* On this extraordinary narrative I shall take the liberty to make a few observations.

1. It is in the highest degree improbable that the founder of so peaceable a religion as the Christian, who solemnly declared that his kingdom was *not of this world*, and who expressly forbade his servants to fight for him, should in this manner put himself at the head of an army, and, like Mahomet, establish his religion by the sword.

2. It is little less improbable, that when Christianity had been so long preached in the world, and when the natural means of conversion were abundantly sufficient, Christ should interpose in person, as in the case of the apostle Paul, to convert Constantine, or any other particular man.

3. If it be true, as Constantine here says, that his father had been all his life a worshipper of the true God (by which he certainly meant the God of the Christians), it is very extraordinary that he should not have brought up his son a Christian, or at least have given him more knowledge of Christianity than he professes to have had at the time of this appearance. Besides, independently of any instructions he might have received from his father or mother, it is not to be supposed that Constantine could have lived to the age of thirty (in the latter part of which the Christians had been so violently persecuted, that they and their principles must have been the subjects of general conversation), and yet have known so little of Christianity as this story supposes. According to it, he did not even know the meaning of the sign of the cross, and had no assistance whatsoever except from his own reflections.

4. There is manifestly an inconsistency in the story in this very respect, as it represents Constantine sending for the priests of the God that he had seen in his vision, which

\* Euseb. *Vita Const.* L. 1. C. xxviii. &c. pp. 515, &c. (P) *Lardner*, IV pp. 49—151

implies that he knew what God it was, and then asking them who he was, and what was the meaning of the figure of the cross, as if he had never seen it before. Had he really been in the circumstances that he describes, viz. wholly ignorant of this strange God, and this symbol, he would naturally have made a proclamation to assemble the priests and ministers of all religions, without distinction, and not those of any one in particular.

5. It is something extraordinary that the priests whom he did send for, should be such bishops, or presbyters, as held the same opinions concerning Christ that Eusebius himself professed, considering Christ as a *God*, who had become *incarnate*, and that the whole of the subsequent history, which represents Constantine as fighting and triumphing under the conduct of this incarnate God, should give so much countenance to the doctrine of the Nicene Creed.

6. We have no account of this appearance, any more than of the vision, except from Constantine; though others are said to have seen this figure in the heavens, as well as himself. We have therefore the evidence of not more than one person for this extraordinary fact, and that of an emperor, whom it would choose to contradict, so far as to say they were present, and saw no such thing; so that the evidence, when properly examined, cannot be said to be very strong. Though, therefore, we may not be able to discover where the fallacy lies; whether the emperor really imagined that he saw such a figure in the sky, and had the dream in consequence of it, or whether he and his Christian friends, seeing nothing more than a natural *parhelion* (which sometimes does exhibit the appearance of a cross), and then fancying they saw the inscription also, purposely made the most of it, in order to encourage the soldiers (who, having served under his father, were probably in a great measure Christians), the story is far from being entitled to credit.

Upon the whole, it appears to me most probable, that Constantine and his friends saw a natural *parhelion*, and that all the other circumstances were either imagined or invented; and that the story has lost nothing in passing through the hands of Eusebius. I am unwilling to think that the whole was an absolute invention of the emperor.\*

\* Such, however, from the passages I have already quoted (pp. 323, 324), appears to have been the opinion of *Lardner*, who also conjectures (IV. p. 155) that the emperor, in the latter part of his life, related the story to Eusebius "in the most solemn manner." Yet *Lardner* adds (p. 158) that he does "not in the least doubt but that, about the time of his victory over Maxentius, or rather, probably, some time before it, Constantine became a sincere Christian, and continued so the remaining

though I should be disposed to admit *this* rather than the truth of two miracles, for which there is so little evidence, and that of the most suspicious nature, and also which is attended with so many improbable and inconsistent circumstances as I have pointed out.

That Constantine was prone to superstition, had been sufficiently evident from the account of the last scenes of his life. I am therefore the more willing to suppose that he was always so much inclined to it, as involuntarily to magnify a natural appearance into a prodigy, which is far from being uncommon, than that he purposely invented the whole for any purpose of ambition. When he was emperor, we do not find that he had recourse to artifice to gain any point.\* On the contrary, he made too much use of power. Some address he avows with respect to his project for composing differences among Christians. But this was chiefly good temper, forbearance and complaisance, and nothing that could be called imposition or deceit; and in this business also the engine that he made the most use of was power.

Mr. Gibbon, whose hatred of Christianity gives a tinge to his whole history, (and this, like any other strong and unreasonable prejudice, has often misled him, and made him ascribe events to the most improbable causes,) supposes that Constantine might be led to embrace Christianity by the disposition to passive obedience in Christians.

“The passive and unresisting obedience,” he says, “which bows under the yoke of authority, and even of oppression, must have appeared, in the eyes of an absolute monarch, the most conspicuous and useful of the evangetic virtues. The primitive Christians derived the institution of civil government, not from the consent of the people, but from the decrees of Heaven. The reigning emperor, though he had usurped the sceptre by treason and murder, immediately assumed the sacred character of viceroy of the Deity. To the Deity alone he was accountable for the abuse of his power, and his subjects were indissolubly bound by their oath of fidelity to a tyrant who had violated every law of nature and society. The humble Christians were sent into

part of his life.” The *sincerity* of this imperial convert remains, however, *problematical*, upon *Christian* principles; and I am surprised that the evidence for it could have satisfied such inquirers as *Lordner* and *Prieston*.

\* He seems, however, after his *conversion*, to have accepted, with the empire, on the defeat of *Maxentius*, the office of *Priest* of *Jupiter*.

“Le lendemain de sa victoire, *Constantin* entra en triomphateur dans Rome.—Le Sénat le déclara premier *Auguste*, et *Grand-Prêtre* de *Jupiter*, quoiqu’il fût alors *catéchumène*.” *Nov. Dict.* II. p. 282.

the world as sheep among wolves; and since they were not permitted to employ force, even in the defence of their religion, they should be still more criminal if they were tempted to shed the blood of their fellow-creatures in disputing the vain privileges, or the sordid possessions of this transitory life.\*

This is only a specimen of that malicious sarcasm, unworthy of every thing that bears the name of history, and highly unbecoming the dignity of it, with which this *impartial historian*, as he would be called, ever treats Christianity; and it prevented his seeing that, by putting himself at the head of a small number of passive and unwarlike people, Constantine had but little chance of getting the better of the great majority, who were obstinate and warlike. Were the views that Mr. Gibbon ascribes to Constantine, he would more naturally have thought, that, if he could recommend himself to those subjects of the empire who alone were formidable, he did not need to give himself any uneasiness about the rest, since they were ready to submit to any master whom God should send them. How does this conduct of Constantine suit with that profound policy which Mr. Gibbon elsewhere ascribes to him; and how could he expect to infuse "his own intrepid spirit," which he says† he did, into such troops as these tame and spiritless Christians could furnish him with?

Besides, what would it have availed Constantine to have the favour of such tame subjects as Mr. Gibbon represents the Christians to have been, who were as ready to attach themselves to any other, even a professed enemy of their religion, as to him? For, according to Mr. Gibbon, all sovereigns, being equally sent of God, would have been equally acceptable to them. In these circumstances, how can we admit with Mr. Gibbon, that "the piercing eye of ambition and avarice soon discovered (to Constantine) that the profession of Christianity might contribute to the interest of the present, as well as of a future life."‡ This historian

\* II. p. 187. P. C. xx. Milton thus replies to Salmasius, who adduced the authority of Athanasius for *passive obedience*: "Athanasius reges tercia ad numerum tribunda vocare befallium esse dicit. Quis hoc dixit Athanasio? Verbum enim Deum illum hic audio." Of the Christians in those times he presently adds, "Quare multo sunt ab illis dicta, atque scripta, que Christus et Apostoli neque docuerunt, neque a prophetis." *D. de serm.* 1551. C. iii. pp. 95, 99.

† Page 76. P. C. xxvii.

‡ Page 208. P. C. xx. Mr. Gibbon, in a note, refers for his authority to the 3d and 4th books of his *Constantine's* life, by Eusebius. From the 3d (I think) he quotes that Constantine "was accustomed to say, that whether Christ was preached in pretence, or in truth, he should still rejoice."

will hardly admit that, at the accession of Constantine, Christianity had so far established itself, by its own evidence, as to have been embraced by a majority of the subjects of the Roman empire. For this, surely would be to admit the truth of it; and unbelievers in general are willing to ascribe its establishment to the power of Constantine exerted in its favour; and the immediately preceding persecution by Diocletian shewed that, with respect to power, and no doubt wealth also, the Christians were greatly inferior to the Pagans. In these circumstances Constantine's eye of ambition and avarice must have been a good deal clouded, to see any prospect of success in his contest for the empire by the aid of Christianity.\* Or, if his eyes were clear, those of Julian must have been very dull, to attempt the subversion of Christianity, when the professors of it were, no doubt, much more numerous than they were at the accession of Constantine, and when it had had the advantage of a long establishment in its favour.

With such prejudices as Mr. Gibbon every where discovers, it was impossible for him to perceive the true spirit of Christianity, or the nature and value of the character which it forms. Else he would not have concluded, that because men may magnanimously suffer for their religion, and would bear any torture rather than deny or disguise their real belief, (which Mr. Gibbon makes no scruple of doing, by outwardly professing that religion which he at the same time cannot forbear treating with contempt,) they would tamely abandon their civil rights. Let him shew that, by becoming a Christian, a person gives up any of his rights as a man, or that he will have less public spirit, and act with less zeal in the defence of his own rights, and those of others. Rather, as the Christian does not value life as such, it may be concluded that he will be more ready to sacrifice it in the cause of his country and of mankind. Mr. Gibbon will hardly say that the Jews were forbidden the use of arms, and Christians worship the same God that they did. †

It cannot affect the evidence of Christianity to suppose

\* Yet my author has conjectured (p. 254), that Constantine's "soldiers were, probably, in a great measure Christians." He has also shewn (p. 278) the slight hold which Paganism had retained in the public opinion.

† Barclay contends that the precepts, Matt. v. 38—48, "Forbid some things, which were lawful to the Jews, considering their condition and dispensation, and command unto such as will be the disciples of Christ, a more perfect, earnest and full signification of charity, as also patience and suffering." He then appeals to "the judgment of most, if not all the ancient fathers, so called, of the first three hundred years after Christ, and of many others," referring to "testimonies against

that the foundation of civil government had never been at all considered by Christ or the apostles, and consequently that they never had any opinion on the subject. They certainly do not say that a right to power is *not* derived from the consent of the people. And finding themselves under a government which it was not in their power to change, it was very natural and right in them to exhort their followers to submit to it, as to the situation in which it had pleased Divine Providence to place them.

What Mr. Gibbon says of Constantine's conversion to Christianity being promoted by the murder of his son is almost too contemptible to be mentioned, as it shews the most violent and malignant prejudice. "At the time of the death of Crispus," he says, "the emperor could no longer hesitate in the choice of a religion. He could no longer be ignorant that the church was possessed of an infallible remedy, though he chose to defer the application of it till the

fighting," from *Justin Martyr* to *Fransois and I. Vives*. From the latter, *Barrow* translates the following character of Constantine's conversion.

"The prince entered into the church, not as a true and plain Christian, which had been most happy and desirable, but he brought in with him his nobility, his honours, his arms, his ensigns, his triumphs, his highness, his pride, his superciliousness; he came into the house of Christ, accompanied with the devil; and he would have joined two houses and two cities together, God's and the devil's, which could no more be done than Rome and Constantinople." See *Apol. Prop.* xv. Sect. xiii. xv.

A. As hom, in the work which I quoted, Vol. II. p. 91, considers "whether the nature of war be inconsistent with the nature of the Christian religion: Or whether some war may not now be lawful under the state of the gospel." He says that "not a few perhaps of the best Christians find their consciences checked, as if they had an interdict from Heaven restraining them even in the extreme necessities from defending their persons, and temporal rights, by the effusion of human blood," because "all sort of war, fights now against Christ and his religion." He adds, somewhat unorthodoxly, "These Christians assure themselves, that if they *walk* in one another's blood here, they cannot afterwards *tumble together* in Abraham's bosom."

This learned civilian proceeds however to contravert "*Schwertours*, and the rest of his tribe" who contend "that though war be not expressly, yet it is virtually forbid by our Saviour, as being totally repugnant to the *analogy of his passion* and the *economy of his cross*." Yet, at length, he admits that "something there is of the mingling of the best *offensive war*," by which he appears to mean every kind of mortal hostility, "which is displeasing to God, otherwise he would not have excepted against David's zeal for building him a house, only because he had been a man accustomed to shed blood, for the battles which he fought were said to be the Lord's." *Of the Controversies*, &c. 1830, pp. 160, 164, 185. See on this subject Some *Jenyns's* remarks on *Valerius*, in his *Literary Trial* Prop. iii.

That writer probably had not forgotten what Shakespeare makes a pensive soldier say to Henry V., who was traversing his camp before *Agincourt*, in discourse "Lamented, therefore, be well that die in battle, for how can they conveniently dispose of any thing, who have as their argument—*Hen. V. Act v. Scene 4*."

Yet whatever be the force of Christianity, respecting war, Dr. Priestley, in reply to Mr. Gibbon, had ought to assume, that, in the age of Constantine the professed followers of *Jesus* with a few exceptions, (see p. 24,) would fight merely as the votaries of *Mercy*. They soon discovered that they were equally exposed to persecutions.

approach of death had removed the temptation and danger of a relapse.\* This is to insinuate that Christianity encourages crimes by providing an expiation for them, and that a man is more disposed to become a Christian in consequence of having committed them, whether he have had any proper evidence of its truth or not. †

If Constantine had no previous belief of a future state, and of the punishments which Christianity denounces against all sinners, what occasion could he think he had of a pardon of sin? Were Nero, Domitian, or Commodus the more inclined to Christianity in consequence of the many murders they committed, or Maxentius, Galerius, and others who had imbrued their hands in the innocent blood of Christians in his own time? Will Mr. Gibbon himself, labouring under any mortal disease, take the prescription of a quack, merely because he promises him a cure?

This remark of Mr. Gibbon's agrees with what he says of one of his *secondary causes* of the spread of Christianity, viz. that it held out to mankind the happiness of a future state. But certainly there must be some other foundation of faith, besides a mere promise. The heathen religion promised all temporal prosperity to the worshippers of the gods, and it is well known that the happiness of this world has as powerful attractions with respect to the bulk of mankind as that of another. But those promises did not secure the perpetuity of those religions. In time men saw no ground of faith in them, and they deserted them for a religion that held out to them nothing but sufferings and death in this world, with well-grounded hopes of recompense in another. As to Constantine, there can be no doubt but that he was as sincere a Christian before the death of Crispus, as he was after that event, and Mr. Gibbon only mentions the circumstance for the sake of the opportunity it gave him to throw out a sneer against Christianity.

The *writers* that properly fall within this short period are so few, that I shall reserve an account of them to the conclusion of the next; and indeed from this time I shall not think it necessary to notice more than the principal of them in any period, and that in the shortest manner.

\* Page 207. (P) See *Zosimus* quoted by *Lardner*, IV. p. 159

† Mr. Gibbon was, probably, well disposed to consider *Christianity* and *the Church* as synonymous, but my author has sufficiently shewn how much they were now distinguished. Hence he might have readily allowed to the historian that *the Church* really pretended to the possession of an *infallible word*, and thus *encouraged crimes* and deluded their convert, by teaching him that baptism, in the article of death, would *expiate* all the offences of his life.

## PERIOD VIII.

FROM THE DEATH OF CONSTANTINE, A. D. 337, TO  
 THAT OF CONSTANTIUS, A. D. 361.

## SECTION I.

*General Observations on the State of Things in this Reign*

CONSTANTINE had three sons, and by his last will he divided his empire among them, in the following manner. To Constantine, the eldest, he gave Britain, Gaul, Spain, and the proconsular part of Africa. To Constantius, the second son, he gave Egypt, and all the eastern part of the empire, with Thrace, and of course Constantinople; and to Constans, the youngest, he gave Italy, Greece, Macedonia and Illyricum. He also left a brother of the name of Julius, and two nephews by another brother, and to these, certain provinces had been assigned. But the army declared they would not obey any other than the sons of Constantine, and put them to death; some say with the consent of Constantius, or even in compliance with the private will of Constantine. But both these suppositions are destitute of proof. In this massacre two sons of Julius, by different wives, were spared, viz. Gallus and Julian, afterwards the famous emperor of that name, at this time only eight years old. They were both of them put under the care of Eusebius of Nicomedia, and were made readers in his church.

Sozomen gives a very favourable, and, upon the whole, I doubt not, a very just idea of the state of Christianity in the reign of Constantine's sons. The bishops in general, he says, were men of exemplary characters and conduct, and the people under their care were attentive to the discharge of their proper duties, so that Christianity gained ground every day, and by the zeal and virtues of the clergy many Gentiles were brought over from their superstitions. To this good effect the emperors themselves contributed not

a little, having no less zeal for Christianity than their father. But, unhappily, they made the same use of their power that he had done before them, in doing that which ought to have been left to reason and persuasion. This, however, is not observed by any historian of the time.

These new emperors allowed the clergy, their children and families, several privileges. They also made laws of their own, similar to those of their father, the object of which was to restrain the idolatry of the Heathens. They ordered all the heathen temples to be shut up, both in the city and the country, and converted the materials of them into christian churches. For, like their father, they distinguished themselves by repairing old churches, and building new and magnificent ones. Of this number was the church at Emesa, which was famous for its beauty.

In the same spirit of zeal with that of their father, but which our more liberal ideas must condemn, they forbade Jews to purchase slaves from any sect besides their own, under the penalty of such slaves becoming the property of the treasury; and they made it confiscation of goods, and even death, for a Jew to circumcise any slave. The object of this law was, that all the Heathens who changed their religion might become Christians. For at that time, our historian says, no converts were made to Christianity, except from them.\*

Indeed, we cannot wonder that a total stop should be put to the conversion of the Jews, when Christians began to consider Christ as a god, and thereby to infringe upon that doctrine which, from long before the time of our Saviour, and in every period since, they have justly held to be most sacred, viz. the *Unity of God*. To establish this doctrine, and to teach it to the whole world, was the one great object of the Jewish religion, and of all the privileges of their nation. They therefore justly consider all Trinitarian Christians as idolaters, and with peculiar aversion, as being more inexcusable than the Heathens themselves.

There cannot be a stronger argument against the interference of civil power in matters of religion, than the history of Constantine and his sons, the first of the princes of this world who took Christianity under their protection. Constantine was, by his own confession, very imperfectly instructed in the principles of Christianity when he under-

\* Seeom. Hist. L. iii. C. xxii. p. 122. 123.

took this new and arduous office. He first got himself instructed by some particular bishops, and presently after patronizing the party of his instructors, he procured the condemnation of every sect that was hostile to them, and enforced their decisions, which in effect he himself dictated, by rigorous civil punishments. It was not long, however, before he saw reason to change his opinion, or at least his conduct. Before he died, he was entirely reconciled to Arius and his friends, to whom he had been most violently hostile, and he entered into their measures as readily and as warmly as he had done into those of their enemies.

His eldest son Constantine, and his youngest Constantius, retained the first opinions of their father with respect to the person of Christ; and in their dominions, viz. in the West, the Trinitarian doctrine was supported. But Constantius embracing what was then called the Arian doctrine, such Arianism was in his reign the orthodoxy of the East, and the majority of the bishops were too ready then, as they have been ever since, to change with the court. Such a bias was interest on the minds of men, Christians and Christian clergy not excepted. But that the standard of faith should be fixed by the caprice (for all history shews that it deserves no better name) of men who, in general, give but little attention to the subject of religion, and who, if they should do it, are commonly the least able to judge concerning it, (in consequence of their minds being occupied with other things, and especially on account of the temptation they are under to make religion a mere engine of civil policy,) is peculiarly reproachful to Christians and Christian clergy, who ought to call no man master upon earth, and much less those who ought rather to be their disciples.

It would not be half so preposterous in princes and statesmen to establish a system of *medicine* within their dominions, and to oblige all their subjects to submit to be created as physicians of their appointment should direct, as to establish a system of *theology*, and enforce a conformity to it by temporal rewards and punishments. It might even be said, that the health of their subjects is an affair of a civil nature, in which the civil magistrate is deeply interested, and that therefore it becomes him to make such provision for it as his wisdom should seem best. But if, notwithstanding this pretence, all men are allowed to provide for the health of their bodies in whatever manner they please, or to neglect it altogether if they think proper, much less pretence is there

to prescribe to men in what relates to the health of their minds, and their happiness in a state to which the power of civil magistrates does not extend, and where, without having any advantage over the meanest of their subjects, they themselves must *receive according to their works*; and when the part they shall have acted towards their fellow-christians and fellow-men, will not be overlooked.

In any other view than this above-mentioned, the ecclesiastical history of the reign of Constantius is as uninteresting as it is unpleasant and tiresome; as it consists of little besides a struggle between the Nicene and the Anti-Nicene bishops, or the Arian and Athanasian parties, as they may be properly termed in this reign, in which Athanasius himself, and his adventures, make so great a figure. Many were the councils which we shall be obliged to attend on both sides,\* but councils in which nothing materially new was decided; so that at the close of this reign the doctrine of the Trinity stood very nearly as it had done before the Council of Nice, since all who called themselves orthodox, or catholic, maintained that Christ, or the *logos*, was the uncreated attribute of the Father, but inferior to him; only God of God, and light of light, not *αὐτοθεος*, or God of himself. A real advance, however, was made towards the close of this reign, in the system of Arianism.

\* The number of councils held in this reign is pleasantly ridiculed by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, a heathen historian. Speaking of Constantius, he says, (in Mr. Gibbon's translation,) "The Christian religion, which in itself is plain and simple, he confounded by the dotage of superstition. Instead of reconciling the parties by the weight of his authority, he cherished and propagated by verbal disputes, the differences which his vain curiosity had excited. The highways were covered with troops of bishops galloping from every side to the assemblies which they call *synods*; and while they laboured to reduce the whole sect to their own particular opinions, the public establishment of the posts was almost ruined by their hasty and repeated journeys." M. p. 266 [C. xvi.] I see nothing, however, in the original which implies that Constantius might have reconciled the parties by the weight of his authority, or that the differences among the bishops were excited by his vain curiosity. The imperial authority would have availed nothing in this case; nor were the differences of opinion at all excited by his curiosity, but by other causes. P

Lardner has given the original passage, which he thus literally translates: "The Christian religion, which in itself is plain and simple, he adulterated with a childish superstition; for studying it with a vain curiosity instead of sober modesty, he raised many dissensions, which when caused, he cherished and increased by a strife about words. And the public carriages were even worn out by the troops of priests galloping from all quarters to their synods, as they call them, to bring the whole sect to their particular opinion." Lardner adds, "He calls the Christian religion a *pure and simple religion*. They who best understand the New Testament, will most admire the justness of this observation." See also further remarks, *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 467, 468.

## SECTION II.

*From the beginning of the Reign of Constantius, A. D. 337,  
to the Council of Sardica, A. D. 347.*

PRESENTLY after the death of Constantine, his son of the same name sent Athanasius from Treves, the place of his banishment, where he had had frequent interviews with him, to his see at Alexandria; Constantius, under whose government Egypt was, making no opposition to it, though the measure gave great offence to Eusebius of Nicomedia, and all the Arians, who complained of it as an irregular proceeding, since he was not reinstated in the same manner in which he had been deposed, viz. by a council. It is said however, that he was received with great joy by the people of his diocese.\* At the same time also, and by the same power, Marcellus of Ancyra, and Asclepas of Gaza, were sent to their respective sees, though they did not obtain possession of them till some time afterwards.

About this time died Eusebius the historian, bishop of Cæsarea, † and was succeeded by Acacius, who will make a considerable figure in the transactions of this reign; and not long after, viz. A. D. 340, Constantine, invading the territories of his brother Constans, was killed in battle near Aquileia, in the third year of his reign. Being the eldest of his father's sons, he thought his division of the empire too small, and had claimed all Africa and Italy.

After the death of Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, which was at the age of ninety-eight years, Paul was chosen in his place, to the great displeasure of the Arians, who would have raised Macedonius to that dignity. This, however, being done in the absence of Constantius, he caused him to be removed, and put Eusebius of Nicomedia in his place. ‡

This proceeding being contrary to the canon, a council was held immediately after at Alexandria, by the friends of Athanasius and Alexander, consisting of about a hundred bishops of Egypt, Thebais, Lybia and Pentapolis, who took advantage of it to criminate Eusebius, as the persecutor of Athanasius, whom they, in their letters to the bishops,

Socrat. Hist. l. ii. c. iii. p. 31. (P.)

\* In the year 330 or 340. *Lardner*, IV, p. 203.

† Socrat. Hist. l. i. c. vi. p. 25. 26. (P.) *Lardner* III, p. 136.

justify from all the accusations which had been brought against him.\*

These proceedings, in Egypt, where Athanasius had, no doubt, many friends, did not deter Eusebius and his party from engaging in other measures against him, in a council held at Antioch, five years after the death of Constantine, A. D. 341, in which Flaccillus, bishop of that city, presided. But neither Maximus, bishop of Jerusalem, nor Julius, bishop of Rome, was there, though Socrates says that the ecclesiastical canons forbade any thing to be done in the church without the consent of the bishop of Rome. However, he could only mean that it had not been reckoned decent to determine any thing of consequence without the concurrence of so eminent a bishop as that of Rome, any more than without the concurrence of the bishop of Antioch, of Constantinople, or of Alexandria. For there was no decree of any council in favour of the bishop of Rome in particular.

This council was dignified by the presence of Constantius himself, who, wishing to attend the dedication of a new church in Antioch, which in the life-time of his father he had superintended, thought it a convenient opportunity of calling this council.† Accordingly ninety-seven bishops were assembled, and in it the friends of Eusebius accused Athanasius of resuming his see without the decree of any council, of exciting a sedition upon his return, in which many persons had died, and of beating some with his own hands, &c. They moreover brought up again what they had before laid to his charge in the Council of Tyre.‡

Having agreed on the deposition of Athanasius, the bishops at Antioch appointed Gregory to succeed him, after the see had been refused by Eusebius of Emesa, § on account of the

\* Athanasii Apol. II. Opera, l. p. 720. (P.)

† Sozom. Hist. L. iii. C. v. p. 97. (P.)

‡ Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. viii. p. 84. (P.)

§ The history of this Eusebius is pretty remarkable, and is thus given by Socrates, from an account of George, bishop of Laodicea, who wrote his life: He was a native of Edessa, and was very early instructed in the knowledge of the Scriptures, but he afterwards studied them more accurately under Eusebius of Casarea and Patrophilus of Scythopolis. Coming to Antioch about the time that Eustathius was deposed (on the accusation of Cyrus of Berea for holding the doctrine of Sabellius), he continued to live with Euphronius, who succeeded him. It being then proposed to advance him to the rank of presbyter, he avoided it by going to Alexandria, where he studied philosophy; and it was after his return from that city to Antioch, that, becoming intimate with Flaccillus, who succeeded Euphronius, he had this appointment to the see of Alexandria. Not choosing to go thither, he went to Emesa, but being insulted at his ordination, as a person who was addicted to the mathematics, by which was meant magic, he fled to George, bishop of Laodicea, who afterwards wrote his life. By his means, and the efforts of Flaccillus and Narcissus, he was at length settled at Emesa. Notwithstanding he subscribed to

affection which he knew the church of Alexandria bore to Athanasius.

Indeed, nothing could be more unjust, or more contrary to ancient usage, than thus obtruding upon a diocese, a bishop who was not of their own choosing. But when it came to be a matter of importance to the state, who should be possessed of any ecclesiastical dignity, the civil powers, on some pretence or other, claimed the nomination, and these bishops acted, no doubt, by the direction of the emperor, who was in this case guided by them. Indeed, arbitrary princes are generally the tools of others, who are abler than themselves, and who have got the ascendancy over them.

In this council it was agreed that no bishop deposed by any council should be restored except by another council consisting of at least an equal number of bishops. Even the Catholic bishops afterwards pleaded the authority of this council in their proceedings against Chrysostom, as we shall see in its proper place.

After dispatching the affair of Athanasius, the bishops who were assembled at Antioch proceeded to fix a creed, which they prefaced by saying that they did not receive it from Arius, but from their ancestors. In this creed it is declared, that there is *one God, and one only begotten Son of God, who existed before all ages, and remained with the Father who begat him, and that by him all things visible and invisible were made.* By these few articles, they probably hoped to heal, or compromise, all their differences, as it is expressed in such a manner as that neither the friends of Arius, nor the advocates of the Nicene Creed, could object to it.

But, apprehensive perhaps that this would not be thought to come sufficiently near to the Nicene Creed, the members of this council agreed upon another, which was said to have been the composition of Lucian of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom at Nicomedia, a circumstance which, it might be thought, would recommend it to general acceptance.\* In this creed Christ is said to be *God of God, perfect out of perfect, the living word, wisdom, life, the true light, not liable to change, the express image of his Father's divinity, substance, power, &c. the first-born of every creature, who was in the beginning with God.* This comes much nearer to the Nicene Creed, and is apparently more remote from Arianism. but

the decree at Antioch, he was accused of Sabellianism; but Constantius, having an esteem for him, took him with him when he went against the Barbarians. L. ix. c. ix. p. 86. (P.) See *Lordner*, IV. pp. 128, 129.

\* Sozom. Hist. L. iii. C. v. p. 28. (P.)

still consistent with it, since the phrase ( $\epsilon\kappa\ \Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ ) of *God*, may not necessarily mean from his *substance*. Perhaps to appear farther removed from Arianism, the bishops who composed this council pronounced an anathema against those who said that *the Son of God is a creature, like one of the creatures*. But the original Arians always made a great difference between Christ, the being by whom all other things were made, and the *creatures* which were made by him; he being made by God himself, and other things not by God immediately, but by him.

Gregory above-mentioned, being present, subscribed this creed as bishop of Alexandria,\* and after the synod he was conducted by a guard of five thousand soldiers, who were joined by the Arians of the city; but in the tumult one of the churches was set on fire and burned down. On this arrival of Gregory, Athanasius made his escape, undiscovered, and fled to Rome. But Eusebius and his friends, confiding in the goodness of their cause, wrote to Julius, the bishop of Rome, requesting that he would himself hear and decide the affair of Athanasius.† In the mean time the Arians at Alexandria, not being satisfied with Gregory, in part on account of the burning of the church, and also because they did not think him sufficiently zealous in their interest, made choice of George of Cappadocia, one of the most distinguished Arians of that age, whose untimely end I shall have occasion to speak of under the reign of Julian.‡

Eusebius did not live to see the issue of this affair of Athanasius. He died presently after this council of Antioch, and in his place the people chose Paul a second time; but the Arian party ordained Macedonius in another church of the city. Constantius, who was then at Antioch, hearing of this, sent Hermogenes with a military force to expel Paul. But in this he was so violently opposed by the people, that in a tumult they burned his house, and killed him, by dragging him through the streets by his feet. This happened A. D. 342.

On this the emperor himself went to Constantinople, expelled Paul, and punished the citizens by lessening their allowance of corn. He did not, however, think proper at that time to confirm the election of Macedonius, but suffered him to officiate in the church in which he had been ordained. Upon the death of Eusebius, who had been at the head of

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. x. p. 86. (P.)

† Ibid. C. xi. p. 89. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. xv. page 107. (P.)

what was called the Arian party, the most active supporters of it were Theognis of Nice, Maris of Chalcodon, Theodorus of Heraclea in Thrace, Ursacius of Singidunum in Upper Mœsia, and Valens of Mureia in Upper Pamphonia.

At this time the church and court of Rome were the refuge of all the bishops who had suffered by the Arians, and indeed of those who thought themselves injured in any other respect. Not only had Athanasius fled thither, but also Paul of Constantinople, Asclepas of Gaza, Marcellus of Ancyra and Lucius of Adrianople. All these, Julius sent back to their proper sees, with letters of acquittal and recommendation, from a synod which he had called upon the occasion. But the Eastern bishops were much offended at this interference of Julius, and in a synod assembled at Antioch, A. D. 345, they wrote to reprove him for meddling in their affairs; alleging that they had not interfered when Novatus was condemned at Rome. And neither Marcellus nor Asclepas was actually restored till after the Council of Sardica; nor was Athanasius re-established till five or six years after this time, though it might seem from Socrates\* that he was then restored, though with much tumult and bloodshed. But in this he refers to another restoration.

Constantius was no more pleased with the interference of the bishop of Rome and his synod in the affairs of the East, than were the bishops who met at Antioch; and hearing that Paul had recovered the see of Constantinople by that means, he sent Philip, the prefect of the prætorium, with orders to depose him, and to give the see to Macedonius, which till this time he had forborne to do. Accordingly, Philip, fearing a tumult, contrived to get Paul into his power by stratagem, and then sent him to the place of his nativity at Thessalonica. Still, however, the business was but half done, and so great was the opposition of the people, or, at least, so great was the crowd that was assembled upon the occasion, and which either would not, or could not, disperse, that the soldiers fell upon them, and more than three thousand were killed, either by them, or by their treading upon one another.

About this time, according to Socrates, Constantius dedicated the celebrated church of St. Sophia in Constantinople, the architecture of which is admired to this day.† Philostorgius says, that when Constantius built this church, he

\* E. n. C. xv. p. 92. P.

† Ibid. C. xvi. p. 94. Codræus says, that this edifice, having fallen down, was rebuilt, and dedicated a second time, by Constantius. *Valentinus's Note.* But it is

removed into it the relics of the apostle Andrew, and those of Luke the evangelist, from Achaia, and also those of Timothy from Ephesus.\* From this time this species of superstition was so common, that particular instances of it will not deserve to be mentioned. In a later period, no church or altar was thought to be duly consecrated, unless it contained some relics.

The emperor Constans, finding that the council which Julius had called at Rome had produced no effect, and that neither Athanasius nor Paul were reinstated in their sees, owing to the opposition of his brother, requested that three bishops might be sent to him, to confer upon the subject. Accordingly, Narcissus of Cilicia, Theognis of Nice, Maris of Chaleedon, and also Mark of Syria, were dispatched from the East for that purpose. But refusing to confer with Athanasius, and presenting a confession of faith different (though in no material respect) from that which had been drawn up at Antioch, they were dismissed without effecting any thing.

At this time we find the first mention of Photinus as bishop of Sirmium. He had been the disciple of Marcellus of Ancyra, and from him the Unitarians were for a long time called *Photinians*.†

My reader will imagine that we have already had creeds enough in the life of one emperor; but they are not one half of those that were the produce of this reign. In the year 344 or 345, there was another council at Antioch, consisting of almost all the bishops of the East, on what occasion convened does not appear; but in it they drew up another creed, longer than any of the preceding, and sent it to the bishops in the West. It is by no means Arian, and differs in nothing from the Nicene Creed, except in its not containing the word *consubstantial*. It not only speaks of Christ as *God of God* and *light of light*, but anathematizes those

perhaps more probable that Soerates is mistaken in placing the *dedication* of this church at this time, if indeed he meant so much, for he only says that he then *built* it, (vol. 5a. P.)

\* E. ii. C. ii. p. 486. (P.) According to *Smoth's* authorities, this removal was into "the church of the Holy Apostles," a mosque which now bears the name of the emperor Mehmet, by whom Constantinople was taken. *Greek Church*, p. 59. *Smoth* shews, from several *Greek* authorities, that the church was called Saint Sophia, "in honour of our blessed Saviour, who is the wisdom of the Father." The present structure was probably built by Justinian. "A new mosque," the chief seat of the Mahomedan worship," erected by the Turks. *The Siphian Greek Church*, 1680, pp. 57, 59. See also *Antiq. of Constantinople*, revised from *Gyllius*, 1729, pp. 82—95, and the engravings, copied from *De Tivoli*.

† Soerates, Hist. L. ii. C. xviii. p. 97. (P.) *Earlner*, IV. pp. 361—366.

who say that the Son was produced from any other substance than God, or that there was any time in which he did not exist; and that it cannot be said without danger of error, that the Son was made *out of nothing*, since this is not said of him in the Scriptures; but it condemns those who say that the Father did not beget the Son, of his own will and pleasure. At the same time the bishops of this council execrate and anathematize those who say, "that Christ is a mere man, like Paul of Samosata, and the followers of Marcellus and Photinus, who deny the eternal essence and divinity of Christ, and his perpetual and immortal kingdom, in order to establish a monarchy." They also condemn the Sabellians and Patripassians by name.

If we consider the tenor of this creed, and the solemn declaration with which it concludes,\* it will appear to be drawn up by the bishops of the East, in order to give all possible satisfaction to their brethren in the West, and to heal all the past breaches in the church; and the seeming tautology of it probably arose from their desire to prevent all cavilling, as if it had not expressed their real sentiments. It also furnishes a proof that the generality of the Eastern bishops did not entirely adopt the doctrine of Arius, though they disapproved of the measures of his adversaries, and could not relish the term *consubstantial*, as both unscriptural and expressly reprobated by the council which condemned Paul of Samosata.

Notwithstanding the peaceable and friendly disposition of these Eastern bishops, those in the West were not disposed to receive their overtures with equal good temper. They being assembled at Milan A. D. 346, refused to give any opinion about the creed, alleging its being drawn up in Greek, which they did not well understand, that the Nicene Creed was sufficient, and that all subtle explanations ought to be avoided. And since neither Paul of Constantinople, nor Athanasius, had been able to recover their sees, notwithstanding the letters of the emperor Constans in their favour, they requested that another general council might be held, in which that affair should be finally decided, and another formulary of faith drawn up, which should be agreed upon by all; alleging that the deposition of those bishops had no other cause than an attempt to unsettle the faith which had been agreed upon at Nice. Accordingly, both the emperors.

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xix. p. 98. 175

wishing, no doubt, to compose all differences, agreed to call another council at Sardica, in Illyricum, on the borders of both their dominions, for the eleventh year after the decease of Constantine, viz. A. D. 347.\*

### SECTION III.

*From the Council of Sardica, A. D. 347, to the Death of the Emperor Constans, A. D. 350.*

WHEN the time that had been fixed was come, there were assembled at Sardica about three hundred of the Western bishops, but only seventy-six of the Eastern, and among them Ischyras, bishop of Mareotis, appointed by those who had deposed Athanasius. Some of the Eastern bishops alleged their bad health, and others the shortness of the time; for which they blamed Julius, bishop of Rome, though six months intervened between the calling and the holding of it. The true reason probably was, their being well apprised that the Western bishops came with a determination to reverse all their proceedings at Antioch, and that they would hear no reason to the contrary; which soon appeared to be the case. For when they were all assembled, the Western bishops insisted upon Paul and Athanasius (and no doubt the other bishops also whose causes were to be decided) having a seat in the council. But to this the Eastern bishops objected, that this would be to make them judges in their own causes, and that they would be obliged to acknowledge that they had done wrong in deposing them, without having an opportunity of hearing any reason for changing their opinion.

These objections not being admitted by Hosius of Corduba, and Protogenes of Sardica, who of course presided, the Eastern bishops, after much fruitless negotiation, left them, and formed a separate council at Philippopolis, in Thrace. There they confirmed their former decrees against Athanasius, Paul, Marcellus and Asclepas. They also pronounced sentence of deposition against Julius, bishop of Rome, and Hosius of Corduba, for communicating with them; and against Maximinus, bishop of Treves, not only for communicating with Paul, but for refusing to do it with some bishops of the East. They also deposed Protogenes, bishop of Sardica, and Gaudentius; the former for acquitting Marcellus whom they had condemned, and the latter

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xx. p. 103. (P.)

for having opposed Cyriacus his predecessor, and for having favoured those who had been deposed by them. Having made these decrees, they, according to custom, wrote to the distant churches, warning them not to receive into their communion those whom they had deposed, or to communicate with them by letters.

They then drew up a creed, in which Socrates says they reprobated the word *consubstantial*. Sozomen, however, says that they only made no mention of it, but anathematized those who said there were *three gods*, that Christ was not God or the same with the Father, Son and Spirit, and that the Son was unbegotten, or that there was a time when he was not.

This creed is in fact a condemnation of the Unitarians and a confirmation of what they had agreed upon at Antioch, which, as I have observed, was of a conciliatory nature. By condemning those who held that there are *three gods*, it is possible that they alluded to the doctrine of the perfect equality of the Son to the Father, which was contended for and acquired the seal of orthodoxy, in a later period, but had probably been only just advanced, and had given offence, at this time. Socrates also says (according to the present copies) that these Eastern bishops confirmed the use of the term *αὐομοιότης*, i. e. asserted that the Son was *unlike* the Father; but, from their subsequent conduct, it is probable that they did the very reverse of this, agreeing with what was done by the Western bishops at Sardica.\*

The Western bishops, assembling without the Eastern, first condemned them for their desertion of the council, and then pronounced sentence of deposition against those who had deposed Athanasius, viz. Theognis of Nice, Narcissus of Irenopolis, Acacius of Casarea in Palestine, Menophantus of Ephesus, Ursacius of Singidnum, Valens of Mircia, and George of Laodicea.†

Having dispatched this business, the bishops assembled upon this occasion confirmed the Nicene Creed, with an express approbation of the phrase (*ὁμοουσιότης*) of *the same substance*, and an express condemnation of the phrase (*ὁμοιουσιότης*) of *like substance*, which then began to be contended for by the Arianizing or more moderate party; and they sent letters to the absent bishops, containing copies of their resolutions, and appealing to them to judge between them and the Eastern bishops. At this council Marcellus of Ancyra was restored‡

\* Socrat. Hist. l. iii. c. xx. p. 194. Sozom. Hist. l. iii. c. xi. p. 197. † Sozom. Hist. l. iii. c. xv. p. 199. ‡ P.

to his see, on pleading that his book had been misunderstood, and that he did not hold the opinions of Paul of Samosata.\*

Thus ended the Council of Sardica, from which so much had been expected. Instead of uniting the Eastern and Western bishops, it occasioned a greater separation between them, the former being probably offended that the latter did not receive their creed, or shew so good a disposition towards a reconciliation as themselves had discovered. Constans, however, was so much intent upon the restoration of Paul and Athanasius, whose sees were within the dominion of his brother (who had opposed their restoration before, and who was not likely to consent to it now), that he absolutely threatened him with war in case of his non-compliance.†

Upon this, Constantius consulted with his bishops, and they advised him, for the sake of peace, to comply with his brother's demands. Accordingly, he not only consented, but wrote himself to Athanasius, encouraging him to come to him, and assuring him of his readiness to give him the possession of his see. The bishop appearing to distrust him, the emperor wrote two other letters. After this, carrying with him a letter from Julius, written in the highest style of encomium, to recommend him to the people of Alexandria, he waited upon Constantius, who received him very graciously, but would have stipulated with him for a church within his diocese for the use of the Arians. To this Athanasius seemed to make no objection, provided that a similar demand of his brother might be granted, viz. that, in every place in which the Arians were established, there should be a separate place of assembly for those of his persuasion. But the Arians being consulted, said that it would be inconvenient. Constantius then made no farther opposition, and not only consented to the restoration of Athanasius, but wrote letters to the people in his favour. At the same time he restored Paul of Constantinople, Marcellus of Ancyra, Aselepas of Gaza, and Lucius of Adrianople, agreeably to the decrees of the Council of Sardica.‡

It might have been expected that, after so much condescension on the part of the emperor, in whose territories he was to reside, Athanasius would have proceeded immediately to Alexandria, and have taken quiet possession of his see. But instead of this, he went to Jerusalem, where he persuaded Maximus the bishop to call a council of the bishops of Syria and Palestine, in which he was again restored to

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xx. p. 103. (P.) + Ibid. C. xxiii. p. 108. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. xxiii. p. 209. (P.)

his see, and received into the communion of the church. From this council letters were sent to Alexandria, and to all the bishops of Syria and Egypt, to acquaint them with the resolutions of it. This proceeding of Maximus exposed him to the ridicule of the Arians, as he was one of those who had consented to the expulsion of Athanasius in the former council.

After this, Athanasius pursued his journey to Alexandria, admonishing the people in all the cities through which he passed, to avoid the Arians, and to receive into their communion none but those who would admit the term *consubstantial*. This conduct gave his adversaries a fresh handle against him, and especially his attempting to make ordinations in other dioceses.\* Thus, however, at length, was Athanasius reinstated in his see, A. D. 349. It was immediately after this, as Le Sneur supposes, that he called the council of one hundred bishops of Egypt, Thebais, Lybia and Pentapolis, in which his innocence was again confirmed, and from which letters were addressed to all the Eastern churches, as was mentioned before.

Ursacius and Valens, seeing Athanasius established in his see, deserted the party of the Arians, acknowledging their error, to Julius, bishop of Rome, and subscribing to the term *consubstantial*. They also wrote to Athanasius, professing their readiness to hold communion with him for the future.†

The great supporter of the catholic cause, and of Athanasius as at the head of it, was the emperor Constans; but he giving himself up to pleasure, and suffering every abuse of government, such as selling the public employments, &c. and pleasing neither the people nor the army, one of his officers, Magnentius, was encouraged to revolt against him; when Constans, being unprepared for the contest, fled, and being pursued to a town near the Pyrennees, was put to death. The only thing for which he is praised by the orthodox, is the support that he gave to their cause; and for this one virtue Athanasius speaks of him as a martyr.‡

\* Socrat. Hist. I. iii. C. xxv. p. 146. P.

† Ibid. C. xii. xiii. xxiv. pp. 140, 146. M. Gibbon thinks the account of this recantation of Ursacius and Valens very singular. "Their epistles to Julius, bishop of Rome, and to Athanasius himself," he says, "are of so different a cast from each other, that they cannot both be genuine. The one speaks the language of criminals who confess their guilt to humanity, the other of enemies who solicit, on equal terms, an honourable reconciliation."—I. iv. c. 11, p. 278. C. xxv. Note. Indeed, it cannot be supposed that these two bishops should have been so much respected by their party as they were. The same observation is ascribed to them. They took the lead at the council of Armin, and in every thing relating to the Arians. P.

‡ Apol. I. Opera, I. p. 678. P. "About 349, Athanasius sent a copy of the Bible to the emperor Constans."—Laudner, IV. p. 257.

## SECTION IV.

*From the Death of Constans, A. D. 350, to that of Gallus, A. D. 354, including the Council of Sirmium, against Photinus.*

CONSTANTIUS being freed from the Persian war, in which he had not been successful, by an invasion of Persia by the Massagetæ, found himself at liberty to revenge the death of his brother; and this he did in a war of three years' continuance, defeating Magnentius first in Pannonia, and then in Gaul, so that at length he was reduced to the necessity of putting an end to his own life, A. D. 353. We see, in a strong light, the power of the bishops of the principal sees at this time, by Magnentius sending ambassadors to Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, and by Constantius, his professed enemy, thinking it worth his while to write to him with professions of friendship and regard on this occasion.\*

Valens, bishop of Muria, is said to have ingratiated himself with Constantius by his management at the battle of Mursa. For while the emperor was at his devotions in the church, during the engagement, the bishop was assiduous in bringing him news of all the particulars of it, and gave him the first account of the enemy being put to flight. It is added to the account, but probably by the enemies of Valens and the Arians, that when he was asked what authority he had for the news, he replied, that an angel had brought him the intelligence.† But before this was accomplished, several events took place in the ecclesiastical world.

Being now sole emperor, and under no restraint from the influence of a colleague, Constantius presently took occasion to reverse what he had been in a manner compelled to do by his brother. He first banished Paul from Constantinople; and, according to Socrates, he was put to death at Cucusus, in Armenia, by those who were conducting him to Cappadocia, the place of his exile; but Sozomen says he could not tell whether he might not die of a disease. Marcellus was banished from Ancyra, and his see restored to Basil. Lucius, bishop of Adrianople, was put into prison, and died there, and the emperor was so provoked by the past conduct, and also by some recent accusations of Athanasius, especially

\* Athan. *ad Vitam solitariam agentes*, Epist. Opera, I. p. 895. *Ad Constantium Apol.* I. p. 677. (P.)

† Sulp. Severus, L. iii. C. xxxviii. p. 266. (P.)



life was aimed at, the writers of the account (which was drawn up by order of the church) could not tell.\* Getting by some means out of danger, he concealed himself six years in the deserts of Thebais, till the death of Constantius. There, however, he was not idle, but continued to write and publish several books; and thence, it is thought that he occasionally made excursions, even as far as Italy, without ever being discovered by his enemies.

Macedonius having succeeded Paul at Constantinople, greatly promoted a violent persecution which the emperor now carried on against the Consubstantialists, first banishing all the bishops who professed that faith, and putting others in their places: and then compelling the people by confiscation, exile, and, it is said, even torture, to communicate with them. But the churches of Achaia, Illyricum and Macedonia were not molested.† I would observe, however, that no instances are mentioned of this general and heinous accusation.

While these things were transacting in the East, Constantius was conducting the war against Magnentius in the West. Being at Sirmium after the defeat of Vetranio, (who had also declared himself emperor,) A. D. 351, he convened a council for the purpose of deposing Photinus, whom the decrees of two former councils had not been able to silence, on account of the great affection which his people had for him. To this council there came from the East, George of Alexandria, and Basil of Ancyra, and from the West, Hosius of Corduba, but against his will. They soon agreed to depose Photinus, as holding the doctrine of Sabellius and of Paul of Samosata. This, says our historian, was universally thought to be well done: but what they did afterwards had not the approbation of all.‡

Having dispatched the business of Photinus, the bishops

protest which was publicly presented three days afterwards by the Catholics of Alexandria." H. p. 288. [C. xxi.] I have, however, carefully perused this account, and find not one of the circumstances mentioned in this note. Some of them, however, are contained in Athanasius's own account of his flight, in his *Apology to the Emperor*, Opera, l. p. 217. According to that, the psalm recited was one which celebrates the mercy of God as *enduring for ever*, in the margin called Psalm 105th, or our 106th, and he only waited until the *greater part* of the congregation were dispersed. Had he staid till the *last*, as Mr. Gibbon represents him to have done, he could not possibly have escaped. Mr. Gibbon probably made use of Fleury, who refers both to the account drawn up by the church, and to that by Athanasius himself, and it is the latter, not quoted by Mr. Gibbon, that contains the particulars which he has embellished. (P.)

\* Athan. Opera, l. pp. 866, &c. (P.)

† Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xxvii. p. 120. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. xxix. p. 128. (P.) *Lardner*, IV. pp. 362—363.

who were assembled on this occasion sat down, as was usual in the councils of this reign, to compose a creed, and not contenting themselves with one, they drew up two, one in Greek, composed by Mark of Arethusa, and the other in Latin. In the Greek creed, Christ is called *God of God* and *light of light*, and it anathematized those who taught that the Son was *made out of nothing*, or of any other substance than that of the Father, or who say that *there ever was a time in which he did not exist*. This is sufficiently agreeable to the doctrine of the Nicene Creed.

With respect to Photinus and the philosophical Unitarians, it equally condemns those who say that the substance of God could be dilated or contracted, and that this dilated substance was the Son, and those who assert that what was born of Mary was a mere man. At the same time they declare that the Son is not equal to the Father, but subject to him; and they anathematize those who say that the Son was begotten without the Father's will. They add several propositions relating to the Holy Spirit, by which it appears that different opinions had begun to be advanced on that subject: but they are chiefly levelled against the philosophical Unitarians.

The Latin creed condemns the word *consubstantial* as unscriptural, and an attempt to explain what is above the human capacity. In other respects it does not differ from the preceding, except in words, and in being much shorter, though, like the former, it contains much reasoning.

From the tenor of these creeds, and all those which have hitherto come before us in the course of this reign, it is highly probable that Eusebius of Nicomedia, and the other friends of Arius, did not entirely adopt his opinions, (if indeed he himself adhered strictly to what he first gave out,) though they thought him right in some things, and were persuaded that his enemies erred also, and especially in carrying their animosity against him much farther than the importance of the subject required. Since all these creeds insist particularly on there being no time in which the Son was not, as well as on his being formed of no other substance than that of the Father, I think it probable that by this time there was such a change in the sentiments of those who came to be deemed the orthodox party, as that they no longer supposed that the act, which was called the *generation of the Son*, took place a little before the creation, but in a proper sense of the term, *from all eternity*.

Photinus being promised a restoration to his bishopric

provided he would subscribe to these creeds, not only refused to do it, but challenged any of the bishops who were present to dispute with him publicly on the subject. Accordingly Basil of Ancyra accepting his challenge, a time was fixed by the emperor, when himself and many persons of senatorial rank, as well as the fathers of the council, would be present, and notaries were provided to write what should be advanced on both sides. After a very eager debate, our historian says, that Photinus was vanquished and condemned. It is evident, however, that Photinus himself was of a different opinion. For it is added that, in his banishment he wrote books both in the Latin and Greek languages, especially against all heresies, making no account of any opinion besides his own.\*

Notwithstanding these fathers had tendered the Latin Creed as well as the Greek one, to Photinus, on second thoughts they were not themselves pleased with it, thinking it not quite consistent with itself; and they took pains to call in all the copies of it that were gone abroad, the emperor himself threatening to punish any person who should conceal it. But it was already in too many hands for such an order to have any effect.†

The venerable Hosius, who, as I have observed, was present at this council, had some time before been banished from his see by the Arian party, and was now brought by the emperor to Sirmium against his will. As he refused at first to subscribe the creed, our historian says, he was compelled to do it by blows and torture.‡ But Sulpicius Severus says, he was thought to be a favourer of the Arian party in Spain; but this was attributed to the weakness of age, as he was more than a hundred years old.§ It is perhaps more probable that he rather favoured the Unitarians.

Julius, bishop of Rome, the steady friend of Athanasius, dying about this time, was succeeded by Liberius; and as the Arians a little before the death of Julius had written to him, desiring his communion, and a farther hearing of their charge against Athanasius, Liberius thought it right to take it up, and therefore cited him to appear at Rome, and, on his refusal, excommunicated him. After this he sought the friendship of Athanasius, and, holding another synod, in which he examined the accusations and defences of Atha-

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xxx. p. 124. Sozom. Hist. L. iv. C. vi. p. 185. (P.) Lardner, IV. pp. 368, 366.

† Socrat. Hist. Ibid. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. xxxi. p. 180. (P.)

§ L. ii. C. xl. p. 266. (P.)

nasius, he received him into his communion; but, not to irritate Constantius, he sent a deputation, to entreat him to convoke a general council of the whole empire, to put an end to the differences of the church.\*

Constantius at first called a synod at Arles, A. D. 353, where Saturninus, the bishop, (called by Sulpicius Severus† a violent and factious man,) was a great promoter of the Arian cause, and, being greatly irritated against Athanasius, partly for the reasons mentioned before, and partly because he was said to have taken the part of Magnentius, he procured him to be condemned again: but Paulinus of Treves, refusing to concur with his brethren, was banished to Phrygia.‡

Gallus, whom Constantius had made Cæsar, and to whom he had given the command of the armies in the East, while he went on the expedition against Magnentius in the West, defeated the Jews who had revolted at Diocæsarea, in Palestine, and totally destroyed the place. But being accused of endeavouring to make himself independent, Constantius sent for him, and caused him to be put to death. The next year he made Julian, his brother, Cæsar, and sent him to take the command in Gaul.§

## SECTION V.

*From the Death of Gallus, A. D. 354, to the Council of Ariminum, A. D. 359, including the Rise of the Anomæans, or those who, after Arius, maintained that the Son was of a Substance unlike that of the Father.*

ABOUT this time an advance was made in the doctrine of Arius. It was indeed a natural consequence of what he had maintained, but was not actually drawn by him. He had said that the Son was made *out of nothing*, and that therefore he ought to be called a *creature*: but still, as he was the maker of all other creatures, he thought him to be of a nature quite different from them, and similar to that of the Divine Being, though not the same with it: and therefore his friends would gladly have substituted the term *ὁμοουσιος* of *like substance*, for *ὁμοουσιος* of *the same substance*. But though the proper consequence of Arius's doctrine was, that, since Christ was a mere creature, he could not differ

\* *Hilarii Fragmenta*, Opera, pp. 109, 188. P. — t. L. B. C. xl. p. 200. P.

† *Ibid.* C. xxxix. p. 211. P.

‡ *Socra. Hist.* t. II. C. xxxiii. xxxiv. p. 151. (P.)

materially from other creatures, and consequently must be of a nature unlike that of the supreme and self-existent Being; no person appears to have perceived, or at least have had the courage to avow this consequence, before Aëtius, who was followed by Eunomius, whose disciples were often called Anomœans, from their maintaining that Christ was of a nature different from that of God (*ανομοιος*).

Aëtius was a native of Antioch, originally, as some say, a physician, but certainly a man of excellent understanding, great acuteness, and well skilled in logic, as well as acquainted with other branches of science. Because he disputed with subtilty concerning the nature of God, his enemies reproached him with the name of Atheist. He was much noticed by Gallus, who was fond of the society of men of learning and religion, and Philostorgius says, that he often sent him to his brother Julian (though he must be mistaken when he adds *in Gaul*) to recall him from Heathenism, to which he was addicted.\*

Aëtius's thirst for knowledge led him to go to Alexandria, where he made himself master of the philosophy of Aristotle. On his return to his native city he was ordained deacon by Leontius, who was then the bishop. Here Aëtius not only appeared to have adopted the opinions of Arius, but became an open and strenuous defender of them; and, thinking that Arius and his friends in general temporized, in order to please the emperor, he even separated himself from their society, (though some say that he was excommunicated,) avowing his opinion that Christ was not only not of the same nature with the Father, but of a different nature, and unlike to him. His zeal and ability were so great, that he soon made many disciples at Antioch.†

Eudoxius, who succeeded Leontius in that see, imbibed his doctrine, as well as Acacius of Cæsarea, in Palestine,‡ and Uranius of Tyre. George of Laodicea.§ in a letter written at the suggestion of some persons whom Eudoxius had expelled, and addressed to a number of bishops who were assembled at Ancyra, at the dedication of a church which Basil had built in that city, represents almost the whole city of Antioch as infected by the heresy of Aëtius.

These bishops, being alarmed, formed themselves into a synod, in which they drew up a very long account of their

\* "Aëtius revint édifié de Julien, dont il rendit bon témoignage à Gallus. Nous avons encore une lettre de ce prince à Julien, où il le félicite de sa persévérance, et l'exhorte à ne se jamais démentir." *Blotere, L. i. p. 71*

† *Lardner, IV. pp. 120—122.*

‡ *Ibid. p. 119.*

§ *Ibid. p. 131.*

faith, with much reasoning on the subject, and in which they are very careful to distinguish between *the Son* and a *Creature*. This creed, as it may be called, is preserved by Epiphanius,\* together with a letter of Basil of Ancyra, and George of Laodicea, written to oppose the new heresy, as they call it, of Aëtius.† If what Philostorgius says, be true, of Basil having been desirous of the see of Antioch before Eudoxius was placed in it, it will in some measure account for the opposition there was between these two prelates.‡

Taking the affair into farther consideration, they applied to the emperor to see that what had been decreed at Sardica and Sirmium (where it had been determined that the Son was *like* the Father) should be carried into execution. The persons sent on this embassy were Basil of Ancyra, Eustathius of Sebastia, Eleusius of Cyzicum, and Leontius, a presbyter, who had an office near the emperor's person. On their arrival they found Asphalius, a presbyter of Antioch, a zealous friend of Aëtius, who having procured letters from the emperor in his favour, was about to return. But Constantius being informed of his heresy, and that of Eudoxius, by these ambassadors, sent an answer to the bishops assembled at Ancyra, in which he assured them that he was far from being disposed to favour Eudoxius, or Aëtius, whom he considered as one whose study it was to deceive the ignorant multitude.

He desired them to recollect the discourse he had had with them, in which it was proved to their mutual satisfaction, that the Son, with respect to his substance, was *like* the Father. For the present, he says, it may suffice to excommunicate them, but he threatens his farther vengeance if they did not refrain from their madness. He then proceeds in a strain of furious invective against the disciples of Aëtius; and the historian ascribes it to the emperor's interference that their heresy did not prevail at this time. § Thus we see Constantius taking as decided a part in favour of the *Homoiousians*, and against the *Anomæans*, (for so the disciples of Aëtius were called,) as his father had done in favour of the *Consubstantialists*, or the *Homoousians*, as they are sometimes termed.

Constantius having pacified the troubles of the empire, and being arrived at Milan, A. D. 355, which was thirty years after the Council of Nice, in compliance with a very

\* Hær. lxxiii. Opera, l. pp. 846, &c. (P.) † Ibid. p. 350. (P.)

‡ L. iv. C. vi. p. 504. (P.)

§ Sozom. Hist. L. iv. C. xiii. xiv. pp. 146, &c. (P.)

earnest request from the bishops, summoned a general council to meet him there. Accordingly some few bishops from the East, but more than three hundred from the West, were assembled. But the Eastern bishops insisting on the perpetual banishment of Athanasius, and others as violently opposing it, the council broke up without effecting any thing.\*

Upon this occasion the emperor acted in a very arbitrary manner, banishing all the bishops who would not comply with his will. At this time, however, Liberius, bishop of Rome, shewed great firmness: † for, in a conference which he had with Constantius, ‡ he refused to consent to the condemnation of Athanasius, without a farther hearing of him before his accusers. The emperor banishing him to Berea, in Thrace, he, with a degree of spirit which approached to insolence, refused a handsome allowance which was offered him for his maintenance; telling the officer that the emperor wanted all his money to pay his soldiers, &c.§

Hosius, bishop of Corduba, was another object of resentment to the Arians, as well as Athanasius, because he prevented the bishops of Spain from joining them against him. At their instigation the emperor sent for him, and not being able, either by promises or threatenings, to make any impression upon him, he kept him from his see till the Council of Sirmium. The principal of the other bishops who were banished upon this occasion, were, Eusebius of Vercel, and Lucifer of Cagliari, in Sardinia, both of whom were sent to Thebais, in Egypt; and Hilary of Poitiers, who was sent into Phrygia. Dionysius, bishop of Milan, would have consented to the condemnation of Athanasius, provided the articles of faith proposed to them had given him satisfaction; but he, as well as the people of his see in general, rejecting a creed sent from the emperor by Ursacius and Valens, he also was banished, and Auxentius, an Arian, was put in his place. || During these transactions, Athanasius continued in the deserts of Egypt, and thence he wrote an apology to Constantius, but without any effect.

After residing a long time at Milan, Constantius came to Rome, which he had never seen before, and with which he

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xxxvi. p. 134. (P.)

† According to *Anon. Marcel.* "he was sent for to come to court, and was at length carried away (to Milan) under a strong guard, in the night-time, for fear of the people, by whom he was dearly beloved." *Lardner*, VIII. p. 467.

‡ Ibid. p. 468, and *Note* (q.). § Theod. L. ii. C. xvi. p. 92. (P.)

§ Sulp. Sever. L. ii. C. xxxix. p. 265. (P.)

was greatly delighted; and there, with great pomp, but too much ostentation, he celebrated the twentieth year of his reign. At this time the senators, who had been applied to, declining the office, a number of respectable women petitioned the emperor for the return of Liberius; and he consented, upon condition that he would enter into his views with respect to Athanasius; and that Felix, who had been appointed to succeed him, might be continued to discharge the episcopal functions jointly with him. But because Felix, though a *Consubstantialist* himself, admitted those of the other party to communion with him, the orthodox would not so much as enter the church while he was in it; and the populace being very clamorous on the occasion, and frequently crying *one God, one Christ, one bishop*, nothing was effected at that time.

Constantius, having remained a month at Rome, returned to Milan, and afterwards went to Sirmium, where the bishops of his party being assembled, drew up another creed, supposed to have been the composition of Potamius, bishop of Lisbon. In this it is expressly said, that no mention should be made of the term *consubstantial*, and the Father is declared to be without dispute greater than the Son, who is however styled *God of God* and *Light of Light*.\*

Hosius, who was at this time a hundred years old, was compelled, and it is said by torture, to subscribe this creed; though Hilary says it was composed by him and Potamius together. Philostorgius says, that he subscribed both the creed, and the condemnation of Athanasius; but Athanasius himself says, that he subscribed the former, but not the latter. On his compliance, however, the emperor gave him his liberty; and, returning to Spain, he died not long after, protesting, it is said, against the violence which had been offered to him.

Liberius, who had now been absent from his see two years, wrote to the emperor by Fortunatian, to solicit his restoration. He likewise wrote to Vincent of Capua, to intercede for him; and in a letter to the Eastern bishops, he acknowledged the justice of their proceedings against Athanasius, and apologized for his own acquittal of him, which, he says, was only in consequence of his having been received into communion by his predecessor Julius. The year following, having subscribed the creed of Sirmium, and the condemnation of Athanasius, he was permitted to return

\* Hilary de Synodis, p. 157. (P.)

to Rome; where, notwithstanding his abject conduct, and his having subscribed an heterodox creed, he was received with great joy; and Felix retiring of his own accord, he took quiet possession of his see.\*

## SECTION VI.

*Of the Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia, A. D. 359.*

As but few of the Eastern bishops had attended these councils in the West, and it was manifestly inconvenient for them so to do; and as, for the same reasons, the Western bishops could not be expected to attend in the East, the emperor, in calling another general council, appointed the Western bishops to meet at Ariminum [*Rimini*], and those of the East at Nicomedia; intending to have it considered that all these bishops, though meeting in different places, composed but one council. But in this scheme the emperor was again disappointed: for the two assemblies did not agree, nor did those who met at Ariminum agree among themselves; and those who met in the East differed still more.

At Ariminum about four hundred bishops were assembled, and Taurus, the prefect, had orders not to permit them to depart till they had agreed in a confession of faith; the emperor promising him, as Sulpicius Severus adds, the consulship in case he succeeded in this. Orders were given, on this as on other similar occasions, that all expenses attending the travelling of the bishops, should be defrayed out of the public taxes; but the bishops of Gaul and Britain generously refused this allowance, except three of the latter, who being poor could not afford it.†

The Athanasians took possession of the church, and the Arians, who did not amount to more than eighty, met in a separate place. Among these, Ursacius and Valens took

\* Theod. L. ii. C. xvii. p. 95. (P.)

† Sulp. Sever. L. ii. C. xli. p. 267. (P.) Rapin represents them as supported by their brethren, "ils étoient si pauvres, qu'il ne subsistoient que des aumônes qu'il recevoient de leurs confrères." *Hist.* l. p. 88. Milton says, "Constantius appointed a synod of more than 400 bishops to assemble at Ariminum, on the emperor's charges, which the rest all refusing, three only of the British, poverty constraining them, accepted; though the other bishops among them offered to have borne their charges; esteeming it more honourable to live on the public than to be obnoxious to any private purse. Doubtless, an ingenious mind, and far above the presbyters of our age, who like well to sit in assembly on the public stipend, but like not the poverty that caused these to do so." *Hist. of Brit.* 1695, p. 107. Published 1670, but written earlier. See *Toland*, Ed. 1761, pp. 99, 120.

the lead, and they proposed to both parties that every thing which had passed with respect to articles of faith should be deemed null, and another creed composed; and they produced one, in which Christ is said to be *God of God*, and *like* the Father who begat him, but in which the term *consubstantial* was rejected.

When this creed had been read, a great majority, who were not disposed to favour the emperor, said, they did not come thither to fix a creed, because none was wanted, but to repress any innovations that might have been made in any article of faith; and therefore, if there was nothing new in the creed which was presented, they might proceed to the condemnation of the Arian doctrine, which had been the cause of so much mischief in the world. On this the bishops were divided, some receiving the new creed, and others adhering to the Nicene.

The advocates for the Nicene Creed addressed a letter to the emperor, entreating him to permit that creed to continue to be the standard of faith, without making any more innovations, and to allow them to return to their sees. But Valens and Ursacius (who had been deposed by the other party in this council, because they would not join them in their condemnation of Arianism,) arriving before the ambassadors from the council, prepossessed the mind of the emperor against them; so that without giving them a hearing, on the pretence of public business, he referred them for an audience to another time and place. To this message the bishops returned an answer, repeating their request of permission to return home, since they could not recede from their determinations; and hearing nothing from the emperor in reply, Socrates says, they dismissed themselves, and returned to their respective cities. But this appears not to have been the case, as they were detained by the prefect Taurus.

At this endeavour, at least, to dismiss themselves, the emperor was greatly exasperated, as if these bishops had acted in contempt of him. He therefore ordered the creed which had been presented by Ursacius and Valens, to be tendered to all the bishops of Italy, before they left Ariminum. The greater part being intimidated, complied and those who would not subscribe it were banished, which occasioned great disturbances.\*

Twenty of the party still made a resolute opposition

\* Socrat. Hist. l. ii. c. xxxvii. p. 135. (P.)

especially Phæbadius of Agen, in Aquitain, and Servatius of Tongres; but at length they were prevailed upon by the entreaties of Taurus, and the address of Valens and Ursacius, to sign the creed proposed to them. These urged that all that they could object to in the creed was that it was defective, not that it was untrue; and that defect they might themselves supply, but that it was very desirable that the whole church should adopt the same formulary; and by this time, the bishops in the East, as well as all but themselves in the West, had consented to admit that the Son was *like* the Father, and that he was *not such as the other creatures*. In this, Sulpicius says, they were deceived; as they signed what implied, though it did not express, that the Son was *a creature*.\* Thus, as Jerome emphatically says, "all the world sighed, and wondered to find itself Arian."†

It appears, Fleury observes, that the bishops of this council attempted to get the lands belonging to churches exempted from all public taxes, but that the emperor refused his consent. Afterwards, being at Antioch, A. D. 361, he exempted the clergy from all extraordinary taxes.‡

The party of Ursacius and Valens having left Italy, assembled at Nice, in Thrace, and there formed a council, in which the creed which had been presented at Ariminum was ratified, with a view, as their adversaries gave out, that this should pass for the ancient Nicene Creed. But the fraud would have been so palpable that it cannot be supposed that any set of men would have attempted it.

While these things were transacting in the West, the Arians in the East, having the favour and power of the emperor, expelled from their sees all the bishops who were not of their party; and in this, Macedonius of Constantinople was the most active. The persecution also extended to the Novatians, because with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity they were orthodox, and the chief of their bishops, Agellius, had recourse to flight. It is said that even torture was applied to compel persons to join the Arians; and a variety of horrid and improbable barbarities are mentioned by Socrates, on the testimony of one Auxanon, a very old man, and a presbyter among the Novatians, as having been committed on this occasion. In Paphlagonia the Novatians withstood the soldiers who were sent to enforce the persecuting orders, and after losing many of their own number,

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xliv. p. 276. (P.)

† Dialogus, *Adv. Luciferianos*, Opera, I. p. 427. (P.)

‡ L. xiv. C. xii. III. p. 512. (P.)

killed them all. This, Socrates says, he had from a person who was present in the battle.

This violence of Macedonius gave great offence to those of his own party, and to the emperor himself, who was also much displeas'd with him, because, without his leave, he had removed the body of Constantine from the church in which it had been deposited, into another, on pretence that the building in which it had been put was become ruinous, so that there was great danger of its falling, and maiming those who might be passing near it. Others, however, and especially the orthodox, had made so much opposition to the removal of the body, that, the two parties coming to blows in the church itself, much slaughter was made on both sides.\*

When the Western council was call'd at Ariminum, the Eastern bishops had been summon'd to meet at Nicomedia; but they were oblig'd to leave that place presently after they had begun to assemble, on account of an earthquake in which the church where the council was to have been celebrated, Philostorgius says, was overthrown, and Cecropius, bishop of the city, and fifteen other bishops who were also in it, were buried in the ruins.†

Being driven from this place, the bishops assembled at Seleucia, in Isauria, to the number of one hundred and fifty. But the issue of this council was not more favourable than that of the West. For some, as Macedonius and others, fearing to have their conduct inquired into, did not attend, and those who did attend, differed in opinion, some refusing to consider any article of faith till they had decided concerning those who had been accus'd, and others contending for the discussion of a creed in the first place. The emperor's own directions on the subject also were various. The bishops were therefore divided into two parties: at the head of one, consisting of thirty, was Acacius of Cæsarea in Palestine, George of Alexandria, Uranius of Tyre, and Eudoxius of Antioch; and at the head of the rest, who were the majority, was George of Laodicea, in Syria, Sophronius of Pompeiopolis, in Paphlagonia, and Eleusius of Cyzicum.

Coming at length to consider the articles of faith, the party of Acacius was for abolishing the Nicene Creed, and composing a new one: but the larger party were only for throwing out the term *consubstantial*. After some time

\* Socrat. Hist. l. ii. c. xxxviii. p. 115. (P.) See *supra*, p. 329.

† E. iv. c. x. p. 506. (P.)

Sylvanus, bishop of Tarsus, cried out that they wanted no other creed besides that which had been agreed upon at Antioch. On this the friends of Acacius withdrew, and the rest, after shutting the doors of the church in which they were assembled, subscribed the creed of Antioch.\*

After much altercation, the two parties were brought together again, and Acacius, by means of the emperor's officers, contrived that, after the exclusion of those who had been accused, a creed which he had prepared should be proposed; and in this both the terms *homoousios* and *homoiousios*, that is, of *the same*, or of *like* substance, as having been the occasion of much disturbance, were condemned; but it was asserted that the Son was *like the Father*, and that he was *begotten without passion before all ages*, and took flesh of the Virgin. Such a creed as this might have been subscribed by almost all the contending parties. However it was not agreed to except by Acacius and his thirty followers.

The terms in which this creed (probably to avoid giving offence) was drawn up being ambiguous, a debate ensued to determine in what respects the Son was like the Father. The Acacians said in *will* only, but the rest in *substance*. This debate took up a whole day; and after resuming it to no purpose, the imperial officers dismissed the council. The majority, however, did not leave the place, but proceeded to examine those who had been accused. They moreover pronounced sentence of deposition against Acacius, George of Alexandria, Uranius of Tyre, and many others. Some also they excommunicated, and among them was Asterius, till they should give satisfaction with respect to the crimes laid to their charge. After much more altercation on this and other subjects, the emperor's officers returned to give an account of the proceedings to their master. †

Hilary of Poitiers, who was now in the fourth year of his banishment in Phrygia, was compelled to attend this council, and in it he gave an account of the faith of the Gallic church, which he declared to be agreeable to the decisions of the Council of Nice, whereas the bishops of that country had been suspected of Sabellianism. ‡

The emperor being returned to Constantinople, Acacius and his friends complained to him that the creed which

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xxxix. p. 149. (P.)

† Ibid. C. xl. p. 151. P.

‡ Sulp. Sever. L. ii. C. xlii. p. 270. (P.)

they had presented had not been received; and continuing some time in the city, they called a council of the bishops of Bythinia, fifty in all, and among them Maris of Chalcedon; when they subscribed the creed which had been presented at Ariminum, with the alteration of a few words only, calling Christ *God of God*, rejecting the phrase of *the same* substance, and adopting that of *like* substance, with the addition of the words *according to the Scriptures*, to which the Aëtians could not object, because in the Scriptures it is said that man was made after the image of God, or like to God. They also rejected the word *hypostasis*, as not mentioned in the Scriptures.\*

Thus the emperor in some measure gained his point, as his father had done before him. The Nicene Creed, containing the phrase of *the same* substance, had been subscribed by the objecting party in the preceding reign, after some explanation; and so also had the phrase of *like* substance, which was the *Shiboleth* of the present reign, been subscribed by the opposite parties. But what signifies an agreement in words when men's ideas and opinions are really different?

## SECTION VII.

*Transactions relating to Arianism subsequent to the Council of Seleucia, A. D. 359, and of the Council of Constantinople, A. D. 360.*

THOUGH the great object of Acacius and Eudoxius was the deposition of their opponents, our historian observes that neither party, though they differed with respect to articles of faith, deposed the others on that account, but only for crimes laid to their charge. Thus they deposed Macedonius as having been the author of much bloodshed, and because he had admitted to communion a deacon taken in adultery. For crimes real or supposed (for some of them are too heinous to be easily credited) they deposed Eleusius of Cyzicum, Basil of Ancyra, Neonas of Seleucia, Sophronius of Pompeopolis, Elpidius of Satala, in Armenia, Cyril of Jerusalem, and many others.†

Theodoret gives a particular account of what passed between Constantius and the bishops who repaired to Constantinople, at the second dedication of the church of

\* Euseb. Hist. l. vi. c. 46. p. 158. P.

† Ibid. c. 46. p. 157. P.

Sancta Sophia,\* from the Council of Seleucia, which, if it may be depended upon, sufficiently discovers the emperor's opinion and temper, and throws much light on the ecclesiastical history of this period. Acacius complaining of those who composed the council at Seleucia, as being assembled for the ruin of the church, the emperor was much provoked at him; but more especially for his accusation of Cyril of Jerusalem, on account of his selling a rich robe which Constantine had given to his church, and which had been afterwards bought by some players, and used on a public theatre. On this, the emperor's friends advised him to assemble, not a council, but ten of the principal bishops, of whom were Cæsarius of Armenia, Basil of Galatia, Sylvanus of Tarsus, and Eleusius of Cyzicum.

These being assembled, advised the emperor to inquire into the blasphemies and unjust proceedings of Eudoxius. But the emperor chose first to discuss the article of faith, and then proceed to the inquiry concerning Eudoxius. On this, Basil, presuming upon the liberty which he had been used to take with the emperor, reproved him, in an ironical manner, as undermining the faith of the church. But Constantius, not taking it in good part, bade him be silent, and said that he was always raising disturbances. On this, Basil saying nothing more, Eustathius said to the emperor, "Since you choose to discuss the articles of faith, see what blasphemies Eudoxius has uttered against Christ;" and at the same time presented a treatise concerning faith, in which was the following passage; "Things that are produced in a different manner, differ with respect to their substance. But we read 'there is one God the Father, *of whom* are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ *by whom*, are all things.'" But the phrases *by whom*, and *of whom*, are dissimilar, and therefore the Son must be dissimilar with respect to the Father.

Constantius being much offended at this, and asking Eudoxius if he wrote the book, he denied it, and said it was written by Aëtius, assisted by George of Alexandria, who at that time resided, together with Eunomius, at the house of Eudoxius. For when, on the death of Leontius, Eudoxius took possession of the see of Antioch, Aëtius returned from Egypt, and brought Eunomius with him. Then the emperor

\* This was thirty-four years after Constantine had laid the foundation of it. On this occasion Constantius made rich presents to the church, especially vessels of gold and silver. He also made valuable presents to the clergy, to the virgins, the widows, and the hospitals. Fleury, A. D. 360. (*P.*) See *supra*, pp. 340, 341.

ordered Aëtius to be introduced, and shewing him the passage above-mentioned, asked him if that was his writing, when he, not knowing for what purpose the question was put, acknowledged it; and in consequence of it the emperor immediately banished him to some place in Phrygia.\*

Eustathius, however, maintained that Eudoxius was of the same opinion with Aëtius, alleging that Aëtius was his guest, and lived in intimacy with him at the time of his writing the book; and in proof of this he alleged that nobody knew of Aëtius writing it besides Eudoxius. But the emperor saying that a judge ought to make proper inquiry before he determined, Eustathius proposed that Eudoxius should satisfy them all that he did not approve of the treatise of Aëtius, by pronouncing an anathema upon it. Constantius approving of this, Eudoxius began to make evasions; but when he was threatened to be banished, as well as Aëtius, he no longer hesitated to disclaim the doctrine, though both before and afterwards he never ceased to defend it.

Eudoxius, however, in his turn objected to Eustathius, and said that for the same reasons that he had given, he ought to condemn the word *consubstantial* as not being found in the Scriptures. But Sylvanus replied, that there was the same reason for rejecting the phrases of Christ being *made out of nothing*, a *creature* and of *another substance* from God: for since these phrases do not occur in the Scriptures, they ought not to be introduced into public worship. To this the emperor assented, and ordered Eudoxius to pronounce an anathema on those phrases.

At first they would have evaded it, but perceiving the emperor to be in earnest, they very unwillingly pronounced the condemnation required; insisting however on the term *consubstantial* being condemned likewise. But Sylvanus with great ingenuity replied, “if God, the Word, be not *out of nothing*, nor a *creature*, nor of *another substance*, he must be *of the same substance* with God, as *God of God, light of light*, having the same nature with his Father.”

But, says our author, though he argued very justly, he did not convince any of them; and a great clamour being raised by the faction of Acacius and Eudoxius, the emperor was angry, and threatened the other party to eject them from their churches. Then Eleusius and Sylvanus, with some

\* Philostorgius says, that when the emperor was informed by Acacius, that Aëtius was well received by Auxentius, bishop of Mopsuestia, whither he had been banished, he sent him to Amblas, that he might end his days miserably through the barbarity of the inhabitants. L. v. C. ii. p. 506. (P.)

others, told the emperor that it was his business indeed to punish, but theirs to judge of piety and impiety, and that they would never betray the religion of their ancestors. Though Constantius, says our author, ought to have admired these men for their courage, in defending the doctrine of the apostles, he banished them from their respective sees, and ordered other persons to be put in their places. In consequence of this, Eudoxius got possession of the see of Constantinople, and Eleusius being banished from Cyzicum, Eunomius was put in his place.\*

When these transactions were over, Constantius ordered the bishops who were assembled to pass a sentence of condemnation on Aëtius in a formal writing; and on this, says our historian, the favourers of his impiety condemned their colleague. They even wrote to George, bishop of Alexandria, to inform him of what had been done against Aëtius, at the same time that they sent him the decrees of the synod. This letter, a copy of which was sent to other bishops, it may not be amiss to produce, as a specimen of such writings.

“ The holy synod assembled at Constantinople, to their dear brother, George, bishop of Alexandria.

“ In the condemnation of Aëtius by the synod, for his nefarious and scandalous writings, the bishops did what was agreeable to the ecclesiastical canons. He was deposed from his deaconship, and expelled from the church. We have likewise given admonitions, that his wicked epistles be not read, but rejected as useless; and have added that, if he do not retract his opinions, he and his followers shall be anathematized. In agreement with this, all the bishops who were convened at this council should have execrated him as the author of scandals, tumults, dissensions, universal murmuring, and sedition among the churches, and have agreed in the sentence that was passed upon him. But, contrary to our expectation, and that of every body, Serra, Stephanus, Heliodorus, Theophilus, and the rest of the party, neither agreed to our suffrages, nor subscribed the sentence that we passed upon him, though Serra himself blamed another of the mad boastings of Aëtius. For he

\* Philostorgius says, that Basil of *Ancyra*, and Eustathius of *Sebastia*, accused Eudoxius and Aëtius of favouring the party of Gallus, and that Constantius gave credit to them and the women, whom they had gained to their party. He adds, that more than seventy bishops of Eudoxius's party were banished by the contrivance of Basil of *Ancyra* and his friends. L. iv. C. viii. p. 504. P.

said he had the impudence to assert, that what God had concealed from the apostles, had been revealed to him.

“ Yet, after giving testimony concerning these mad and arrogant speeches of Aëtius, the persons above-mentioned could by no intreaties be prevailed upon to join us in the condemnation of him. We however, with singular patience, spared them a long time, urging and entreating them, by every mode of address, to make the sentence of the synod unanimous. But this being without any effect, thinking that the canons of the church ought to be preferred to their friendship, we have decreed that they shall be separated from our communion; allowing them, however, the space of six months for repentance and agreement with us. But if, within that time, they do not concur in the condemnation of Aëtius, we pronounce them deposed from their episcopal dignity, and others must of course be put in their places, that the Catholic church may be in agreement with itself; all the bishops in all places keeping the bond of brotherly love, all saying the same thing, and having the same opinion and will.

“ This we write to inform you of the decrees of the synod, praying that, by adhering to them, you may govern the churches which are subject to you by the grace of Christ in peace, and according to order.”\*

From what passed at this council, at which the emperor was present, the reader may easily judge of the authority of councils in general. For we may take it for granted that princes and other persons who have power, always direct such assemblies as they please; so that their decisions are by no means the serious, deliberate opinions of the majority of the members, but the pleasure of one or a few, and that generally dictated by their interest.

Macedonius, being expelled from Constantinople, joined those bishops who had deposed Acacius at Seleucia, urging them to adhere to the creed of Antioch, in which the term *of like substance* was inserted; and from that time this party was distinguished by the name of *Homoiousians*. They were also joined by Eustathius, who had been expelled from Sebastia.

The friends of Acacius wished to have another council, and the year following, viz. A. D. 360, the emperor himself being present, they were assembled at Antioch. But few of

\* Theod. Hist. l. v. c. xxvii &c. pp. 110, &c. (P)

them were for calling in question what had been decreed before; saying that the term of *like substance* ought to be expunged both from the creed of Ariminum and that of Constantinople. In their debates on this occasion they avowed that the Son was *unlike* the Father both *in substance and will*, and likewise *made out of nothing*, doctrines which were held by the disciples of Aëtius at Antioch. Being interrogated why they had subscribed the other creeds in which the term ( $\epsilon\kappa \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ ) of God, had been used, they said, that according to the apostle *all things* are said to be ( $\epsilon\kappa \tau\omicron\upsilon \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ ) *of God*, and that for this reason they had added the words, according to the Scriptures. George of Laodicea was the inventor of this evasion. The friends of Acacius, however, not insisting on what they had proposed, nor choosing to bear the reproach of inconsistency, subscribed the creed of Constantinople, and then the bishops dismissed themselves.\*

## SECTION VIII.

*Of the Method by which the Trinitarians distinguished themselves from the Arians, at Antioch; and Observations on the Progress of Arianism in this Reign.*

THE manner which the orthodox took to distinguish themselves from the heterodox, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, by ascribing *glory to the Father, Son and Spirit*, at the conclusion of their hymns, was begun at Antioch in this reign. The custom had been, Philostorgius says, to ascribe *glory to the Father by the Son in the Holy Spirit*, or, *in the Son and the Holy Spirit*, but that Flavianus of Antioch introduced the custom of ascribing *glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit*.† Some, however, pronounced this doxology in one way, and others in another. In this difference Leontius, the bishop, did not choose to interfere, but, pointing to his grey hairs, said, “when this snow shall be dissolved, much mud will be left behind;” intimating, that when he should be dead, much mischief would arise from these party distinctions.‡

The method of singing alternately, here alluded to, was introduced into the church of Antioch by Flavianus and Diodorus, who had embraced a monkish mode of life, and who (as was ever after the case with the monks in general)

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xlv. p. 161. (P.) † Ibid. L. iii. C. xiii. p. 497. (P.)

‡ Sozom. Hist. L. iii. C. xx. p. 126. (P.)

were zealous for the highest orthodoxy of the times, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity. These men being very popular, threatened Leontius that they would leave his communion if he did not degrade Aëtius, whom he had made a deacon, and it is said that, in compliance with them, he did it, when, in other respects, he shewed him all the favour that he could; though Aëtius himself said that he quitted that church of his own accord.

These two men, though not of the clergy, were continually taking the lead among the people in all pious exercises. They were the first who divided the choir of singers into two parts, and taught them to sing the psalms of David in alternate verses, a custom which from Antioch spread itself into all Christian churches, in every part of the world. The chaunting in our cathedrals was derived from it. These two men would often pass the whole night with a number of people in the churches, singing psalms in this new manner; and, at the request of Leontius, they did the same in time of public worship.\*

It is evident that, notwithstanding Arianism took its rise some time before the Council of Nice, yet that nothing that we should now think deserving of the name, was openly avowed by any set of men till towards the close of the reign of Constantius, when the *Aëtians*, afterwards called *Eunomians*, professed that, as the Son was made out of nothing, he must be of a substance different from that of the Father. Nay, the proper opinions of Arius, viz. that the Son was made out of nothing, and that there was a time when he did not exist, were really adopted by very few, if any, till the period of which we are now treating; and it is even not improbable that Arius himself receded from these opinions before he died; so that what we now call *Arianism*, arose much later, and spread much less rapidly than has been generally imagined.

In all the councils of which we have seen an account in the reign of Constantius, we find creeds not materially different from that of Nice. For though the bishops who composed some of them reprobated the term *consubstantial*, they adopted other phrases that were nearly, if not altogether, equivalent to it. Consequently the great body of the favourers of Arius did not entirely adopt his opinions, but rather favoured him as a man ill used, and one whose opinions had no great harm in them. They blamed the

violence of his adversaries, and seriously objected to the term *consubstantial*, as having been rejected by the first council of Antioch, and favouring the opinion of the Divine essence being material. At the same time they really believed, with the Anti-Nicene fathers in general, that the *logos* was the personified attribute of the Father, and therefore not produced from any thing *besides* himself, and therefore in all respects *like* himself.

It is not to be supposed that those who actually subscribed the Nicene Creed, even after their being banished for refusing to do it, dissembled their opinions, or subscribed what they did not believe, but for the reasons which they alleged, and which have been reported. With the explanations of the term *consubstantial* which accompanied their subscriptions, I have no doubt that they were very sincere. Besides, if it could be supposed that there was an adequate motive for their hypocrisy in the reign of Constantine, there was no temptation to act the same hypocritical part in that of Constantius.

That Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had the confidence of Constantine in all the latter part of his life, and who, till the time of his death was the leader of that party which favoured Arius the most, was nevertheless far from being what we should now call an Arian, may be safely concluded from the sentiments of Eusebius of Cæsarea, who was of the same party, and who was always in high favour with Constantine. From his writings, which are numerous, there can be no doubt of his having been a believer in an *uncreated logos*, and of his having in all other respects held what had been generally deemed the orthodox doctrine concerning the person of Christ, till the Council of Nice; though he probably did not adopt the opinion which arose in his own time, and which afterwards acquired the stamp of orthodoxy, viz. that of God having been *always* a Father, and therefore that of the Son having been *always*. This therefore I take to have been the case of Eusebius of Nicomedia and those who were of his party.

Indeed the system of Arianism cannot be said to have been completed till after the time of Apollinaris, who first maintained that in the incarnation the *logos* was united to a human body only, itself supplying the place of the intellectual principle, or the soul; or since the immaterial part of man was by many supposed to be two-fold, consisting of  $\nu\epsilon\sigma$  and  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , the *intellectual* and *sensitive* part, the *logos* was in the place of the former of them. But as Apollinaris

himself supposed the *logos* to be *uncreated*, he could not be called an Arian.\* However, they who adopted his opinion of the *logos* supplying the place of a human soul in the person of Christ, and supposed with Arius that the *logos* was created out of nothing, were properly Arians, or such as are now so denominated.

It is something remarkable that, as the doctrine of a created *logos* followed that of an uncreated one in the person of Christ, (so that Arianism, in the first of its elements, was founded upon Trinitarianism,) the Arians learned of Apollinarius, a Trinitarian, to abandon the idea of a human soul in Christ. Without this, however, they must in time have come to the same conclusion, in reflecting upon their principles, and the natural consequences of them.

Before the end of this reign, the followers of Aëtius, or rather of Eunomius, separated themselves from those who had been called Arians, and came to have a separate denomination, in the following manner, as related by Theodoret. Notwithstanding the forced condemnation of Aëtius by Eudoxius and Acacius, he continued to live in friendship with them, and was by them advanced to the rank of bishop. Eunomius having got possession of the church of Cyzicum, while Eleusius their former bishop was still living, Eudoxius who well knew the sentiments of the people, as well as the aversion which the emperor had to his opinions, advised him to conceal them as much as he could, for the present. But though he did this, he was brought by a stratagem to declare himself openly in the church, and this gave occasion to his adversaries to accuse him before the emperor, who ordered Eudoxius to inquire into the case, and to depose him if the allegation was true. After many delays, Eudoxius found himself obliged to do this, but notwithstanding all his apologies, Eunomius complained of being ill used by him: and from that time he formed separate congregations, and his followers were called *Eunomians*.†

The Eunomians, as I have already observed, were the first Arians who properly avowed that Christ was a creature, so as to be of a nature unlike that of God. Still, however, it does not appear that as yet even these Arians had any idea that their created *logos* supplied the place of a human soul in the person of Christ. It is probable that for a long time this *logos* was supposed to possess the mind of Christ in

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xlvii. p. 166. (P.) *Ibid.*, IV. pp. 387—39

† Theod. Hist. L. ii. C. xxix. p. 111. (P.) *Ibid.* p. 126.

much the same manner as the Gnostic Christ was supposed to have taken possession of the man Jesus, or as demons were imagined to take possession of men, being a principle superadded to the soul and body in conjunction.

The Arians spread themselves not only through all the provinces of the Roman empire, but among the barbarous nations also, both in this and the preceding reign. Among those who were carried captive by the Goths from Asia Minor, in the time of Gallienus, were the ancestors of Ulphilas of Cappadocia. This Ulphilas, being sent ambassador, among other persons, from the king of the Goths to Constantine, was ordained bishop of the Goths by Eusebius of Nicomedia and his friends. He translated into the Gothic language almost all the books of Scripture, and was highly esteemed by Constantine, who was used to call him the Moses of the age, though he was an Arian, as well as the Goths who were instructed by him.\*

Philostorgius says that the Indians who had been converted to Christianity by the apostle Bartholomew, held that the Son was *unlike* the Father, and that Theophilus, an Indian, informed the Arians in the Roman empire that such was their opinion. This however he would naturally say, if they had been properly *Unitarians*, which was most probably the case. For, believing Christ to be a mere man, they must of course have thought that his nature was unlike that of God, as much as the Arians did concerning their logos. The people who are here called Indians were not those of Indostan, but a people of Arabia Felix, near the sea coast, being the same that are called Sabæans, and likewise Homerites.†

This Theophilus was sent ambassador by Constantius to the king of the Homerites, on purpose to engage him to embrace the Christian religion; and it is said that he succeeded, and built three churches in that country.‡ After this Theophilus proceeded farther, and corrected whatever he found to be amiss in the churches already established in India; but he had no occasion to rectify their opinion concerning Christ, as they had always considered him as being of a substance *unlike* that of the Father.§ After this, Theophilus returned into the Roman territories, where he was much esteemed by the emperor, though he had no bishopric assigned him.

\* Philostorgii Hist. L. ii. C. v. p. 460. (P.) Lardner, IV. p. 137.

† Ibid. C. vi. p. 481. L. iii. C. iv. p. 486. (P.)

‡ L. iii. C. iv. p. 488. (P.)

§ L. iii. C. v. p. 488. (P.)

## SECTION IX.

*Of the Death and Character of Constantius.*

CONSTANTIUS, hearing that Julian, after being successful in his wars in Gaul, had, without his consent, accepted the title of *Emperor* and *Augustus* from the army, began to march against him from Antioch, where he was when he heard the news; and finding himself indisposed on his march through Cilicia, was baptized, which, like his father, he had omitted to be before; but being seized with an apoplexy, he died in the forty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his reign.\*

Constantius, like his father, was no doubt very sincere in his profession of Christianity,† and had the best intentions in his endeavours to aid it by civil power. But his reign, like that of his father, affords a striking lesson of the risk that Christianity runs in such an alliance with the kingdoms of this world. What did it produce in this case but discord instead of harmony, and mischiefs of every kind, with whatever is most contrary to the spirit and practice of Christianity? So far, however, was Constantius from having perceived the impropriety of his conduct in this respect, that Philostorgius says that, just before his death, he had appointed another council to meet at Nice, in order to examine the opinions of those who held that the Son was of a substance different from that of the Father. Acacius, he says, having accused Eunomius and Eudoxius, the emperor sent for the former to Antioch, and there called a synod to examine the charge against him; but no accuser appearing, the emperor was much displeas'd with Acacius, and reserved the discussion of the affair to the future council.‡

The private life of Constantius was in the main irreproachable, though, like many other well-meaning princes, he had the weakness to be influenced by favourites, and to be governed by passion. That he had a strong sense of religion, though mixed with superstition, appeared in a remarkable

\* Socrat. Hist. L. ii. C. xlvii. p. 161. (P.) Constantius was taken ill at Tarsus, and died at *Mopsucren*, a town at the foot of Mount Taurus, Nov. 3, 361. Julian is said to have practis'd *divinations*, to learn the probability of Constantius's death, which *Greg. Nazianzen*, on no authority but his own supposition, believ'd that Julian hasten'd. See *Blutéri*, L. iii. pp. 196, 205—210.

† Yet it is not easy to remove all *historic doubts*, as to the *christian sincerity* of both these princes. See *supra*, pp. 326, 329, *Notes*: and p. 354.

‡ Socrat. Hist. L. v. C. v. p. 511. (P.)

manner when he was marching against Magnentius. For, assembling his troops, he exhorted them all to be baptized; telling them that life was always uncertain, but especially so in war; and he ordered all those to return home who did not choose to comply, as he was determined that none should fight under him who were not baptized.\* This story (which I see no reason to question the truth of) is the more remarkable, as at that time the emperor himself was not baptized. But he might not think himself in so much personal danger as those who fought under him.

## SECTION X.

*Of the Persecution of Christians in Persia, in the Reign of Constantius, A. D. 343.*

THE persecution of Christians was by no means confined to the Roman empire. Similar causes necessarily produce similar effects in all places; and Christianity was equally hostile to every species of idolatry, with all of which it had been taken for granted that the welfare of the states in which they were practised was connected. The progress of it, therefore, could not fail to give general alarm, and especially would it highly irritate those who were immediate gainers by the old superstitions; which must have been the case with great numbers in all civilized and opulent countries, in all of which large funds were appropriated to the support of religion, funds from which several persons of considerable rank and consequence derived great emoluments.

The reason why we have fewer accounts of persecutions without the bounds of the Roman empire, is because there were no writers at that time in those countries, at least that are come down to us. By means of the Greek writers, however, we know some little of what was transacted in the countries bordering upon the Roman empire, with which the Greeks and Romans had always some intercourse. We have, for example, a tolerably authentic account of the persecution of Christians by Sapor II. king of Persia, in this period viz. A. D. 343.†

When the Christians were considerably increased in Persia, the Magi and the Jews in conjunction, who were equally

\* Theod. Hist. L. iii. C. iii. p. 125. (P.)

† According to *Asseman* (Bib. Or.) it began in 306, and continued till 370. *Lardner*, IV. pp. 183, 184, and *Note* 9.

irritated against them, in order to instigate Sapor to persecute them, accused Simeon, bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, of being an enemy to Persia, and of giving intelligence concerning the state of it, to the Romans. In consequence of this information, Sapor, suspecting all the Christians of the same disaffection, loaded them with heavy taxes, destroyed their churches, and confiscated their sacred vessels, &c. He moreover sentenced all the clergy to death; and when Simeon, who was brought into his presence, refused even to prostrate himself before him, as had been the custom with respect to the kings of Persia, or consent to worship the sun, he was subjected to grievous torture, which he bore with great fortitude.

While he was in prison, Ustazes, a favourite eunuch of the king, being mortified at the indignation with which Simeon treated him on account of his conforming to the idolatry of the country, out of complaisance to the king, resolutely declared himself a Christian, and was put to death, and afterwards a hundred others, all either bishops or of some order of the clergy; and, being assisted by the exhortations of Simeon, they shewed the greatest constancy. Lastly himself, and two other old men, Abdechalaas and Ananias, were put to death. Also Pusices, the chief of the king's artizans, being perceived to encourage Ananias, was not only put to death, together with his daughter, who was a nun, but, previous to his execution, he had his tongue torn out in a peculiarly cruel manner.

The year following, about the time of Easter, Sapor ordered that not only the clergy, but all his Christian subjects, without exception, should suffer death; and then the number of martyrs was prodigious; the Magi being assiduous in their accusations, and the Christians not declining what they called the crown of martyrdom. On this occasion many of the courtiers suffered, and particularly Azadas, a favourite eunuch, whose death affected the king so much, that from this time he confined the persecution of the Christians to the clergy.

About the same time some Jews accused Tarbula, the sister of Simeon above-mentioned, (who, together with two other women, had devoted herself to a single life,) of causing the illness of the queen, by means of some charms, in revenge for the death of her brother. The queen being inclined to Judaism, gave credit to the accusation; and in consequence of this, all the three were put to death, by being sawn through the body.

This persecution by king Sapor fell the heaviest on the province of Adiabene, where the Christians were very numerous. Aceptsimas, a bishop, and many of his clergy, were seized at the same time. But the persecutors contenting themselves with the bishop, dismissed the inferior clergy, after confiscating all their effects. James, however, a presbyter, chose to remain with his superior, and ministered to him in the cruel usage to which he was exposed, in consequence of his refusing to worship the sun. Aceptsimas was tortured to death, but some Armenians privately conveyed away his remains, and buried them. Others of the clergy were cruelly tortured, but survived; and one of them, Aithalas, a presbyter, had his arms so stretched, that he never recovered the use of them.

The number of clergy who suffered martyrdom in this persecution was very great. Sozomen has preserved the names of twenty-two of the bishops; and he says that all the martyrs, including men and women, were supposed to amount to no less than sixteen thousand.\*

Sozomen places this persecution in the reign of Constantine, and supposes him to have written the letter to Sapor, mentioned before, on this occasion. But as neither Eusebius, nor any contemporary writer, speaks of any particular persecution of the Christians in Persia at that time, it is most probable that it was in the seventh of Constantius, where Jerome, in his Chronicle, places such a persecution as was noticed by Baronius.†

## SECTION XI.

### *Of the Donatists in this Reign.*

IT is probable that the Donatists kept increasing in number during this reign, through the whole of which they continued to be persecuted, as they had been, in the reign of Constantine.

The emperor Constans, in whose government Africa was, actuated by the zeal of his family for the *peace of the church*, sent two persons of rank, Paul and Macarius, A. D. 348, to endeavour to conciliate the Donatists, and at the same time to distribute alms to the poor. But the Donatists were not to be conciliated, and it is said opposed these ambassadors by force, the *Circumcilliones* intercepting their donations. To

\* Sozom. Hist. L. ii. C. ix. xv. pp. 56, &c. (P.)

† *Annales*, A. D. 343. (P.) See *supra*, p. 281

all their overtures for peace, they replied, *Quid est imperator cum ecclesia?* "What has the emperor to do with the church?" An excellent saying, and worthy to be adopted by all Christians, though on this occasion it might have been prompted by the injuries the Donatists had received from the emperor.\*

About the end of the reign of Constans, A. D. 349, a council was held at Carthage, where Gratus was bishop, in which canons were made against the Donatists' practice of re-baptizing, and against considering those of them as martyrs who destroyed themselves by throwing themselves from precipices, &c.† It is obvious to remark that, if any of them did this, it is a proof that they were driven to it by extreme despair, in consequence of the greatest violence. For the Donatists were *men*, and no men will voluntarily destroy themselves if they be permitted to live in peace.

## SECTION XII.

### *Of the Monks in this Reign.*

I HAVE made some mention of Anthony, the first of the monks of Egypt, in a former period. His fame was so great, that he had many imitators, not only in Lybia and Egypt, but also in Palestine, Syria and Arabia. They all adopted the same course of life that he had done, and like him had many followers. But the most eminent of his disciples was Paul, who joined Anthony, on his wife proving unfaithful to him.‡

Contemporary with this Paul was Ammon, who led the same monastic life in Egypt, and whose wife (with whom, however, he never had any commerce) followed the same mode of life, and was the first woman who did so. They lived in separate places near the lake Marcotis, and saw one another twice a year. He was the founder of many monasteries in that part of the world. Another eminent Monk, or rather Anchorite, in the time of Constantine, was Eutychianus, a Novatian, who resided near Mount Olympus, in Bythnia.§

\* Optatus, L. iii. p. 66. It was also usual with them to say, *Quid Christiani cum regibus, aut quid episcopis cum palatio?* "What have Christians to do with kings, or what have bishops to do at court?" Ibid. Sect. i. p. 25. — P.

† Binnii Concilia, L. p. 456. — P.

‡ Sozom. Hist. L. i. C. xiii. p. 29. (P.) See *supra*, pp. 198, 309, and Vol. V. p. 388. Also *F. Paul, Of Eccles. Benef.* Translation, 1735, Ed. 3, C. viii. pp. 21—22, and *Hist. of Popery*, L. pp. 90—92.

§ Sozom. Hist. L. i. C. xiv. p. 29. — P.

Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, was a great advocate for such maxims and observances as distinguished the Monks, prescribing rules concerning diet, dress, &c. It is said that the book of monkish discipline, which was commonly ascribed to Basil of Cappadocia, was in reality written by him. His severity was so great, that it led him to violate the established rules of the church. It is even said that he condemned marriage, that his disciples, at least, refused to pray in the house of a married person, that they led some women to forsake their husbands, and even to dress themselves like men. On this account the neighbouring bishops assembled at Gangræ, in Paphlagonia, and condemned all those peculiarities; and after this Eustathius himself, to shew that he was not refractory, conformed to the usual customs.\* The council is supposed to have been held after this period, viz. A. D. 377.

### SECTION XIII.†

*Of Pretensions to Miracles which began to be advanced, and to gain Credit, chiefly in this Period.*

IN order to form a complete idea of this period of ecclesiastical history, it will be proper to recite some of the *miracles* which were pretended to be wrought in it; and I cannot give a fairer specimen of the credulity of the Christian world in this respect, than by giving some of the particulars of the life of Anthony, written by Athanasius. If the credulity of this extraordinary man carried him so far as to believe the truly ridiculous tales that he has recorded, we may safely conclude that the Christian world in general was well disposed to listen to, and receive them. Tales of this kind, however, do not by any means furnish a just objection to the truth of the miracles on which the truth of Christianity was originally founded. It was the unquestionable authenticity of those miracles that made Christians in general disposed to believe, without sufficient examination, reports concerning others which appeared calculated to confirm their faith. There is the greater reason for making choice of this account of pretended miracles, as I believe it is the first of the kind in point of time. After this the Christian world

\* Sozom. Hist. L. iii. C. xiv. p. 115. (P.)

† This section was added in the *Northumberland* edition. 1805.

was deluged with accounts of miracles performed by the living and the dead, and was the foundation of the canonization of those who were denominated *Saints*, and entitled to the worship of Christians. It was, indeed, the principal circumstance necessary to procure canonization.

This Anthony,\* whose exemplary life made him to be exhibited as a pattern to succeeding monks, was a native of Egypt, of a wealthy family, who, much against the wishes of his parents, abandoned all his possessions and worldly prospects, to give himself up to a life of austerity and the exercises of devotion, in the deserts adjoining to his country.

The most remarkable of the supernatural events, and those that occur the most frequently in this curious history, are his interviews with the devil and demons. These gave him infinite disturbance in almost every imaginable way, and some of them are sufficiently ludicrous. After tempting this good man, by various suggestions in the ordinary mode of his access to the minds of men, the devil one night assumed the form of a woman; but this having no effect, he appeared in the shape of a black boy, and addressed him in a human voice. Anthony asking him who he was, he said that he was *the spirit of fornication*. To this Anthony replied that he had now made himself perfectly contemptible, being black as his colour in mind, and weak as a boy whose appearance he had assumed; adding, "the Lord being my helper, I hold all my enemies in contempt." On this the devil, being terrified, fled from him. This, says the writer, was the first contest that Anthony had with the devil: but it was by no means the last.

The next time that he assailed him he was accompanied with a multitude of demons, and they beat him so cruelly, that from the excessive pain he lay on the ground, unable to speak: though at the same time he felt that he was able to bear any torture. After this he got himself conveyed into a tomb in the neighbourhood, where from the torture to which he had been exposed, not being able to stand, he prayed lying along on the ground. However, when he had finished his devotions, he called to the demons with a loud voice, saying, "Here I am, and do not wish to be spared any of your blows. Nothing that you can do can separate me from the love of Christ." The devil wondering at this, called his demons, and said to them, "You see that neither

\* See *supra*, pp. 309, 376; and *Hist. of Popery*, l. p. 99.

the spirit of fornication, nor the stripes we have given him, have produced any effect; we must assail him in some other way."

In the night, therefore, making a dreadful noise, they burst into the hut in which he slept, in the forms of beasts and serpents; so that the place was soon filled with the appearance of lions, leopards, bulls, serpents, asps, scorpions, and wolves, all of them attacking him in their own way; the lion roaring as he rushed upon him, the bull pushing with his horns, &c. and each of them with a noise peculiar to his kind, and all shewing great wrath. Anthony, however, with the greatest fortitude bore all the pain they gave him, and though it made him groan, he insulted them, saying, "If you had the power, one of you might have been sufficient to assail me, but your power having been taken from you by Christ, you think to terrify me by your numbers; and your assuming the forms of brute animals is another confession of your weakness. If, however, you have any power over me, fall on; and if not, why do you give me this disturbance?" The demons not being able to prevail over him, only gnashed their teeth. During all this Christ was present to his assistance; for, lifting up his eyes, he saw the roof of the place uncovered, and a ray of light shining through it upon him. On this the demons disappeared, his pain left him, and the hut was found to have received no injury. He then asked why Christ had not come to his assistance sooner, and was answered, "I was here, Anthony, but I waited to be a spectator of your combat; and since you have not sunk under it, I shall always be your helper, and shall make your name famous in all places." On this he rose, and prayed, and found himself stronger than he had been before. This, the writer says, was when he was thirty-five years old.

The day after this the devil threw in his way a silver dish: but Anthony being aware of the artifice, said to the devil, "May thy dish perish with thee," on which he vanished as if he had been smoke. Proceeding farther, he found gold in his way, but only admiring the quantity of it, he passed by it as if it had been fire, hastening to a solitary hut, into which he did not suffer any person to enter. His friends, however, who stayed without, heard a noise as of many persons with him, shouting, and saying to him, "Get thee from us, what hast thou to do in the desert?" At first his friends thought that some persons had, by some means or other, found their way to him: but peeping through a chink, and seeing no person, they concluded that the noise proceeded

from demons, and called to Anthony; and he not answering, they forced their way to him, expecting to find him dead. But far from that, he was singing in the words of the Psalmist, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; let them that hate him flee before him."

In this manner did Anthony live near twenty years, never coming out of his hut, and rarely seen by any body. At length, however, he was prevailed upon to come out, and then he was distinguished by the performance of many miracles of various kinds, especially the curing of diseases, and casting out demons; and being surrounded by disciples, he related to them in what manner he had repelled various attacks of demons while he had lived in that solitude.

At one time he said that one of them appeared of great stature, saying he was the great power of God, and asking him what he could do for him; but that he spat at him in the name of Christ, when he and all his companions soon vanished. Another time he said that he came in the form of a monk; saying he was sent to bring him victuals; but that, he, knowing what he really was, began to pray, when the demon instantly fled. At another time he said that, hearing a knocking at his door, he opened it, and seeing a very tall person, he asked him who he was, and was answered, *Satan*. He then rehearsed a dialogue that passed between them, he complaining of *Satan*, and *Satan* in return complaining of the trouble that the monks gave him, when he had no power to hurt them.\* In this Anthony said he had confessed the truth, for that by the coming of Christ he had lost all his power. On hearing the name of Christ, *Satan* instantly disappeared.

Not liking so much interruption from disciples, and so many persons continually applying to him, he was directed by a supernatural voice how to find his way to the *inns* Thebais; and he reached it by joining a company of Arabs. Finding a convenient place well watered, he lived there in part by his own labour, in cultivating the ground adjoining to him, and in part by the charity of the Arabs. But his water being resorted to by wild beasts, that were apt to do mischief in his garden, he took one of them, and mildly expostulating with him on the injury they did to him, when he did none to them, from that time they troubled him no more, till some of them were sent by the devil, of all the kinds that the desert contained, and especially hyenas.

\* *Athen. Op.* II. p. 476. See *M. d. d. l. e. t. o. n.*, "Free Inquiry," Works, 4to. 1755, l. p. 117.

But when they came rushing upon him, he said to them. "If you have any power over me, I am ready to be devoured by you, but if you be sent by demons, depart immediately, for I am the servant of Christ;" and on this they instantly fled.

At another time he was visited by a beast with the form of a man as far as the thighs, but with the legs and feet of an ass. But on his signing himself with the sign of the cross, and saying, "I am the servant of Christ," this beast with his companions fled with so much haste, that he fell and died upon the spot. And the demons finding that they could not by any means in their power drive him from that place, attempted it no more.

The writer then proceeds to relate several remarkable cures performed by Anthony, of persons who were not brought to him, and of his seeing in a vision the situation of persons and things at a great distance from him. Among others he foresaw the death of the monk Ammon. For when he was sitting, and looking upwards, he saw the figure of a person carried through the air with great signs of joy, and expressing a wish to know the cause of it, he was told by a supernatural voice, that it was the soul of Ammon, who was just then dead, at the distance of thirteen days' journey; and inquiry being made, it was found that he died exactly at that time.

This Anthony foresaw the rise and progress of the Arian heresy two years before it broke out, under the image of the communion-table surrounded by mules kicking at it. He also foretold the death of an Arian persecutor, who was killed by the bite of his own horse, though before, he had always been remarkably gentle. Lastly, he foretold the time of his own death, which happened when he was one hundred and five years of age.

I have not recited all the extraordinary things that are contained in this curious history; but I imagine they are sufficient to shew the faith of the great Athanasius, and the credulity of the age in which such works could be received and admired; and this is but a small specimen of the ridiculous tales, chiefly originating with the monks, and propagated by them, which disgraced the cause of Christianity from this time till the reformation. It is observable, however, that Athanasius neither says that he was himself present at any of those extraordinary miracles, or that he had made any particular inquiry into the authenticity

of them. He only says that he had himself seen this Anthony.\*

We have of Jerome, who lived after Athanasius, a life of Paul, who preceded Anthony in the monastic life, and also of Hilarian, who was his disciple, both written in the same spirit, and with equal credulity, especially with respect to combats with the devil and demons. According to Jerome, Anthony arrived at the cell of Paul just before his death, and two lions scratched a grave for him, when Anthony was not able to do it.† Hilarian, then living in Syria, is said to have foretold the death of Anthony, and immediately went to visit the cell in which he had lived and died. But the place in which he was buried he found was to remain unknown, agreeably to the express order of Anthony himself.

Athanasius was soon followed by Gregory Nyssen in his account of pretended miracles. But he does not ascribe them to any person with whom he was at all contemporary, but to one who had lived more than a century before him, viz. Gregory of Neocæsarea, in Cappadocia, a disciple of Origen, and held in the highest esteem by all the Christian writers who have mentioned his name. Some of the works of this excellent man are extant, but in them we perceive no trace of the miracles ascribed to him, and the writer of his life appeals to no authority for what he advances: and yet it is from this circumstance that his hero has obtained the appellation of *Thaumaturgus*.

The first thing of any importance that is ascribed to Gregory by this writer, is his having received a *creed* ‡ as from the mouth of John the Evangelist, after a conversation which he heard between him and the Virgin Mary. But that this creed was not any that was given by John, or received by

\* In the preface to his life of Anthony, he declares, "that he had inserted nothing in it, but what he either knew to be true, having often seen the saint himself, or what he had learned from one who had long ministered to him, and poured water upon his hands." See the original, *Opera*, II. p. 451, *Edit. Par.* quoted by *Middleton*, I. p. 119. *Note.* Anthony, it seems, was an author. Thus one of his biographers says, "Nous avons des lui sept Lettres écrites en Egypte et en Liban. Quelques uns même lui attribuent une Règle et des Sermons." *Nouv. Diet.* I. p. 163.

† *Middleton*, I. p. 122. *Hist. of Popery*, I. p. 90. There were, probably, two monks named Paul. See *supra*, pp. 198, 376.

‡ "The very words, as they were written by his blessed hand, are preserved to this day, in the church of Neocæsarea. Vid. Greg. Nyss. vit. S. Greg. Thaumaturg. p. 978. *Op. II. Ed. Par.* Dr. Waterland has given us a translation of this creed, and Dr. Bertram, an abstract of it, which is, as express as possible, they say, for the doctrine of the Trinity, as it was taught afterwards by Athanasius." *Middleton*, I. p. 120. See also p. 123. *Lardner*, III. pp. 48—52.

Gregory, is evident from its being a Trinitarian creed; whereas, to say nothing of John, it is probable that Gregory was an Unitarian.

But perhaps the most palpably absurd of all the wonders ascribed to this excellent man, is that, having on a journey taken up his lodging in a heathen temple, the deity or demon that was worshipped there informed the priest that he could no more appear in that place, on account of a person who had lodged there the preceding night. On this the priest followed and overtook Gregory, who, to satisfy him, wrote an order to the heathen god, in these words, "Gregory to Satan. Enter." This writing being laid on the altar, the deity answered his worshippers as before.\* The priest then returned to Gregory, who, farther, to convince him of his power of working miracles, commanded a heavy stone that lay before them to remove, and settle in a distant place to which he directed it.

On his arrival at the city to which he was going in order to take upon him the bishopric of it, he relieved all who applied to him, whether possessed with demons, or labouring under any disease. Many of them were relieved by pieces of linen on which he had only breathed. Two brothers quarrelling about a certain lake, he went to it, and after his prayers it was dried up. Lastly, a river having done much damage to the country by overflowing its banks, he confined it within certain bounds, which it never afterwards passed.

It should seem that these miracles reported to have been performed in the East, excited the emulation of Sulpicius Severus in the West, and that he was determined to make his tutor, Martin, bishop of Tours, as famous as Anthony had been made by Athanasius, or Gregory Thaumaturgus by Gregory Nyssen.

This Martin was a native of Pannonia, but educated in Italy, and for some years was in the army. Having quitted this mode of life, and being on a journey near Milan, he was met by the devil in a human form, who asked him whither he was going; and he answering, wheresoever the Lord should send him, he replied, "Wherever you go, or whatever you undertake, I will oppose you." To this Martin answered, "The Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man can do unto me."

Having established a monastery near Milan, a catechumen.

\* *Middleton*, I. pp. 121, 122. *Lardner*, III. pp. 30, 34

who attended there to receive his instructions, died of a fever when Martin was absent. Returning three days after his decease, which happened before he was baptized, he ordered all persons to leave the room in which the body was laid; and after he had prayed with him two hours, he came to life. He then related, that when he had left the body, he was carried before the tribunal of a judge, and received a dreadful sentence. But two angels informing the judge that he was the person for whom Martin prayed, he was by the same two angels carried back, and restored to life. From this time the historian says, that Martin was universally considered as a saint, and an apostolic man. After this he by his prayers recovered from death a man who had hanged himself.

After he was made bishop of Tours, finding that an altar had been raised to the honour of a supposed martyr, and being in doubt with respect to it, he went to the place, and praying, desired to be informed of the truth of the case; when looking to his left hand, he saw a ghost standing near him in a sordid habit, and with a fearful countenance, and commanding him to speak, he said that he was a robber, who had been executed for his crimes, and had nothing in common with martyrs. The persons present, the historian says, heard the voice, but Martin only saw the ghost.

Going to demolish a heathen temple, and a large pine tree that was near to it, the priest and the people opposing him, proposed that, as a proof of his authority, he should be bound, and placed in the way of the tree as it was falling. To this he readily consented; and when the tree was actually falling upon him, he only raised his hand, and making the sign of the cross, it suddenly moved from him, and fell upon some of the idolators who thought themselves in a place of perfect safety.

Being opposed in an attempt to demolish another heathen temple, two angels appeared to him in suits of armour, saying they were sent by the Lord, to disperse the rustic multitude, and preserve him safe till the temple should be demolished. He therefore returned, and finished what he had undertaken, the country people saying they were withheld by some supernatural power from interrupting him; and becoming Christians. At another time having presented his head to one of the company who opposed him in his attempt to demolish their temple, the man after raising his arm with the axe to strike him, suddenly fell backwards, and being

terrified, asked his pardon. And on another similar occasion, the knife with which a man was going to stab him was suddenly taken from him, and could not be found.

As to the curing of diseases, and the casting out of demons, no person ever applied to him in vain. Even the shreds of his garments were sufficient for this salutary purpose. By means of the authority which he had over demons, he could avail himself of any intelligence that they could give him. The city being at one time alarmed with the report of an intended invasion by the Barbarians, he ordered a demoniac to be brought to him in the church, and asked the demon before the congregation whether the report had any foundation in truth. The demon, thus questioned, said that the report had been propagated by sixteen demons, with a view to make him leave the city; but that the Barbarians had no intention of attacking it. Then the alarm ceased.

Martin had frequent interviews with angels, and he also often saw the devil, sometimes in his proper form, and sometimes in others. At one time the devil broke into his cell; and shewing the horn of an ox stained with blood, he said, "Martin, where is thy power now? I have killed one of thy monks." On this, Martin called them all together, when it appeared that none of them were missing, but that a hired servant had been killed by an ox as he was driving a waggon drawn by oxen. Many accidents of this kind, the historian says, he foretold before they happened.

The devil often appeared to Martin in the form of the heathen gods, especially that of Mercury, but he always defended himself by the sign of the cross, and prayer. A multitude of demons were often overheard railing at him; and at one time some of the fraternity declared that they had heard a dialogue between Martin and a demon; the latter complaining of the injury that had been done him by receiving again some who had lost the benefit of their baptism by relapsing into heresy, and that Martin, in vindication of his conduct, said, "Nay if thou, O wretch, shouldst desist from heresying mankind, and repent of thy wickedness, though now the day of judgment is at hand, I can assure thee of the mercy of Christ."

A man of the name of Anatholias having professed an attachment to the monks of Martin's monastery, pretended to have a conversation with angels, and even with God himself: and as a proof of it, he said that on a particular night, which he mentioned, he was to be presented from heaven with a white garment. Accordingly, on that night

a great noise was heard in his cell, and he presently came out clothed in a garment of wonderful whiteness, and made of a kind of wool with which none of the monks were acquainted. But when they proposed to take him to Martin, he was exceedingly averse to it: and when he was compelled to go, the garment disappeared: the devil, the writer says, well knowing that he could not conceal his artifice from him.

At one time the devil appeared to Martin in a magnificent dress, saying that he was Christ, who was come to appear to him before his descent to the earth. But Martin, aware of the cheat, said that Christ would not appear in that form, and that he would not be convinced unless he saw in him the marks of crucifixion in his hands and feet. On this the devil vanished like smoke, and left in the cell such a stench, as sufficiently proved that it could not have been any other than the devil. Lest this story, the writer says, should be thought fabulous, he declares that he had it from the mouth of Martin himself. The reader, however, will not doubt but that it was the impudent invention of one or other of them.\* He concludes his history with declaring in the most solemn manner, that he had related nothing but the truth, and expresses his hopes that whoever believed his account would receive a reward from God. He also says that he had not by any means related all that he might have done concerning this most extraordinary man. Indeed he relates many more anecdotes of him of a similar nature, in his *Letters* and *Dialogues*. But my readers, I imagine, will think with me, that the specimen I have given them is sufficient to mark the gross imposition of some, and the

\* It was, most probably, a *pious fraud* of his pupil and biographer Sulpicius *Martin* appears to great advantage, as represented by *Lardner*, for his opposition to the interference of the civil power in the concerns of religion, and for his attachment to the *merciful* theory of Origen. On that subject, I cannot forbear to quote the following paragraph, worthy of the understanding and the heart of a writer to whom I have been so much indebted in the conduct of this undertaking.

“We can perceive from Sulpicius, that Martin, bishop of Tours, was favourable to the opinion concerning the salvation of the fallen angels; but then it is not advanced as a doctrine of religion, but as a pleasing speculation, supposed to be no unsuitable to magnificent apprehensions of the Divine perfections, and the vast extent of his unmerited goodness, displayed in his dealings with sinful men. See *Origen*, when he discoursed of abstruse points, and advanced propositions justly liable to dispute, was wont to insert expressions of caution and diffidence. And they who now followed him in his opinions, seem to have imitated him in the modest manner of proposing them; which may be of use to strew the unreasonableness of the excessive enmity and clamour against *Origen* and his friends. And, indeed, if learned and thoughtful men are not allowed freely to propose their sentiments, and humbly and modestly to recommend them to the consideration of others, learning and religion will decline very fast, as they did in the Christian world soon after this time.” *Lardner*, V. p. 14; also IV. pp. 393, 370, 371, 180.

credulity of others in this pretty early period,\* and he will readily excuse me, if, contenting myself with what I have related in this Section, I trouble him with little or nothing of the kind in the future progress of this work.

## SECTION XIV.

### Of the Christian Writers from the Accession of Constantine to the Death of Constantius.

THE writers within this period are sufficiently numerous; but as, from this time, I shall not think it necessary, in general, to take notice of any besides the more considerable of those whose works have come down to us, I have not many to give an account of.

Arnobius was a native of Sicca, in Africa, a teacher of rhetoric, and at first a strenuous defender of the heathen religion; but, after his conversion to Christianity, he wrote one of the best treatises now extant against it.†

Lactantius was a native of Italy, and a disciple of Arnobius. but was removed to Nicomedia by Diocletian, when he wished to make that city equal to Rome, and to introduce into it the liberal arts. Having few disciples, he employed himself chiefly in composing books, and he first distinguished himself by his defence of Christianity against Hierocles, the president of Syria. He was afterwards made tutor to Crispus, the son of Constantine. We have of him several treatises, which are so arranged as to have the title of *Institutions*, comprehending a system of Christianity and morals. We have also an epitome of the whole in a separate treatise. He is the most elegant of all the Latin Christian writers.‡

The most valuable writer in this period is Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine, surnamed Pamphilus, on account of his friendship for Pamphilus the Martyr. He seems

\* See the remarks of Mosheim on "the miracles attributed to Anthony, Paul the Hermit, and Martin;" though he denies that, in this century, miracles had entirely ceased." *Ecc. Hist.* Cent. iv. Pt. i. Ch. i. Sect. xxiii. I. p. 277.

† Entitled *Adversus Gentes*. See *Lardner*, IV. pp. 1—24. He remarks that "Arnobius says gloriously of the Christian religion, 'it trusts to its own evidence, and stands firm upon its own bottom, whether any man embrace it or not.'" *Sæc illis contenta est vivibus, et veritatis fundamentibus nititur: nec spoliatur visis, etiamse nullum habeat vindicem.* I. iii. *Ibid.* p. 214.

‡ "Il merite à bon droit le nom de Cicéron Chrétien.—Quoiqu'il soit, il est certain, que *Lactance* surpasse de beaucoup Cicéron pour les pensées, parceque les matières de la religion dont il traite sont infiniment au dessus des maximes de la doctrine des philosophe." *Du Pin* quoted by *Lardner*, IV. p. 65. See also pp 24—87. There are numerous quotations from *Lactantius* in the Notes to Vol. V.

to have been master of all the knowledge of his age, and he had the particular confidence of Constantine, as appears by several of his letters to him, which he has preserved.

We have of this writer an ecclesiastical history in ten books, the only work of the kind now extant of that age, beginning with the origin of Christianity, and describing its progress to the time of Constantine. The early part of it is very imperfect, no doubt for want of materials. The manner in which he expresses himself with respect to all those whose sentiments he disapproved, shews that he may be justly suspected of partiality, and it certainly affects every thing he says concerning Unitarians of every kind. Indeed, two of his works are on the subject of this controversy, being written to confute Marcellus of Ancyra.

He likewise wrote a Chronicon, or Chronology, from the time of Abraham to that of Constantine, of which we have an imperfect copy in the Latin of Rufinus. But the most learned works of Eusebius are his *Preparation and Demonstration of the Gospel*, in which he defends the cause of Christianity against Heathens and Jews. We have likewise a particular treatise of his against Hierocles, in answer to what he had written against the Christians, the *Life of Constantine* in four books, an *Oration in Praise of Constantine*, recited in his presence on the thirtieth anniversary of his reign, a *Commentary on the Psalms and on Isaiah*; and, in the Latin of Rufinus, the first book of an *Apology for Origen*, written by himself and Pamphilus in conjunction.\*

Among the writers and great men of this period, we must place Hierax of Leontopolis, in Egypt, a person well skilled, according to Epiphanius, in all science, and especially in medicine, and who wrote in both the Greek and Egyptian languages. He was so well acquainted with the Old and New Testament, that he had them as it were by heart, and he wrote commentaries on them. He was particularly revered for the strictness of his virtue, abstaining from wine and all dainties, so that many of the monks of Egypt adopted his opinions, which were in some respects those of the Gnostics, as he denied the resurrection of the flesh, and reprobated marriage. The former of these he is said to have borrowed from Origen, and the latter was held by many who pretended to great purity. He had followers who bore his name, and who are by some, but unjustly, ranked among the Manichæans. He lived to an extreme

\* See *Index*, IV. pp. 200—212.

age, some say above ninety, retaining the perfect use of his eyes, and employing himself much in writing books, which he did in a very fair hand. Besides his commentaries on the Scriptures, he wrote on the work of the six days, but nothing of his is now extant.\*

The emperor Constantine himself must also have a place among the writers of his age, on account of the many letters of his which have been preserved by Eusebius and other writers, and especially his *Oration to the Congregation of Saints*, or the Christian Church, in which he defends Christianity, and the orthodoxy of the times concerning the person of Christ.†

\* Epiph. Hær. lxxvii. Opera, I. pp. 710, &c. (P.) Lardner, III. pp. 399—402.

† In connexion with the passage quoted p. 275, Note †, Milton thus describes the character of Constantine, and the consequences of his *conversion*:

“If he had curbed the growing pride, avarice and luxury of the clergy, then every page of his story should have swelled with his faults, and that which Sozimus, the Heathen, writes of him, should have come in *to boot*: we should have heard, then, in every declamation, how he slew his nephew Commodus, a worthy man, his noble and eldest son Crispus, his wife Fausta, besides numbers of his friends. But since he must needs be the load-star of reformation, as some men clatter, it will be good to see further his knowledge of religion, what it was. A pretty scantling of his knowledge may be taken by his deferring to be baptized so many years, a thing not usual, and repugnant to the tenor of Scripture. Next, by the excessive devotion, that I may not say superstition, both of him and his mother Helena, to find out the cross on which Christ suffered, that had long lain under the rubbish of old ruins, some of the nails whereof he put into his helmet, to bear off blows in battle, others he fastened among the studs of his bridle, to fulfil (as he thought, or his court bishops persuaded him) the prophecy of Zachariah: ‘And it shall be, that that which is in the bridle, shall be holy to the Lord.’ Part of the cross, in which he thought such virtue to reside, as would prove a kind of palladium to save the city wherever it remained, he caused to be laid up in a pillar of porphyry, by his statue. How he or his teachers could trifle thus with half an eye open, upon St. Paul’s principles, I know not how to imagine.

“How should, then, the dim taper of this emperor’s age, that had such need of snuffing, extend any beam to our times? And what reformation he wrought for his own time, it will not be amiss to consider. He appointed certain times for fasts and feasts, built stately churches, gave large immunities to the clergy, great riches and promotions to bishops; gave and ministered occasion to bring in a deluge of ceremonies, thereby either to draw in the Heathen by a resemblance of their rites, or to set a gloss upon the simplicity and plainness of Christianity, which to the gorgeous solemnity of Paganism, and the sense of the world’s children, seemed but a homely and yeomanly religion, for the beauty of inward sanctity was not within their prospect.

“Thus flourished the church with Constantine’s wealth, and thereafter were the effects that followed. The church now with large steps went down hill decaying: at this time antichrist began first to put forth his horn, and that saying was common, that former times had wooden chalices and golden priests, but they, golden chalices and wooden priests.” *Of Reformation*, 1641, Works, 1697, pp. 179, 180. *Milton*.

Milton then introduces *Petrarch* (Sonnet, 108,) thus addressing *the Roman Antichrist*:

“Founded in chaste and humble poverty,  
’Gainst them that rais’d thee dost thou lift thy horn,  
Impudent whore; where hast thou plac’d thy hope?  
In thy adulterers, or thy ill-got wealth?  
Another *Constantine* comes not in haste.”

*Ibid*, p. 181

## PERIOD IX.

THE REIGN OF JULIAN.



## SECTION I.

*General Observations.*

It ever a wish could arise in the breast of a Christian, to see a heathen and persecuting emperor, it would be, after perusing such a history as we have been considering, of the factions among the Christian bishops during the reign of Constantius. Indeed, had there been nothing in Christianity, besides what appears upon the face of this part of our history, it would not be worth contending for. But all histories preserve the accounts of the turbulent, and in general the worst part of our species, of every description, civil as well as religious; while the quiet, the inoffensive, the benevolent, and truly virtuous characters, walk in a sphere in which they very rarely attract much notice, and are therefore soon forgotten. More especially would this be the case with Christianity, the principles of which led men to cultivate such virtues as made no figure in the bustle of the world.

Notwithstanding all that we have seen of the factious and unchristian spirit which prevailed among the more conspicuous of the bishops, even Julian, whose history is now coming before us, and whose testimony in this respect cannot be excepted against, bears witness to the exemplary morals of the Christians in general, and even those of their ministers, as greatly superior to those of the Heathens and their priests; and to this circumstance chiefly he ascribes the progress that, to his great regret, Christianity made in the world.

Compared with the disposition of the generality of Christians, the Heathens knew nothing, in a manner, even of benevolence, and much less of piety. For the latter, indeed, their religion afforded them no object: and it was unques-

tionably a sense of their common relation to God, and to Christ, and their considering themselves as joint heirs of a happy immortality, which inspired that ardent and generous benevolence, which was unknown in the world before the promulgation of Christianity. *How these Christians love one another!* was always, and indeed justly, the wonder of the Heathens; and their general benevolence towards all mankind, without excluding even their enemies, was a new thing also; the attachments of the Heathens having been always limited to their relations, particular friends, their country, or some other near and small object. We have seen how, in time of distress and pestilence, the generality of the Heathens deserted even their nearest relations and friends, rather than run any risk to save them. And, indeed, to a man whose prospects are bounded by this life, what could justify the risk of it?

On the other hand, the principles of Christianity, which, in the course of this history have been abundantly exhibited, led men to make no account of life, or of any of the advantages or disadvantages of it, when they came in competition with their known duty. Nay, many of the Christians, we have seen, were improperly lavish of their lives, and, contrary to the express commands of Christ, (who was no enthusiast, like many of his followers,) courted persecution, and were as ambitious of the honour of martyrdom, as many are of crowns. The uniform operation of these principles, heathen philosophers and emperors viewed with astonishment, but at the same time with hatred, as a thing of which they were not capable. These principles were entertained by all sincere Christians, and they increased their attachment to each other, and gave such a generosity and energy to their sentiments and conduct, as in the eyes of Heathens must have made them appear a superior kind of beings with respect to themselves; and, independently of their future glorious prospects, they were, and appeared to be, infinitely happier even here, when destitute of all worldly advantages, than their persecutors were, in the enjoyment of them.

These virtues distinguished the great mass of Christians, who were not within the influence of worldly ambition, as the leading bishops and clergy were; and even these men, notwithstanding their great failings, were in general actuated by a sincere love of truth, though they adopted improper methods of promoting it. The most factious of them were not destitute of sincere piety, and even of benevolence, when they were not (as was too often unhappily the case) in-

fluenced by human passions, and led by uncommon incentives to indulge a spirit of pride and ambition. And it should be considered, that to have the command of so much wealth and power as many of the Christian bishops were in possession of, especially in the time of the Christian emperors, was a great temptation to persons bred in obscurity, as many of the more eminent of the bishops and clergy were.

In their most eager contests for pre-eminence, the Christian bishops, in these factious times, were not inferior to the generality of statesmen and warriors; and when the profession of Christianity became honourable and lucrative, it must be supposed that many would class with Christians, who had nothing of their religion but the name, and whose sole object was the temporary advantages which it happened to be the means of procuring them. Such men as these ought not to be considered as Christians: because, with the same disposition of mind, and the same prospects in this life, they would have professed any other religion.

Let us not then think lightly of the advantages of Christianity, when we consider the effects of those human passions, which, in certain circumstances, the principles of it might not be able to controul. In every situation Christianity did something in favour of those who really believed it. It contributed to improve their characters, though it did not always remove every defect. The good seed was sometimes choked with thorns, and in other cases could hardly be distinguished among the tares which grew up with it; but, in favourable circumstances, it produced much good fruit, and such as nothing else could have yielded.

In the extremely low and lamentably corrupted state to which Christianity sunk in later ages, so as, in its external appearance, to resemble that very idolatry over which it triumphed, both in its objects and mode of worship, it was, radically and internally, infinitely superior to it, as it directed men's views to a state beyond the grave, and with a view to that, strongly inculcated the government of the passions. Professions have always some influence on practice; and the Monks in every age professed, and, in general, I doubt not, sincerely endeavoured to cultivate, amidst all their absurd mortifications, that humility, charity, piety, and heavenly-mindedness, to which the Heathens made no pretensions at all. Many of their rites consisted in the grossest sensual indulgence, and the most indecent

exhibitions, especially those in which Bacchus and Venus were the objects of worship; such as the rudest populace among Christians, in any age, would have turned from with abhorrence. How prejudiced then must that man be, and how much to be pitied, who can at this day give the preference to the worship of the Heathens, and fancy it to have the recommendation of elegance, and whose writings infuse those prejudices into others, who are destitute of sufficient knowledge of antiquity to be upon their guard against them!

## SECTION II.

### *Of the Superstition of Julian.*

THE reign that we are now going to take a view of, was short, but of great importance in the history of Christianity. It was its last and successful struggle against Heathenism, which, though supported by a man of considerable ability and address, and who gave his whole mind to the subject, yet appeared, in *his* conduct, as despicable and as malevolent as ever it had done before. With respect to himself, it is lamentable to observe how an attachment to Heathenism depraved a mind which was naturally far from being bad, and how it led a sensible man to adopt measures, which, for their meanness, as well as their injustice and cruelty, every man of sense must now condemn.

Julian was educated a Christian, and kept by his uncle, with perhaps too much care, from having access to any heathen masters. However, when he was at Nicomedia, where he was forbidden to attend the lectures of Libanius, his orations, which fell into his hands, gave him particular pleasure. But still he discovered no fondness for the heathen religion, though he was so great an admirer of the heathen writings, which would tend to recommend it to him, till the arrival of Maximus of Ephesus, of whom he both learned the rudiments of philosophy, and acquired a relish for the religion to which his master was bigottedly attached. Lest his propensity to Heathenism should be suspected, he got his head shorn, and pretended a great fondness for the monastic life. He also became a reader in the church of Nicomedia; and he dissembled so well, that his christian friends do not appear in the least to have suspected that he was any other than they wished him to be.

Afterwards, being permitted to study philosophy at Athens he had a better opportunity of learning the rites of his new

religion, and of hearing the sneers of the heathen philosophers, against Christianity. There also he was initiated into those *mysteries* to which all persons had not access, and might learn those arts of divination and magic which were always a flattering part of the heathen religion, and to which he was most superstitiously addicted.

How Julian acquitted himself as a military commander in Gaul, it is not my business particularly to relate. It is sufficient to say that he was the terror of his enemies, and that he gained the affections of his soldiers, so that they gave him the title of *Emperor* and *Augustus*. But before this, as soon as he began to feel his power, he acted independently of his uncle, (who had discovered an imprudent jealousy of him,) and no longer concealed his attachment to Heathenism, but opened the temples in the cities through which he passed, offering sacrifices, celebrating festivals, and assuming the title of *Pontifex Maximus*. It was afterwards pretended by the Heathens that, while he was in Gaul, he was induced to take up arms against his uncle by prophecies and oracles, which foretold the death of Constantius, and his own advancement to the empire.\*

On the death of his uncle, Julian marched directly to Constantinople, which was the place of his nativity, where he was received without opposition, and where he behaved in such a manner as to acquire great popularity, redressing many public wrongs, and punishing the authors of them; and though he did not conceal his own attachment to Heathenism, he behaved at first with the greatest moderation and impartiality towards his christian subjects; and he pleased many of them by recalling from banishment the bishops whom his uncle had capriciously deposed, and restoring them to their sees. He wrote to Basil and Gregory (who will soon make a great figure in this history,) with whom he had studied at Athens, inviting them, among other persons of distinguished ability and learning, to his court, but probably with a view to engage them in his designs. This flattering invitation, however, they declined, from the unfavourable opinion they had conceived of him, and especially the marks of levity, inconstancy, and vanity which they had seen in him; indications not of a great, but of a little mind.

Julian gained the applause of many by his reforms in the imperial household, from which he cut off all superfluous

\* Sazou. Hist. L. v. C. 1. p. 171. — P. c. See *supra*, pp. 27, 272. — Notes †

xpense, by his contempt of all pomp, which, however, he carried to an extreme that was unbecoming the dignity of an emperor, by his application to study, and the harangues which he made in the senate, such as no emperor had attempted since the time of Julius Cæsar. His patronage of learned men, and especially the heathen philosophers, brought great numbers of them to his court, especially his tutor Maximus, to whom he behaved with the respect of a child to a father. These men, who were his only associates, contributed not a little to flatter his vanity, which was the predominant foible of his character.

An anecdote which we find in Eunapius,\* concerning the manner in which Maximus went to the court of Julian, may give us an idea of the spirit and folly of Heathenism. Presently after his arrival at Constantinople, Julian sent messengers to Maximus and Chrysanthius, who married the cousin of Eunapius, the writer of this account. They were both at Sardis; and, having much experience in the art of divination, they had recourse to the gods to direct them how to proceed. The omens were so unpromising that Chrysanthius was terrified and discouraged; but Maximus, whose inclination to comply with the flattering request was probably stronger than that of Chrysanthius, said that he had forgotten the rules of their discipline, which they had learned from their childhood, which was not to be discouraged by the first repulses, but to use violence with the gods. (*εὐχιάζεσθαι τὴν τῆ θεῶν φύσιν*) till they obtained their request. Chrysanthius replied that, if he had the courage to persist, he might; but that for himself, he could not resist the presages they had seen. Maximus, however, persisted, till at length he obtained the omen that he wanted.† The remainder of the account I shall give in the words of Mr. Gibbon, as I might be suspected of wishing to give an unfavourable idea of the boasted philosophy of the Heathens.

“The journey of Maximus through the cities of Asia displayed the triumph of philosophic vanity; and the magistrates vied with each other in the honourable reception, which they prepared for the friend of their sovereign.‡

\* *Vit. Maxim.* p. 77. (P.) In “Lives of Philosophers and Sophists.” *Lardner* IX. p. 11.

† See *Julien, par Bletière*, l. iv. pp. 252—251.

‡ “Tandis que les hommes complimentoient Maxime, la femme de ce philosophe recevoit les visites des femmes, qui venoient lui faire leur cour par une porte dérobée.—Depuis Sardes jusqu’ à Constantinople, le voyage de Maxime fut un triomphe continué.” *Ibid.* p. 256. The wife of Maximus, according to Eunapius, was highly accomplished. “Plus habile et plus philosophe que son mari” p. 257.

Julian was pronouncing an oration before the senate when he was informed of the arrival of Maximus. The emperor immediately interrupted his discourse, advanced to meet him, and, after a tender embrace, conducted him by the hand into the midst of the assembly, where he publicly acknowledged the benefits which he had derived from the instructions of the philosopher.\*

“Maximus, who soon acquired the confidence, and influenced the councils of Julian, was insensibly corrupted by the temptations of a court. His dress became more splendid, his demeanour more lofty, and he was exposed under a succeeding reign to a disgraceful inquiry into the means by which the disciple of Plato had accumulated, in the short duration of his favour, a very scandalous proportion of wealth. Of the other philosophers and sophists who were invited to the imperial residence by the choice of Julian, or the success of Maximus, few were able to preserve their innocence or their reputation. The liberal gifts of money, lands and houses, were insufficient to satiate their rapacious avarice; and the indignation of the people was justly excited by the remembrance of their abject poverty and disinterested professions.”†

Julian indulged his vanity in a work which he composed, entitled *The Casars*, in which he satirized all the emperors who had gone before him. He also wrote several books against the Christian religion; but in them there appeared to be more of wit than of argument.‡

Of all the preceding emperors, Julian was the greatest admirer of Marcus Antoninus; and as he resembled him in some of his good qualities, though not in all of them, so he certainly partook of his superstition. That he had this, and other faults, is acknowledged by his best friends. To copy the account which Dr. Lardner, whose impartiality has never been called in question, gives of him, “he had a certain levity of mind, was a great talker, and very fond of fame; superstitious rather than properly religious, so addicted to sacrificing, that it was said the race of bulls would

\* “Exsiliunt inde coram: et qui esset oblitus (hunc curam in vestibulo longo) progressus, exosculatum susceperuntque reverenter secum induxit: per ostentationem infestissimum nimis captator manus glorie.” *Ann.*, quoted in *Julian*, I. iv.

† *Id.*, II. p. 378. (P.) C. xxiii. See the contrast between the philosophers Maximus and Priscus. *Julian*, I. iv. pp. 256, 257.

‡ *Social. Hist.*, I. iii. C. 3. pp. 397, &c. (P.) *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 373, 375, 391—411. *Julian*, I. v. p. 388. See the *Catholic* use made by *Blutiræ* of Julian's Description of some Opinions and Practices of Christians, p. 586.

be destroyed if he returned victorious from Persia; and such was the multitude of his victims, that his soldiers who partook of them were often much disordered by excess in eating and drinking. So Ammianus. It would be tedious to rehearse all the instances of excessive, and even ridiculous superstition, which may be found in heathen writers.

“ Libanius says, ‘ he received the rising sun with blood, and attended him again with blood at his setting; and because he could not go abroad so often as he would, he made a temple of his palace, and placed altars in his garden, which was purer than most chapels. By frequent devotions he engaged the gods to be his auxiliaries in war, worshipping Mercury, Ceres, Mars, Calliope, Apollo and Jove, whom he worshipped in his temple upon the hill, and in the city,’ meaning Antioch. ‘ Complaining of the gods who had deserted him, Whom shall we blame?’ says Libanius, ‘ not one, but all; for none were neglected by him, neither gods nor goddesses. And is this the return,’ says he, ‘ for all his victims, for all his vows, for all the incense, and all the blood offered up to them, by day and by night?’ Again, says the same writer, ‘ wherever there was a temple, whether in the city or on the hill, or on the tops of the mountains, no place was so rough, or so difficult of access, but he ran to it as if the way had been smooth and pleasant, if it had a temple, or ever had had one.’

“ But though Julian was so devout and religious in his way, when disappointed, he could be displeased, and even angry with his gods, like other heathen people, especially the vulgar among them. In the Persian war, having had some advantages, and expecting more, he prepared a grand sacrifice for Mars; but the omens not being favourable, he was exceedingly moved, and called Jupiter to witness, that he would never more offer a sacrifice to Mars. This excess of superstition, it seems to me, is an argument of want of judgment, which defect appeared upon divers occasions, and in many actions not altogether becoming the dignity of an emperor.”\*

Julian “ was heard to declare—that if he could render each individual richer than Midas, and every city greater than Babylon, he should not esteem himself the benefactor of mankind, unless at the same time he could reclaim his subjects from their impious revolt against the immortal gods.” †

\* Test. IV. p. 25. (P.) Works, VIII. pp. 361, 362.

† Gibbon's Hist. II. p. 579. (P.) C. xxiii

## SECTION III.

*Instances of Julian's Partiality for the Heathens, and his Prejudice against the Christians.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the professed moderation of Julian, the difference of his behaviour towards the Heathens and Christians, in similar circumstances, was sufficiently striking, as will appear from the following examples.

There was in the city of Alexandria a place in which the heathen priests had been used to offer human sacrifices. This place, as being of no use, Constantius gave to the church of Alexandria, and George, the bishop, gave orders for it to be cleared, in order to build a christian church on the spot. In doing this they discovered an immense subterraneous cavern, in which the heathen mysteries had been performed, and in it were many human skulls. These, and other things, which they found in the place, the Christians brought out, and exposed to public ridicule. The Heathens, provoked at this exhibition, suddenly took arms, and, rushing upon the Christians, killed many of them with swords, clubs and stones: some also they strangled, and several they crucified.

On this, the Christians proceeded no farther in clearing the temple: but the Heathens, pursuing their advantage, seized the bishop as he was in the church, and put him in prison. The next day they dispatched him, and then fastening the body to a camel, he was dragged about the streets all day, and in the evening they burnt him and the camel together. This fate, Sozomen says, the bishop owed in part to his haughtiness while he was in favour with Constantius, and some say the friends of Athanasius were concerned in this massacre,\* but he ascribes it chiefly to the inveteracy of the Heathens, whose superstitious he had been very active in abolishing. Had any Christians been concerned in it, he justly observes that Julian would have triumphed in the circumstance, and not have reproached the Pagans with it as he did.

When the emperor was informed of these shocking outrages and cruelties, he neither ordered any inquiry to be made after the authors of them, nor expressed a wish to

\* *Blatere* thus admits that they were not disinclined to it. "Cœux-ci-eront-ils-encore-donné-une-grande-preuve-de-moderation, en-ne-se-jouant-pas-à-ses-bour-geois." *Julien*, I., iv. p. 296. See *Annal. Mar. in Lardner*, VIII. p. 472.

punish any person whatever, but contented himself with writing them a letter of reproof, acknowledging that the Christians had deserved all that they had suffered, and even more; but asking them if they were not ashamed to tear a man in pieces like so many dogs, and then lift up their hands in prayer to the gods, as if they were pure. They ought, he says, to have had recourse to the laws when they thought themselves injured, and that they were happy in having an emperor who would apply no other remedy to their disorders besides reproof and exhortation, which he hoped they would respect the more, as they were Greeks. He then says that he forgave them for the sake of their god Serapis, Alexander the founder of their city, and his uncle Julian, who was prefect of Egypt and Alexandria, extremely addicted to the heathen superstition, and a promoter of the persecution of the Christians beyond the orders of his master.\*

This George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria, was a man of letters, and had a very valuable library, which Julian ordered to be seized for his own use; and in his orders concerning it, he says that many of the books were on philosophical and rhetorical subjects, though many of them “concerning the doctrine of the *impious Galileans*” (as in his sneering, contemptuous way he always affected to call the Christians); “which,” says he, “I could wish to have utterly destroyed; but lest books of value should be destroyed along with them, let these also be carefully sought for.” He says that he himself was not unacquainted with the books of this bishop, for that when he was in Cappadocia he had borrowed some of them, “to have them transcribed, and then returned them to him.” On this occasion Lardner justly observes, that “it was a mean thing in Julian to wish that Christian writings might be destroyed, and below a philosopher to entertain such a thought.”† I would add, that it does not appear that any price was to be given for these books to the family of the proprietor of them.

Such was the forbearance of Julian towards the Heathens. Let us now see on what slight pretences he banished some Christian bishops, as Athanasius of Alexandria, Eleusius of Cyzicum, and Titus of Bostra, all men of great distinction, as Lardner observes, whose extracts from Sozomen on this subject I shall quote, or abridge.

\* Julian, hearing that Athanasius, who had succeeded to

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iii. C. xxiii. p. 173. Sozom. Hist. L. v. C. vii. p. 189. P. Lardner, VIII. pp. 415, 470—472.

† Test. IV. p. 98. (P.) Works, VIII. pp. 413, 44.

the church of Alexandria after the death of George, above mentioned, boldly taught the people, and brought over many Gentiles to Christianity, ordered him to leave the place, and threatened him with a severe penalty if he did not.\* Though the emperor, says this writer, was determined by all means to restore Heathenism, he judged it imprudent to compel men by punishments to sacrifice, against their will. Nevertheless he banished the clergy out of cities, intending by their absence to abolish the assemblies of the people: where there were none to teach them and perform the accustomed rites, that in length of time the memory of their worship might be lost. His pretence for so doing was, that the clergy excited the people to sedition. Under this pretence he banished Eleusius and his friends from Cyzicum, though there was no sedition there, nor any reason to apprehend it.

“He also required that the people of Bostra should, by a public decree, expel from their city their bishop Titus: because when he had threatened that if there was any disturbance in that place he should impute it to the bishop and his clergy, Titus had sent a letter to the emperor, assuring him that the Christians in Bostra were equal in number to the Gentiles; that they were very peaceable, and that paying a regard to his admonitions, they had no thought of making any disturbance. From these words Julian took occasion to write a letter to the people of Bostra, in order to incense them against Titus, as having accused them, by intimating that it was not owing to their good temper, but to his exhortations, that they were kept from sedition, though the letter was very far from admitting any such construction. On this pretence, however, he excited the people to expel the bishop, as a public enemy.

The like happened in many other places, partly owing to the command of the emperor, and partly to the violence and petulance of the people; but the whole fault, says the

\* “*Edictum*, the prefect of Egypt, delaying to carry his orders into execution, Julian wrote to him as follows. ‘Though you neglect to write to me on any other subject, at least it is your duty to inform me of your conduct towards Athanasius, the enemy of the gods. My intentions have been long since communicated to you. I swear by the great Scrupus, that unless, on the orders of Decentius, Athanasius has departed from Alexandria, nay, from Egypt, the officers of our government shall pay to you one hundred pounds of gold. You know my temper. I am slow to condemn, but I am still slower to forgive. This epistle was conveyed by a short postscript, written with the emperor’s own hand.’ The contempt that is shewn for all the gods fills me with grief and indignation. There is nothing that I should see, nothing that I should hear, with more pleasure, than the expulsion of Athanasius from all Egypt, the detestable wretch. Under my reign, the baptist of several Grecian ladies, of the highest rank, has been the object of his persecu-  
Gibbon’s Hist. W. p. 408. (P. C. xxii)

historian, is to be ascribed to the emperor himself, who neglected to punish according to the laws those who, out of hatred to our religion, transgressed in these respects, seemingly reproving them in words, but by actions really exciting them to such irregularities.”\*

## SECTION IV.

### *Julian's Artifices to subvert Christianity, and his Testimony in Favour of it.*

THE whole of Julian's conduct clearly shews that, in his restoration of the bishops to the sees from which they had been expelled, which had the appearance of justice and moderation, his real design was to promote dissensions in the churches, by the contests which would necessarily arise between the bishops who were recalled, and those who had obtained possession of their sees, to prevent which he had made no provision whatever. In consequence of this order, however, Meletius returned to Antioch, † Athanasius to Alexandria, Hilary to Gaul, Lucifer to Sardinia, both from Thebais, and Eusebius to Italy. But the consequence of this was, what no doubt Julian rejoiced in, great dissensions in the churches to which they returned, especially at Antioch, where the different factions did not cease for eighty years. Among others he restored Aëtius, writing him a very friendly letter, inviting him to come to him, and defraying the expenses of his journey. He not only favoured the Novatians, but obliged Eusebius, bishop of Cyzicum, to rebuild at his own expense and within the short space of two months, a church of that sect which he had been the means of destroying in the time of Constantine. This was justice, no doubt, but administered in a capricious manner, and not with a view to answer the proper ends of justice, which is to promote the peace of society. ‡

Julian also gave leave to the Donatists to hold their assemblies as usual, and having been grievously oppressed by the Catholics, they are said by Optatus, § to have taken ample revenge for their past injuries; but the violence

\* Lardner's Test. IV. p. 106. (P.) Works, VIII. pp. 429, 431.

† Constantine being displeas'd with Meletius, because, contrary to his expectations, he found him to be an advocate for the Homousian doctrine, sent him to Meletina his native place, and put Euzoius into his see. Philostorgi Hist. I. v. C. v. p. 369. (P.)

‡ Theod. Hist. L. iii. C. iv. v. pp. 125, &c. Sozom. Hist. I. v. C. v. p. 187. (P.) Lardner, VIII. pp. 369, 370.

§ L. vi. pp. 111, &c. (P.) Ibid.

which he describes as committed by them on this occasion can hardly be credited.

Among other methods which Julian took to establish Heathenism, he endeavoured to make the Heathens adopt those customs to which he thought the great credit and flourishing state of Christians, were chiefly owing. But nothing of the kind having ever been attempted before, his scheme was unnatural and ineffectual. With this view, however, he ordered that the heathen temples should be furnished, like the Christian churches, with seats for persons of different classes; and he appointed readers and preachers, to give regular lectures on certain days and hours. He also provided places of retreat, like monasteries, for those who chose to spend their lives in philosophical speculation, and other places for the reception of poor people and strangers; and he established rules of penance for offences voluntary and involuntary. But what he particularly admired among the Christians were the tickets which they gave to those who travelled, to insure them a friendly reception wherever they went.

A letter which he wrote to Arsacius, high-priest of Galatia, shews both his solicitude upon this subject, and how hopeless his project was. I shall therefore give a considerable part of it, sometimes using the translation of Dr. Lardner.

“ If Hellenism does not prosper according to our wish, it is the fault of those who profess it. With respect to the religion itself, there is nothing wanting in point of excellence or magnificence, and so great a change has taken place in favour of it, as far exceeds our utmost expectations. But this will not suffice without attending to the circumstances which have contributed to the increase of atheism” (meaning Christianity) “ such as their humanity to strangers, the care they take about burying their dead, and their affected gravity of manners, each of which we ought to adopt. Not is it enough that you alone act in this manner, but all the inferior priest in Galatia, whom you must, by shame, or persuasion, bring into this method, or remove them from the sacerdotal office. Their wives, children and servants, must come to the worship of the gods, and must forbear to converse with the servants, children, and wives of the Galatians, who are impious towards the gods, and prefer impiety to religion. You are likewise to order them not to frequent the theatre, nor to drink in taverns, nor to exercise any mean and sordid employments. Such as hearken to your directions you are to encourage, others you are to reject.

“ You must also erect hospitals in every city, that strangers also may share in our humanity. As to the expense, I have already provided for it: having ordered thirty thousand (modii) pecks of wheat, and sixty thousand (ξξξαι) pints of wine to be given every year for the whole province of Galatia, a fifth part of which I would have given to those poor persons who attend upon the priests, and the rest to strangers and beggars. For it is a shame that when there are no beggars among the Jews, and the impious Galileans relieve not only their own people, but ours also, our poor should be neglected by us, and be left helpless and destitute. Teach the Gentiles, therefore, that they contribute something to this service, and that the villagers offer their first-fruits to the gods; and shew them that this has been an ancient custom among the Greeks, as we may see in Homer.

“ Very rarely visit the civil governors at their houses, but rather write to them. When they enter a city, let no priest go out to meet them. When they enter the temples of the gods, let no priest go farther than the vestibule, to wait upon them. When they enter the temples, let none of their guards go before them, but let them follow if they please: for as soon as any person passes the threshold of the temple, he is to be considered as no other than a private person. You know very well that, within the temple, you yourself hold the highest rank, as the divine law requires. They who submit to this regulation, are indeed pious worshippers of the gods, but they who carry their pride and pomp along with them, are vainglorious persons.

“ I am very willing to relieve the people of Pessinum, if they will first appease the mother of the gods; but if they neglect her, they will not only be reprov'd, but, what I am sorry to add, shall feel my indignation, for” (quoting two Greek verses) “ we must have no compassion upon, or shew any favour to those who are the enemies of the immortal gods. Assure them, therefore, that if they expect any favour from me, they must all worship the mother of the gods.”\*

In this letter it is easy to perceive the spirit of a persecutor, and that Julian would have done as much as Diocletian and his colleagues, if he could have attempted it with safety to himself, and with any prospect of success.† But it is more pleasing to observe in it the traces of some excellent Christian customs of this age, such as the gravity and decency of

\* Sozom. Hist. L. v. C. xvi. p. 203. † *P. Luciani*, VII. p. 101. p. 102.

“ That Julian was a persecutor,” see *Forbes*, VII. p. 101.

their manners, especially those of the clergy, who paid no servile court to the civil governors, their care to avoid the theatre and the taverns; their charity, which was not confined to themselves, but extended even to the Heathens; their reverence for their religion, and for their places of public worship, so that a magistrate was considered as no other than a private person when he was there.

How strange must all this exhortation to moral duties have appeared to the priests and professors of Heathenism, whose religion never had, or could possibly have, any connexion with moral virtue; and the chief recommendations of which to the common people were the riotous and licentious festivals which it provided for them, and the promises it held out to them of enabling them to pry into futurity. As to moral instruction, the duties of mutual affection, and extensive charity, the attempt to graft them upon Heathenism (in which the doctrine of one God, of his moral government, and a future state of retribution, was unknown) must have appeared ridiculous to the Heathens themselves.

If the things which Julian recommends in this letter, (and of which he himself would have had no idea, if he had not seen them among Christians,) had had any natural connexion with Heathenism, it would have appeared long before, even before the appearance of Christianity. On the contrary, the religious rites of the Greeks and Romans had such an evident tendency to debase the minds, and to corrupt the morals of men, that about the time of our Saviour the philosophers began to be ashamed of them; and the zeal that we afterwards find for them in such men as Marcus Antoninus, Julian, and the heathen philosophers of his age, arose from their having nothing else to oppose to Christianity, and to prevent its spreading among the common people. With respect to these, Julian did not take the right method to gain them. Some new and more diverting spectacle, some refinement in sensual gratification, or some improvement in the art of divination, might have been attended to; but moral lectures of piety and virtue had no charms for them, otherwise they would have become Christians.

Julian was very sensible that an open persecution of Christians, if he could have undertaken it with safety to himself, which in his situation, and especially at the beginning of his reign, he certainly could not, would have been ineffectual. But it is evident from his whole conduct, that there was nothing nearer his heart than to undermine Christianity by degrees, and to extirpate it altogether.

possible. This scheme, and his preparation for the Persian war, occupied him entirely. Far, indeed, was Julian from being the philosopher that he first affected to be, in leaving religion free to all his subjects, without preferring or molesting any person on that account. If ever there was a bigot to the rites of Heathenism, and a malignant one with respect to Christianity, it was Julian, who appears in so respectable a light to many modern unbelievers.

## SECTION V.

*Julian's more direct Attempts to undermine, and gradually to extirpate, Christianity.*

JULIAN, as has been seen already, was continually sacrificing, and encouraging others to do it. He took from the Christian clergy and their churches, all the privileges and grants of his predecessors. He restored to the heathen priests, of every class, their former honours and immunities; enforcing, however, that superstitious abstinence from certain meats, which had been prescribed to some of the classes of them; and he gave back to the temples their former revenues. The Nilometer,\* which, by order of Constantine, had been kept in a christian church, he removed to the temple of Serapis.

He was frequently writing to the cities which were most addicted to the heathen rites, encouraging them to ask any favours of him, and shewing the greatest readiness to grant them. But he had such an aversion to those cities in which Christianity was generally professed, that he would not so much as hear their complaints. Though the people of Nisibis were particularly exposed to the irruptions of the Persians, on the approach of the war, he would not receive their ambassadors, and said he should send them no succours, because they were all Christians. He considered their city as a polluted place, and said that he should never set his foot in it, unless they returned to the heathen religion.

Such was this *truly philosophical emperor, the common father of all his subjects*. Julian had the same objection to the people of Constantia, because they were all Christians, and annexed the place to the city of Gaza, to which it was a sea-port, though Constantine had given it the privileges of

\* "The cubit by which the rising of the Nile in Egypt was measured," and which "had been usually lodged in the temple of Serapis." *Lardner*, IX. p. 162.

an independent city; and there was no reason for the change in favour of Gaza, but that the inhabitants of this place were generally Heathens.\*

He likewise struck *Cæsarea*, the metropolis of Cappadocia, out of the list of cities, and changed its name, because almost all the inhabitants were Christians, and had demolished the temples of Jupiter and Apollo. Hearing that they had proceeded to demolish the only temple that remained in the place, after his accession to the empire, he was provoked to the highest degree, and reproached the heathen inhabitants, though they were very few in number, for not exerting themselves to prevent it.

Julian ordered the strictest inquiry to be made into all estates belonging to Christian churches, in order to confiscate the whole of them, and he did not scruple to make use of torture to come at the truth, which was a most cruel persecution under another name. He subjected all the Christian clergy to the lowest services in the army, and he made the common people in the cities to pay the same tax that was exacted in the villages. He threatened that, unless the Christians rebuilt the temples, he would never cease till he had destroyed the places in which they had stood, and used to add, that he would not even suffer the Galileans to wear their heads. Our historian justly observes, that if it had been in his power, and he had not been prevented by death, he would probably have been as good as his word.†

Though Julian forbore to persecute unto death, he could not, on several occasions, refrain from using insults, which sufficiently shewed what he felt, and what he wished to do. When he was sacrificing in a temple at Constantinople, and *Maris*, the bishop of Chæledon, a man respectable for his learning, and the part that he had acted in public life, and now for his age, was coming that way, he abused him as an impious person, and an enemy of the gods. He had even the meanness to reproach him for his blindness, saying, "Will not your Galilean God cure you?" The old man replied, "I thank my God that I am deprived of sight, that I may not see your fall from piety." On this occasion the emperor had so much command of himself, as to pass on without making any answer.‡

Notwithstanding Julian's affectation of great magnanimity, he was not always so much master of himself as he appeared

\* Sozom. Hist. E. v. C. 10. p. 1. — *P.* — † *Ibid.* C. iv. p. 181. — *P.*

‡ *Ibid.* p. 185. — *P.* — See Sozomen's reasons for Julian's forbearance, with the remarks of *Lordier* on *Maris's* reply, VIII. p. 373.

to be on this occasion, which indeed was at the beginning of his reign. When he was at Antioch, a little before he set out on his expedition against Persia, two of the officers who attended upon his person, Juventinus and Maximus, complained that, by his orders, every thing in the city was polluted with the rites of Heathenism, so that the very fountains which supplied the city, and every thing that was sold in the market, bread, flesh meat, herbs, apples, &c. had been sprinkled with lustral water, by which it was, as it were, consecrated to the heathen gods: for such had been his insidious policy, in order to draw the people insensibly into idolatry.

Julian hearing of their having made these complaints, ordered them to be brought before him: and as, by his manner of interrogating them, (in which, as his custom was, he affected great familiarity,) he encouraged them to speak freely, they told him that they *had* made those complaints; and that having been educated in the Christian religion, under his predecessors Constantine and Constantius, they could not help being disgusted at seeing every thing contaminated with the rites of Heathenism; but that this was the only thing of which they complained in his reign. At this he was so provoked, that he ordered them to be put to death with torture, pretending that it was not on account of their religion, but for their petulance in insulting their emperor. However, the Christian citizens of Antioch justly considered them as martyrs, providing for them a splendid monument, and observing an annual festival for them.\*

About the same time a deaconess, of the name of Pythia, a leader of a choir of women, having sung psalms as the emperor was passing by the doors of a church, and having, imprudently perhaps, made choice of those psalms in which the heathen gods and their worshippers are spoken of with contempt, he was so provoked, that he sent for her; and though she was very old, one of his guards struck her by his orders on both the cheeks, in his presence, till the blood came out.†

When Valentinian, who was afterwards emperor, but then only a tribune, was walking before Julian into a heathen temple, in the early part of his reign, he struck the priest, who either casually, or as he probably thought, intentionally, sprinkled him, as well as the emperor, with the lustral water, as thinking himself defiled by it. But the emperor

was so offended at the liberty which he took, that he banished him, to a castle situated in a desert place.\*

Julian withdrew from the churches that allowance from the public funds which Constantine had granted for the relief of the poor and the widows. He moreover took from the churches all their sacred vessels, and other things of value that had been presented to them, and wherever the temples had been destroyed, he compelled the Christians to rebuild them; and when they were unable to do this, he punished them with imprisonment and torture, without excepting the bishops and clergy; so that, in this form, our historian says, the persecution was in reality not much less grievous than it had been under the heathen emperors.†

Julian was more particularly intent on banishing all Christians from the army. For this purpose he removed the sign of the cross from the standards, and in the statues which were made for him he gave orders that a figure of some of the heathen gods should accompany them. For example, Jupiter was drawn as descending from heaven, and presenting him with his crown and purple robe, the ensigns of imperial power; or Mars or Mercury, smiling upon him, the former as a warrior, and the latter as an orator. This he did that those who paid homage to his statues might at the same time be obliged to pay their respects to those heathen gods. If they refused to do it, he punished their neglect as an offence against himself.

In order to deceive the soldiers into the act of sacrificing, he refused to give them the usual donative on festival days, unless, according to the ancient custom of the Romans, they threw some frankincense into the fire. This some of them incautiously did; but others, who were apprized of the nature of the action, refused the donative on those terms, and informing the others that they had been guilty of an act of idolatry, they were so much shocked at what they had done, that they ran about the streets, declaring that they were Christians, and always had been so. They even went to the emperor and returned the donative, telling him that they were ready to die for Christ if he ordered it. But he contented himself with dismissing them from the service.‡

At one time, however, the clamour of some of these

\* Theod. Hist. L. iii. C. xvi. p. 136. — *P. Blotum*, L. iii. p. 236.

† Sozom. Hist. L. v. C. v. p. 189. — *(P.)* — ‡ *Ibid.* C. xvii. p. 207. — *(P.)*

penitent soldiers to be led to martyrdom, rather than be thus betrayed into idolatry, provoked the emperor so much, that he ordered them to be beheaded. Accordingly, they were conducted to a place without the city, to which they were followed by a great crowd of people, admiring and praising their fortitude, as had always been usual on such occasions. Being arrived at the place of punishment, the oldest among them desired the executioner to begin with the youngest, lest he should be terrified at seeing others put to death before him. Accordingly the youngest of them was placed on his knees, and the executioner was preparing to do his office, when the emperor sent to recall his order. But the young man was so far from rejoicing at his deliverance, that he said, "Romanus," for such was his name, "was not worthy to be a martyr." This lenity of Julian, the historian observes, was not spontaneous; but he envied the Christians the glory of their martyrs. However, his banishing many of them from the cities into the extreme parts of the empire would, in many cases, he adds, be a punishment worse than death.\*

Farther, to discourage the profession of Christianity, he took from those who refused to sacrifice, the rights of citizens. He even forbade them all access to the public Forum, and other places of general concourse, and excluded them from all magistracies and honours, especially from the government of provinces; alleging, in his insulting manner, (which is certainly no indication of a great mind, and which shews how little he was acquainted with Christianity, or how willing he was to pervert it,) that their religion forbade the use of the sword for the purpose of capital punishment.†

But the most illiberal of all the methods that Julian took to lower the credit and prevent the spread of Christianity, a measure exclaimed against by the Heathens themselves, was, that he would not allow the Christians to teach the Greek poets and orators. He was exceedingly mortified to observe how many Christians there were, both Catholics and Arians, who distinguished themselves as men of letters; that Apollinaris the Syrian was so eminent in every kind of science, and particularly that Basil and Gregory of Cappadocia, who had studied along with him at Athens, should excel all the orators of their age, and thinking that they derived their great power of persuasion from their study of the Greek

\* Theod. Hist. L. iii. C. xvii. p. 136. (P.)

† Socrat. Hist. L. iii. C. xiii. p. 188. (P.) *Lodovic.* VIII. pp. 270, 271.

orators, he wished to deprive them of that advantage. As a reason for his conduct, he charged the Christians with inconsistency in teaching what they did not believe, and that it was absurd in them to give lessons out of Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, and Lysias, and at the same time revile the gods whom those writers had worshipped. "If they think those books contain a false religion, let them go," says he, "to the churches of the Galileans, and there study Matthew and Luke."\* But if Julian had thought that there had been that necessary connexion between the *religion* of the classic writers, and the excellence of their *style*, it would have been wiser in him to have encouraged the Christians in the use of them, as a means of drawing them to the heathen religion. In him it was a low and unworthy insult.

This prohibition, from which Julian expected so much, was far from answering his purpose. Orosius says, that when he published his edict forbidding the Christian professors of rhetoric to teach the liberal arts, they almost all chose to resign their chairs; and Jerome says that Proaresius, the Athenian sophist, shut up his school, though the emperor had granted him a special licence to teach. Austin records the like steadiness of Victorinus, who had long taught rhetoric with great applause, at Rome. But Eccebius, a Christian sophist, at Constantinople, who had been Julian's master in rhetoric, was overcome by the temptations of the times, and openly professed Heathenism. However, when Julian was dead, he recovered himself, and, with much humility intreated to be reconciled to the church.†

In some measure to remedy the disadvantage arising from their not having access to the Grecian poets and orators, learned Christians applied themselves to write such books as might in part supply the want of those which had been usually read in the schools. Particularly, Apollinaris the elder wrote in heroic verse the history of the Bible, as far as the reign of Saul, divided, like the *Iliad*, into twenty-four books. He wrote comedies like those of Menander, tragedies like those of Euripides, and lyric poems like those of Pindar, and also works of every other kind, not inferior, in the opinion of Christians of that age, to those of the Grecian masters. He likewise wrote an excellent work concerning truth, against the heathen philosophers, in which he shewed,

\* Julian Epist. xlv. Opera, l. p. 133. — *P. — Bibliotheque, l. iv. pp. 261—266.*  
 † Lardner's Test. IV. p. 41. — *P. — Works, VIII. pp. 575, 572.*

by other arguments than those which are drawn from the Scriptures, that they were mistaken in what they taught concerning God.\*

The younger Apollinaris wrote the history of Christ, and of the apostles, in the form of dialogues, like those of Plato; and about this time Heliodorus composed an elegant and ingenious romance, called *Ethiopes*,† which has served as a model for other works of the kind. As soon, however, as, upon the death of Julian, Christians were at liberty to teach what books they pleased, all these compositions of Christianity were laid aside, and the study of the Greek classics was resumed, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrances of some pious Christians against the practice.‡

## SECTION VI.

### *Violences committed upon Christians, in the Reign of Julian*

THAT Julian had as great a hatred of Christianity as any of the persecuting emperors, and that he would have used any means that he could have thought would be effectual to extirpate it, cannot be doubted; and there were persons enough to second his views, and even go beyond his orders, indulging that brutal spirit with which the Heathens in general, and especially those of the lower classes, were always actuated against the Christians. Indeed, notwithstanding the boasted lenity of Julian,§ there were many who were properly martyrs to their religion in his reign. Theodoret says, that an account of the outrages committed by Heathens upon the Christians, while Julian was emperor, would require a separate volume, and that he therefore confines himself to a few of the cases.

At Ascalon and Gaza, the heathen populace, without any orders from the emperor, but hoping to escape unpunished for doing what they conceived would not be disagreeable to him, indulged their brutal disposition so far as to put to death several priests and nuns. It is even said that they ripped open their bellies, and, throwing barley upon the bowels, exposed them to be torn by hogs.

\* Sozom. Hist. L. v. C. xviii. p. 207. (P.)

† See *Lardner*, VIII. p. 436. ‡ Socrat. Hist. L. iii. C. xvi. p. 191. (P.)

§ On this subject *Bletière* justly remarks: "La volonté du prince est toujours mieux exécutée que ses loix. et ce n'est point à un langage de cérémonie qu'on reconnoit sa volonté, mais à certains traits qui partent du fond du cœur." *Julien*, L. iv. p. 289

The same shocking outrage was committed by the inhabitants of Heliopolis, near mount Libanus, upon some nuns of that place, after exposing them naked in the public streets, and subjecting them to all kinds of insults. They were provoked to this particular kind of outrage, because they had been prohibited from prostituting their young women, according to their ancient custom, in the precincts of the temple, before marriage: a rite of Heathenism which is particularly described by Herodotus, as practised in his time, at Babylon. For Constantius had demolished the celebrated temple of Venus in that place, and, building a christian church there, had prohibited the former prostitutions.

At the same city of Heliopolis there was one Cyril, a deacon, who, in the preceding reign, had been particularly active in demolishing the temple. The Heathens, not forgetting this, took advantage of the present times, not only to kill the man, but it is said that they even tore and tasted his liver. The history of former persecutions, and the brutal disposition of the lower class of idolaters, will make this part of the story not incredible, though no regard is due to what is subjoined by the Christian writers, of the judgment of God upon these inhuman murderers, of their teeth falling out, and their tongues corrupting, &c.\* The fact of the murder being true, the superstition of the age would easily add the rest.

At Dorostolum, a city of Thrace, Emilianus was burned alive, on what pretence is not said, by the order of Capitolinus, the prefect. At Arcthusa, in Syria, one Mark, who, in the time of Constantius had shewn much zeal in destroying the heathen temples, and building christian churches with their materials, was seized by the inhabitants of the place, after he had first fled, but afterwards surrendered himself, and though he was an old man, they first scourged him naked, then dragged him through the common shore, and, anointing him with honey and some kind of pickle, suspended him in the sun, to be tormented with wasps and other insects. This they did in order to extort from him money to repair their temples. But finding that, though he was pricked with

\* Seezan, Hist. E. v. Græc. x. p. 101. — P. Theod. E. in. C. vi. vii. Græc. 8. *Quæ* m. "Les idolâtres de Palestine et de Phénicie commencent des cruautés que nous ne voyons point ailleurs, si ce n'est dans les auteurs originaux, si l'on ne savoit d'ailleurs de quel est ce peuple, une populace irritée, chez qui le zèle de religion est devenu une rage, et de quelle est la nature de ce sentiment humain. — J. H. B. environné des Pains, pouvoit ignorer une partie de leurs fureurs — mais il excusoit l'autre, sur le zèle et sur l'antiquité de ceux qui étoient au-delà de ses ordres." *Bletin*, t. 4. p. 255—257

*styles*, as well as tormented with insects, he refused to give any thing for such a purpose, they dismissed him: and, admiring his constancy, many of them were afterwards converted to Christianity.\*

At Merum, in Phrygia, the prefect Amalchius ordered a heathen temple to be cleared, and the image that was in it to be repaired; which gave such offence to three zealous Christians, Macedonius, Theodulus, and Tatian, that they went in the night, and broke the image. When the governor was going to punish the innocent inhabitants of the place, they confessed what they had done, and refusing to sacrifice, (on which their lives would have been spared) they were exposed to all kinds of torture, and at length put upon a gridiron, and roasted before a slow fire; but even in this situation they made light of their torments.†

At the same time Busiris, of Ancyra, in Galatia, who was of the sect of the *Eneratites*, having insulted the Heathens, was seized by the governor of the province, and being placed upon the engine of torture, he held up his own hands, and exposed his sides to be torn; saying, there was no occasion to fasten him, and, without changing his posture, he bore all the pain they could put him to. He was then sent to prison; but being released after the death of Julian, he lived to the reign of Theodosius, and joined the Catholic church.

At the same time Basil, a presbyter of the church of Ancyra, and Euppsychius of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, suffered martyrdom, the latter being a man of an honourable family, and just married. They were among those who had demolished the heathen temple in that place, which gave such extreme offence to Julian, that all who were concerned in it were punished with death or banishment. Basil had been particularly zealous in exhorting the people not to sacrifice, but to adhere to their religion, without regarding any thing that they might be called to suffer. This he did at a time of public sacrifice, and being seized by the president, he bore torture with great constancy before he expired. These facts, as the historian justly observes, shew that there were many martyrs in this reign, though no orders had been given to punish Christians, as such, with death.‡

At Gaza, the heathen inhabitants, who, as has been observed, were much more numerous than the Christians, seized upon Eusebius, Nestabus and Zeno, who in the pre-

\* Theod. Hist. L. iii. C. vii. p. 128. Sozom. Hist. L. v. C. x. p. 191. (P.)

† Soerat. Hist. L. iii. C. xv. p. 190. Ibid. C. xi. p. 196. (P.)

‡ Sozom. Hist. L. v. C. xi. p. 196. (P.) See *Blücher*, L. i. p. 20. Note

feeding reign had demolished their temples, and insulted their religion; and having first scourged and then imprisoned them, they afterwards dragged them along the pavement with their faces sometimes upwards and sometimes downwards, beating them with stones, clubs, and other things. The women ran out of their houses, and some poured boiling water upon them, and others thrust spits, &c. into them; and when they had mangled them in this manner, they took them to a place without the city, where the carcases of beasts were usually thrown, and burning them, mixed their bones with those of camels and asses.

Zeno their cousin, having collected their bones, narrowly escaped being seized, and fled to Authedon, a place on the sea coast, about twenty stadia from Gaza. The heathen inhabitants of this place discovering him, scourged him, and turned him out of the city. He then took refuge in Constantia, the inhabitants of which, as has been observed, were Christians, and there he was concealed till the danger was over. In the reign of Theodosius this Zeno became the bishop of the place, and building a church without the city, he deposited in it the remains of his cousins above-mentioned together with those of Nestor, another of them, who had been seized and scourged at the same time, and left for dead, and who afterwards died of his bruises in the house of Zeno.

For these shocking violences Julian did not even reprove the people of Gaza by a letter, as he had done the citizens of Alexandria. Nay, he displaced the governor of the province, for having seized some of the persons concerned in these outrages, in order to their trial, saying, there was no occasion for that, when they had only revenged themselves upon a few Galileans, for the many injuries they had done to them and their gods.\* Hilario, a monk of Gaza, escaped death by flying first to Sicily, then to Dalmatia, and lastly to Cyprus.†

Lastly, Julian himself not only confiscated the property of Artemus, who had been the military commander in Egypt, in the time of Constantius, and had been active in breaking the images, but ordered him to be beheaded.

\* "C'est au contraire, il pouloit de la qualité de pere commun, et armoit contre, les uns contre les autres. — Lorsque les Chrétiens lui représentèrent les vexations auxquelles ils étoient exposés; 'Avez vous sujet de vous plaindre.' 'Non, mon frere est appelle.' — 'Le contraire,' leur repondoit il, rendant mutiles, par le desespoir, et par ses raileries ameres, les defenses générales de persécuter et de troubler." *Blatier*, *Éccl.* pp. 288, 289.

† See *an. Hist. Eccl.* t. vi. c. 15. s. pp. 121, 193. — *P.*

“ This,” says Theodoret, “ was done by that prince, whose clemency, and freedom from anger, his admirers so much extol.”\*

Julian’s aversion to Christianity was so great, that, in opposition to it, he patronized the Jews, whose religion he no more respected than that of the Christians, but whose enmity to them was equal to his own. There is a letter of his still extant, inscribed *to the community of the Jews*,† “ in which he boasts of his having abolished some taxes which had been laid upon them, and calls their venerable patriarch, Iulus, his brother. He also intreats their prayers for him, that when he shall be returned victorious from the Persian war, he may rebuild the holy city Jerusalem, which for a long time they had earnestly desired to see inhabited: and that he might come and dwell there himself, and together with them offer up prayers to the Supreme Deity.”‡

It is also said that Julian, having inquired of some Jews why they did not sacrifice according to their law, they told him that this could only be done at the temple of Jerusalem, which was destroyed, and that on this account, as also with a view to defeat the predictions of our Saviour, he gave orders for rebuilding their temple at his own expense. With this encouragement it is also said, that the Jews began the work, but that they were prevented by an earthquake, and various miracles, the particulars of which I shall not recite because they are evidently fabulous.§

That Julian once intended to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, is highly probable, from his well-known hatred of Christianity, and the levity of his temper; but that he seriously entered upon a work of this magnitude, and that he actually contributed any thing towards the expense of it, on the eve of a Persian war, is not probable; and his death prevented whatever he might have intended to do after this. As to the Jews, encouraged as they were by the emperor, they would naturally think of the scheme, and would pro-

\* Hist. L. iii. C. xviii. p. 157. — *P.* — *Bletérié*, L. iv. p. 290.

† *Lardner*, Test. IV. p. 47. — *P.* — Works, VIII. p. 377.

‡ *Épîtres de Julien* par Kapp. — Ep. xxv. p. 396. — *Lardner*, VIII. p. 377.

§ *Socrat*, Hist. L. iii. C. xx. p. 196. — *Sozom*, Hist. L. v. C. xxii. p. 213. — *Theod.* L. iii. C. xx. p. 139. — See *Lardner*’s Test. IV. pp. 16, &c. — *P.* — Works, VIII. pp. 376—395. — Dr. L. well observes, p. 392, that “ the truth of history is not at all hurt by our refusing to assent to some things which Christian writers have said of Julian.” — See also *J. Basnage*’s “ Examination of those Miracles which defeated Julian’s Attempt to rebuild the Temple,” (in *Hist. des Juifs*, t. vi. Ch. xviii. xix. quoted and controverted by Warburton, in his *Julian*, B. ii. C. iv. Ed. 2, pp. 174—257; and *Bletérié*, L. v. pp. 387—499.

bably be laying some plan for carrying it into execution; but such an undertaking required more time than the reign of Julian, to do much more than confer about it.

## SECTION VII

### *Of Julian's Expedition against Persia, and his Death*

IN December, A. D. 361, Julian arrived at Constantinople, after the death of Constantius; there he stayed about eight months, and setting out for Antioch, in his way to Persia, he arrived at that city in July, A. D. 362. In the beginning of March following, he proceeded towards Persia, but was slain in battle on the 6th of June. This is the general outline of the history of Julian, after he became emperor. Let us now attend to some particulars of his progress towards the East.

Having collected a large sum of money, chiefly by his exactions upon Christians, he entered upon his expedition, and when he came to Antioch, being apprehensive that the price of provisions would be advanced in consequence of his presence, and that of his army, he very imprudently not only fixed the price of all the necessaries of life, but so low, that the people of the neighbourhood did not think it worth their while to supply the market. What the people of Antioch suffered in consequence of this, provoked them to make very free with their master; and as some of them were of a satirical turn, they ridiculed him, and especially his beard, saying it ought to be shorn, that ropes might be made of it, &c. He wore his beard, as choosing to appear in the character of a philosopher, as well as that of an emperor. And as, out of his great attachment to Heathenism, he had ordered that upon his coins there should be drawn an altar and a bull ready to be sacrificed, they had said that this bull would tear up the whole world.

At such jokes as these the emperor was so irritated, that he threatened to leave the place, and go to Tarsus. But dropping this notion of revenge, and confiding in his own talent as a writer, he returned their jokes upon him, by others upon them, in a piece which he entitled *Misopogon*, a thing certainly unworthy of the dignity of an emperor, especially when engaged in so serious an expedition, as that against the Persians always was to the Romans.\*

\* On Julian's unfavourable reception at Antioch, see the ancient authorities cited by *Bletæus*, L. v. pp. 54—58.

Julian, being arrived at Antioch, was much disappointed and chagrined, to find that the worship of Apollo at Daphne, in the neighbourhood of that city, had been so much neglected. He called the great sun to witness, that the condition in which he found the very image of the god was such as to shew that he had quitted the temple some time before. He had hastened to the place, he says, in expectation of seeing a most splendid worship, victims, libations, dances, &c., but on entering the temple he found neither incense, sacred cake, nor victim. He still thought that these things might be in some place out of the temple, and that they had waited for his coming, as for the high-priest. But when he inquired of the priest of the place, what sacrifices the city prepared for that great festival, he was answered that the city provided nothing of the kind, but that he himself had furnished a goose for the solemnity.\* We may easily imagine what must have been the mortification of Julian, to find the progress that Christians had now made in the extirpation of Heathenism.

Being, however, near this famous temple at Daphne, Julian sent to consult the god about the success of his expedition; but no answer being returned,† and it being supposed that the body of Babylas the martyr (which had been buried in a place adjoining to the oracle) was the cause of this silence,‡ he ordered it to be removed. This order the Christians readily obeyed; and, marching in solemn procession, with a great company of women and children, they conveyed the coffin into the town, singing psalms all the way, and especially those in which the heathen gods and their worshippers were inveighed against; as Ps. xcvi. 7, “Confounded be all they that worship graven images, that boast themselves of idols,” &c.§

The emperor, highly provoked at this insult, as he considered it, the next day ordered the leaders of this procession to be arrested, though Sallust, the prefect of the Prætorian guards, who was a Heathen, endeavoured to persuade him

\* Julian's *Misopogon*. Opera, I. pp. 561, &c. (P.) *Bletérie*, L. v. p. 540.

† According to *Chrysostom*, “he could receive no other answer from Apollo, but that the dead would not suffer him to speak any longer. ‘By which answer we may understand,’ says Sir Isaac Newton, ‘that some Christian was got into the place, where the heathen priests used to speak through a pipe, in delivering their oracles.’ See *Observat. on the Prophecies of Daniel*, Pt. i. p. 210.” *Middleton's Enquiry*. Works, 4to. 1752, I. p. 124.

‡ *Bletérie* says, “Les prêtres du temple, se voyant délaissés de trop près par les Chrétiens, n'osassent plus risquer leurs grandes accoutumées.” *Julian*, L. v. p. 559.

§ *Socrat. Hist.* L. iii. C. xviii. p. 194. *Theod. L. iii. C. x. p. 181.* (P.) *Socr. Fontenelle's Hist. des Orac.* Div. n. C. iv. Ed. 1728, p. 117. *Bletérie*, L. v. p. 556.

not to indulge the Christians with the honour of martyrdom: But seeing the emperor not able to restrain himself, he ordered a young man of the name of Theodorus, who had shewn more zeal in the business than the rest, to be seized; and placing him upon the engine of torture, he had his back and sides torn from morning to evening, and then ordered him into strict custody. The next day Julian being informed of the fortitude of this youth, and how much the Christians in general gloried in it, ordered him to be dismissed, and that no others should be tortured.\*

Another thing which happened at the same time, and which, probably, mortified this heathen emperor still more, was, that the temple of Apollo, the god whose oracle he wished to consult, was consumed by lightning, and the statue of Apollo, which was made of wood, covered with gold, was broken to pieces. Julian, the count of the East, and uncle of the emperor, hearing of this accident in the night, went immediately to Daphne, where the mischief had happened; and seeing the temple in ruins, and the image reduced to ashes, he tortured the guardians of the place, suspecting that, with their connivance, it had been set on fire by some Christians; but no confession of this kind could be extorted from them, as they persisted in saying that the fire came from above, and some country people declared, that they saw it descend from heaven.†

After this, as Julian made no scruple to confiscate any property belonging to christian churches, he ordered all the vessels to be brought out of the large church which Constantine had built in Antioch; and locking the doors, forbade any more assemblies to be held in it. Then, going into the church along with his uncle Julian, and two other attendants, Fœlix and Elpidius, who had abandoned Christianity to oblige their master, the Count is said to have shewn his contempt of the place, by making water upon the table at which the eucharist was administered; and when Euzoüs, the Arian bishop of the church, would have prevented it, he gave him a blow on the head. And as, on this occasion, Fœlix was admiring the richness and the curious workmanship of the vessels, (for they had been provided by Constantine and Constantius at a great expense,) the emperor said, "See with what vessels the son of Mary is served!"‡

Not long after this, Count Julian was seized with

\* This was at the instance of the prefect, Sallust. *Blotier*, l. v. p. 357.

† Theod. Hist. l. iii. c. 81. p. 1. l. *P.* *Blotier*, l. v. p. 361.

‡ *Blotier* attributes this speech to Fœlix. *Julian*, l. v. p. 36 v.

loathsome disease, (his bowels being obstructed, and his excrements voided at his mouth,) which carried him off. Fœlix also died soon after, by bleeding at his mouth, and other parts of his body, and the Christians naturally enough said, that the judgments of God had overtaken them for their profaneness and sacrilege, as they did with respect to Julian himself afterwards.\*

It was while Julian was at Antioch, that what has been related concerning Juventinus and Maximus, Valentinian, and the other confessors among the soldiers, as also concerning Artemius, and Publia, the deaconness, happened, at all which the chagrin of Julian, with respect to Christianity, could not be concealed. This ill humour kept continually increasing, and as he was always disappointed, the mortifications he met with on this head must have rendered him very unhappy.

Before he proceeded on his expedition, besides consulting Apollo of Daphne, Julian sent to consult the oracles of Delos, Delphi, Dodona, and several others, all of which returned favourable answers, encouraging him with promises of victory.† One of the answers, Theodoret says, was in these words: “All of us gods are now preparing to carry the trophies of victory to the wild river;” meaning the Tigris. “I, the warlike Mars, will be their leader; and let those who call Apollo the god of eloquence, and the president of the muses, laugh at these verses if they please. But I, having found out his deceit, lament his fate who is deceived.” I quote this oracle as a specimen of the folly and ambiguity of the heathen oracles in general, and to shew what kind of religion it was that this philosophical emperor preferred to Christianity. The oracles collected by Herodotus, the oldest of the Greek historians, in whose time these things were in the highest credit, are no better than this. Julian, however, believing these oracles, promised himself certain victory, and threatened that, on his return, he would persecute the Galileans, and place the statue of Venus in their churches.‡

When Julian was on his march, a circumstance happened at Berea, which does him some credit, though Theodoret relates it with a different view. One of the officers who was about the emperor’s person, and who was a Christian, seeing his son go over to Heathenism, had banished him

\* Theod. Hist. L. iii. C. xii. xiii. p. 132. (P.) *Bletérie*, L. v. pp. 366 - 369.

† *Bletérie*, L. v. p. 353.

‡ Theod. Hist. L. iii. C. xxi. p. 140. (P.)

from his house, and the young man had taken refuge with the emperor. He invited them both to dine with him; and placing them by each other at table, he very mildly told the father, that he should not endeavour to force his son to become a Christian, since he himself did not compel any of them to adopt his religion. The officer replied, "You speak of your wicked and accursed gods, who prefer lies to the truth." But notwithstanding this offensive language, the emperor only advised him not to rail in that manner, and said to the young man, "Since I cannot persuade your father to take care of you, I will."\*

It must be observed, however, that this good humour appeared at an entertainment, and upon an expedition in which it was greatly his interest to secure the good-will of persons of all descriptions: and notwithstanding all his endeavours to get an army of Heathens, he could not but know what appeared to be the fact immediately after his death, that a great part of that very army which he then commanded, and the ablest of his officers, were Christians.

Julian had acquired the character of a good general, in Gaul, but his conduct in this expedition did not at all correspond to this idea. It is acknowledged by all, that he committed many faults, and though he was sufficiently apprized of them beforehand, he persisted in following his own opinion, till he had no power either to advance or to recede; and after the army had suffered greatly, both from the enemy, and from famine, he received his death from an arrow.

The predictions which were afterwards pretended to have been delivered concerning the approaching death of Julian, I do not think necessary to relate, because such was the credulity of the times, that they would be believed on very slight evidence; but I cannot omit mentioning what Julian is said to have done at Carrhæ a short time before his death, the evidence of which Theodoret says was existing in his time, though I am far from saying that I think it entitled to credit.

Choosing to march through Carrhæ, rather than Edessa, because this place abounded with Christians, he entered into a temple, and after performing some secret rites, he shut and locked the door, leaving a guard of soldiers to see that it was not opened till his return. As he did not return, and a certain emperor succeeded him, it is said that the temple

\* Theod. Hist. l. v. c. xxii. p. 141. P

was opened, and that the body of a woman, who had been sacrificed for the sake of inspecting her liver, was found suspended by the hair of her head, and her hands extended. It is also said, but with still less appearance of truth, that many heads of persons who had been killed for similar purposes, were found at Antioch. Such, says our historian, are the rites of these abominable deities.\*

These stories I do not relate because I think them deserving of credit, but because they are sufficiently similar to other facts, which no person acquainted with heathen antiquity can deny; so that they give us a just idea of the true spirit and tendency of those heathen superstitions, to which this emperor was addicted almost to infatuation. It cannot be denied that the entrails not only of animals, but also of men and women, have been thought proper subjects of inspection in various rites of the heathen religion; a man having been thought a more valuable victim than a beast, and that the surest prognostics were procured by this means.

By means of Christianity, we in this country are happily removed from the actual observance of any thing of this kind, and are therefore more incredulous on the subject than we should otherwise have been; but all history attests that there is no practice so abominable or so cruel, as not to have been authorized by the religion of Julian; and he endeavoured to restore it, without any restriction, as it had been practised for ages before him. In this religion there were many secret rites, at which none but the initiated were present, and which they were under the most solemn obligation not to reveal. These mysteries, as they were called, were not the sublime doctrines of the unity of God, and the vanity of the popular superstition, as Warburton paradoxically maintains, but in some cases, such things as would have shocked the common people too much to have been acquainted with. It is impossible to know, and especially to feel, the value of Christianity, without a knowledge of the heathen religion, which it happily supplanted.

The Heathens were wont, as we have seen, to ascribe all the calamities that befel the empire, to the disuse of their religious rites, and the introduction of Christianity; but in this short reign of Paganism, there were several great public calamities, and among them dreadful earthquakes, one especially at Alexandria, in which the sea first receded far from

\* Theod. Hist. L. iii. C. xxvi. p. 149. (P.) *Bledric*, L. v. pp. 548—550. L. vi. p. 416.

the shore, and then returned with the most destructive inundation, rising higher than the tops of several houses, the anniversary of which, Sozomen says, the people of Alexandria observed in his time, with lamps lighted, through the whole city. There was also a season of great drought during this short reign, followed by a famine, and that by a pestilence.\* To these must be added the destruction of the greater part of a fine army, the death of the emperor himself, and the consequent loss of a great extent of territory, which it was found necessary to abandon in order to make peace.

I am far from considering these things, which are liable to happen at all times, and which actually befel the Roman empire under christian, as well as heathen princes, as Divine judgments, intended to punish the apostacy of Julian; but certainly there was nothing either in the length or the prosperity of the reign of Julian, that could lead the Heathens of that age to draw any favourable conclusion with respect to the power of the gods, to whose rites he was so much attached. If any man deserved well of the heathen gods, it was Julian, who did his utmost to restore their worship, after it had been discountenanced, and almost suppressed, in two preceding long reigns; and yet, though all the promises of these gods respected this life only, it is evident that they could do very little for him. In this view the reign of Julian affords a most instructive lesson, and no doubt many of the Heathens profited by it.

It is usual for Heathens and unbelievers in Christianity, to make great boasts of Julian, and some Christians may have spoken of him with too much abhorrence. It appears to me, from the closest attention that I have been able to give to his conduct, that he had the good qualities of temperance, ingenuity, activity and personal courage, and also that of a wish to acquire the character of greatness and magnanimity; but that his excessive vanity and superstition, must compel us to place him in the class of men of little minds, so that he was really incapable of being what it was his great ambition to be thought to be.

Justice, with a due proportion of clemency, is the most essential quality in a truly great prince; but the levity of Julian's temper made him too precipitate in his decisions, and his partiality to the Heathens prevented his being just to the Christians, who were equally the subjects of his

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. ii. p. 221. P

empire, and therefore equally entitled to his protection. This appeared on his accession to the empire, and his first arrival at the capital. He, no doubt, corrected many abuses; "but justice herself," says Ammianus, as quoted by Mr. Gibbon, "appeared to weep over the fate of Ursulus, the treasurer of the empire, and his blood accused the ingratitude of Julian, whose distress had been seasonably relieved by the intrepid liberality of that honest minister. The rage of the soldiers, whom he had provoked by his indiscretion, was the cause and the excuse of his death; and the emperor, deeply wounded by his own reproaches, and those of the public, offered some consolation to the family of Ursulus, by the restitution of his confiscated fortune."\*

"A devout and sincere attachment to the gods of Athens and Rome, constituted, "as Mr. Gibbon acknowledges, "the ruling passion of Julian. The powers of an enlightened understanding were betrayed and corrupted by the influence of superstitious prejudice; and the phantoms which existed only in the mind of the emperor, had a real and pernicious effect on the government of the empire."† From his antipathy to the Christians "he was sometimes tempted," says Mr. Gibbon, "by the desire of victory, or the shame of a repulse, to violate the laws of prudence, and even of justice," as has been abundantly evident in the preceding history.

It is usual to compare the character of Julian with that of his uncle Constantius, to the great disadvantage of the latter. But the reign of Julian was short, and many bad reigns have begun well. Temptation requires time to operate; and it appears to me highly probable that, in time, the moderation with which Julian affected to govern, but which he often departed from, would have given way to the most wanton cruelty.

Without considering the difference between the religion of Julian and that of Constantius, (though it may be supposed that a wise man would not, in a matter of this consequence, make a foolish choice,) it cannot be denied that Julian's attachment to the heathen philosophers and diviners, was not less than that of Constantius to the Arian bishops; his antipathy to Christianity, was not less than that of his predecessor to Athanasianism; and his cruelty to those

\* Gibbon's Hist. II. p. 345. (P.) C. xxii. *Lardner*, VIII. p. 368.

† Hist. II. p. 356. (P.) C. xxiii.

who were obnoxious to him, far exceeded any thing that he had seen in the preceding reign. Julian's schemes to subvert Christianity, deserve no other title than that of cunning, and have none of the characters of wisdom or generosity. The proceedings of Constantius, though reprehensible, were always open and undisguised. When he was compelled by his brother to receive the man whom he hated the most, he did it in a frank and noble manner; and if Athanasius could have been contented with that advantage, he might have enjoyed his dignity undisturbed. But the hatred of Julian to all his Christian subjects, was bitter and implacable. Whatever virtues, therefore, we allow him, we cannot give him those of justice, greatness, or magnanimity.\*

## SECTION VIII.

### *Of the Ecclesiastical Events of this Reign.*

AFTER the death of George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria, the great body of Christians in that city received Athanasius, who had returned from banishment, with great joy; and in consequence of this event, the Arians were expelled from all the churches, and obliged to hold their assemblies in private houses, and obscure places, choosing Lucius to succeed George.†

At the same time Lucifer, bishop of Sardina, and Eusebius, bishop of Verceil, returned from their place of exile in Thebais, and after considering what they might do to establish the discipline and peace of the church, it was agreed between them, that Lucifer should go to Antioch, and Eusebius to Alexandria: in order that, holding a synod together with Athanasius, they might settle the articles of faith. Lucien, therefore, appointing a deacon to take his place, and promising his assent to whatever they should decree, went to Antioch, where he found the church in a very unsettled state, and which, after residing there some time, and using his best

\* "He was a man of great ingenuity, sobriety of manners, and good-nature, in himself, but his zeal for the religion which he had embraced, was excessive, and degenerated into bigotry and superstition; insomuch that, with all his pretensions to right reason, and all his professions of humility, moderation, tenderness and equity, he has not escaped the just imputation of being a persecutor.

† "A review of the history of this person of shining abilities and high station, may lead us to some serious reflections. Particularly it holds out to us this humbling and useful admonition. *Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall.*" *Lydner*, VIII. p. 428.

‡ *Socrat. Hist. L. iii. C. iv. p. 176. P.* See p. 398.

endeavours to compose matters between Meletius and Paulinus, the two orthodox bishops of the place, he left in no better state than he found it. The particulars are not such as deserve notice at this day; but what was transacted by his friend Eusebius, and Athanasius, at Alexandria, requires our particular attention, as it exhibits another advance in the standard of orthodoxy.

These two bishops having assembled their brethren of that country and the neighbourhood, agreed to assert the divinity of the Holy Spirit, as a person of the same substance with the two other persons of the Trinity; a new doctrine, which we shall find received a firmer establishment in a more general council held afterwards at Constantinople.

Till this time, the Catholics had thought differently on the subject of the Holy Spirit, without any of them incurring the charge of heresy. For some of them considered the *spirit* of God as another term for the *power* of God, and not as a proper *person* distinct from that of the Father, whose spirit it was; any more than the spirit of a man is a person distinct from the man whose spirit it is. And those who did suppose that the Holy Spirit had proper personality, conceived it to have been an intelligent being created by Christ; arguing that, since *all things* that were *made*, were made by him, the Holy Spirit also must have been made by him, and of course be inferior to him.

But the Arians having, no doubt, availed themselves of this doctrine of the inferiority of the Holy Spirit, in favour of that of the inferiority of the Son, the Catholics were led to maintain the contrary; and now for the first time we find the Holy Spirit, by any public act of a council or synod, raised to an equality with the Son, and made to be consubstantial with him, and with the Father. It was not, however, as yet supposed that either of these two persons was *equal* to the Father, though they were held to be *of the same nature* with him; just as, according to the philosophy of the times, a beam of light was supposed to proceed from the substance of the sun, and to be of the same nature with it, yet would not have been said to be equal to it.

It was also in this council declared, that Christ took not only a human body, but also a proper human soul, which they affirmed, and with great truth, citing sufficient authorities for it, to have been the opinion of all the ancients. This was in opposition to the doctrine of Apollinaris, who maintained that the *logos* was united to flesh only, and that

the human soul was not necessary to his person. Whether this opinion of Apollinaris was at this time generally received by the Arians, does not distinctly appear, though they must have been inclined to it, and afterwards did adopt it universally.

A third and more subtle question was discussed in this council, viz. the proper use of the two terms *essence* and *hypostasis*, which had often been used promiscuously, or without any certain definitions, in this controversy. This subject had not been overlooked by Hosius, when he was sent into Egypt by Constantine, to compose the differences which were then first occasioned by the opinions of Arius; though no mention was made of it at the Council of Nice. But because the distinction between these two terms had been much agitated since that time, and there was no prospect that all those who held the doctrine of that council could be brought to agree in the same use of these terms, it was settled at this council, that neither of them should be made use of with respect to God; because the term *essence* is never used in the Scriptures, and the term *hypostasis* only in a borrowed sense.

It was agreed, however, that it was absolutely necessary to make use of these terms in the controversy with the Sabellians, lest, through want of proper terms, it should be thought that there was no difference whatever between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; whereas each of them was God in his own *hypostasis*, or *person*, as it was called in Latin.\*

We have no account of any debate in this synod, so that it is probable that Athanasius and his particular friends made what decrees they pleased, and that the rest assented to them, as Lucifer had promised that he would do, whatever they thought proper to decree, without being present, or hearing any thing that might be alleged for or against any question. To the members of this synod Athanasius read his apology for his flight in the Arian persecution.

Athanasius had been very active and successful, not only in keeping the Christians firm in their profession, but also in converting the Heathens; and the emperor being informed of it, ordered him, as some say, to be banished, but, according to Theodoret, to be put to death.† However, he escaped

\* Secret. Hist. L. iii. C. vii. p. 178. (P.)

† "Avant baptizé quelques femmes de condition, Julien le tyranit de l'Égypte donna des ordres secrets pour lui ôter la vie." *Bléville*, L. iv. p. 363.

in an extraordinary manner. As he was going up the Nile, in order to take refuge in the deserts of Thebais, he was pursued by some persons whom the governor had sent to apprehend him: when, finding that he should certainly be overtaken by them, he ordered the boat that he was in to turn about, and meet his pursuers. They, not suspecting him to be the person who was fleeing from them, only asked him where Athanasius was; and he, with great presence of mind, telling them that he was not far off, they went on, while he returned to Alexandria, where he lay concealed till the death of Julian.\*

After the synod at Alexandria, Eusebins of Verceil followed his friend Lucifer to Antioch, but he there found the Catholics divided among themselves, some adhering to Paulinus, who had been ordained by Lucifer, and others to Meletius. He therefore proceeded through Illyricum to Italy, where he found Hilary arrived before him. These two were the great champions of the Catholic faith against the Arians in the West, and contributed much to the establishment of it.†

As Julian did not interfere in the disputes of the different sects of Christians among themselves, the Arians were completely formed into two parties in this reign.‡ The more moderate of them, (by which I mean those who approached the nearest to the Catholics,) at the head of whom were Macedonius, (from whom they were often called *Macedonians*,) Eleusius, Eustathius, and Sophronius, held several synods, and particularly one at Seleucia, in which they condemned the *Acacians*, as those Arians were called who receded the farthest from the catholic faith, but who were more generally termed *Aëtians*, or *Eunomians*, all these three appellations being derived from the names of the leaders of the party at different times. They rejected the creed of Ariminum, and confirmed that which had been settled at the former synod of Seleucia, and which was the same with that of Antioch.

Being asked on this occasion, in what respects they differed from the other Arians, they gave, according to

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iii. C. xiv. p. 189. Sozom. Hist. L. v. C. xv. p. 200. Theod. Hist. L. ii. C. ix. p. 130. (P.)

† Socrat. Hist. C. ix. x. p. 184. (P.)

‡ For this toleration of the Arians, *Julian* is thus censured by the orthodox *Bletérié*: "Il protégeoit les mécontents, les brouillons, les schismatiques.—En un mot, tous ceux qu'il jugeoit propres à troubler l'église, il les appuioit dans la poursuite de leurs prétentions." *Julien*, L. iv. p. 301.

Socrates, the following account of the matter. The Eastern churches, they said, held that Christ was of the same substance with the Father, and the followers of Aëtius that he was of a different substance, both which doctrines they held to be impious; whereas they maintained a middle opinion, holding that the Son was *like* the Father as to his *hypostasis*. By this means, adds the historian, they acknowledged the novelty of their opinion, as being a departure from two others, which, therefore, must have preceded theirs. This, however, is no necessary consequence.\*

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iii. C. x. p. 189. P. On *Acarinus* and *Macedonius*, see *supra*, pp. 362—367.



## PERIOD X.

FROM THE DEATH OF JULIAN A. D. 362, TO THAT  
OF VALENS, A. D. 379.



### SECTION I.

*The Reign of Jovian, consisting of Seven Months.*

NOTHING could have been better calculated to shew how well established the more serious and thinking part of the Roman empire were in the belief of Christianity, and how little hold the principles of Heathenism had on the minds of men, than the whole of the preceding history of Julian. The great bulk of mankind, being wholly occupied with the things of this life, think little about religion, in any part of the world. They receive what their ancestors delivered down to them, and may be said to believe it; but knowing no certain ground of their faith, they are not prepared to run any risk for it. This, at least, was the case in the Roman empire, with which alone I have at present any concern. Now the history that I am writing, shews that the heathen subjects of the empire were almost wholly of this unthinking class of men, and that the Christians in general were of a very different character, viz. thinking men, well grounded in their faith, and ready to abide by it at all risks.

From the propagation of Christianity to the time of Julian, a period of near three centuries, in which Christianity had been a constant object of attention, Heathenism had produced not more than three or four writers against the new religion, and none who had shewn any readiness to suffer for their principles. Indeed there was nothing in that religion that could produce a spirit of martyrdom. It held out nothing for men to die, or to run any risk for. Julian himself, though in the reign of Constantius he was a Heathen in his heart, and even hated Christianity, long and artfully concealed his religion, and probably would never

have declared himself if he had not been emperor, or had had a good prospect of becoming one. He had the command of the army in Gaul some time before it was discovered that he was no Christian, and then he shewed it with great caution, and only in proportion as he found he could do it with safety.

The Heathens shewed their zeal, only in persecuting the Christians, and not in bearing persecution themselves. Nay, it does not appear that they ever shewed any readiness to hazard so much as to fight for their religion, against those whom they knew to be unfriendly to it. Though the Heathens were, no doubt, a very great majority of the subjects of the Roman empire, at the time that Constantine declared himself a Christian, their zeal was no obstruction to his taking quiet possession of the empire, or to his holding it a longer time than any emperor whatever, after the promulgation of Christianity.

The same was the state of things under the sons of Constantine, a period of about fifty years. Even then the majority of the people could hardly be said to be Christians, and yet the emperors did whatever they pleased, in shutting up their temples, demolishing their idols, preventing their festivals, &c. which would, no doubt, greatly offend their riveted prejudices; but as the persons and the property of the Heathens were not touched, it produced no rebellion, and the religion of the emperors, and the measures which they thought proper to take in order to promote it, were generally acquiesced in.

It is evident from the state in which Julian actually found things on his accession to the empire, that, notwithstanding the edicts of the preceding emperors for that purpose, the rites of the heathen religion had never been discontinued, and that that class of people which we call *the mob*, was entirely with him. Such are always prepared for every species of dissoluteness; and they would, no doubt, greatly enjoy the good eating, drinking, and debauchery, which had always been indulged on occasion of the heathen sacrifices and festivals. But such people as these are neither any credit, nor firm support of a cause. Without leaders of gravity and ability, who can controul their licentiousness? They can do nothing; and without a certainty of success they would not, as I have observed, even seriously fight for their religion; whereas the Christians shewed their attachment to their religion in every method besides that of fighting for it.

This appeared both during the reign, and upon the death of Julian. The Christians, established as they were at the time of his accession, had they been so disposed, were, no doubt, able to have given him much trouble, and probably might have entirely prevented his enjoyment of the empire. But, notwithstanding the great corruption both of their religion and of their morals, Christians had not yet forgotten that they were not to *fight*, but to *die* for their religion; and, to the honour of Christianity, we read of no rebellion, or any thought of rebellion, in the reign of Julian. Had he proceeded to act the part of Diocletian, as in time he probably would have done, (for Diocletian had been emperor nineteen years before he attempted so much as Julian did against Christianity in the first month or two of his reign,) the Christians, I doubt not, would have submitted to it as they did then.

The disposition of Julian with respect to Christians was evidently as hostile as that of any of the persecuting emperors; and if he had been of opinion that he *could* have extirpated them by persecution, he would certainly have attempted it. But though this was sufficiently known at the time, his Christian subjects were as obedient to him, and served him as faithfully as the Heathens. Though he took great pains to clear his army of Christians, he could not do it; and yet, notwithstanding the army was dissatisfied with his conduct as a general, and had much reason to be so, there was no mutiny among them as long as he lived.

That this army was more of a Christian than a Heathen one, was evident from this circumstance, that when Julian died, (a sacrifice to his rashness and misconduct,) the man they looked up to was a Christian, one who was known to have shewn his readiness to resign his employment rather than sacrifice, but whom, in this difficult expedition, it is clear that Julian did not think he could well do without. This was (on the refusal of Sallust) Jovian, one of the tribunes. In the distress in which the army was involved at that time, we may be assured that nothing but an opinion of the greatest military talents could have recommended any man to their choice; nor was the situation of an emperor, in their circumstances, a thing to be coveted. Accordingly, Jovian declined their offer; but he was not able to resist the importunity of the whole army to take the command, notwithstanding his known attachment to Christianity.

As one method of declining their proposal, he told them, that he was a Christian, and that he would not command

an army of Heathens. Had this been a Christian army, and any of the heathen officers had declared that they would not command an army of Christians, no person who has attended to the preceding history would hesitate to say how the negociation would have ended. He would have had no army at all. But what did this army, which Julian had done every thing in his power to train up in the practice of Heathenism? What hold had this religion, whether newly embraced, or not, upon their minds? They with one voice promised that, if he would be their emperor, they would be Christians; adding that they were educated in the Christian faith, the oldest of them under Constantine, and the younger under his son Constantius.\*

I am far from saying that I place any value on such Christians. But the fact, if it be one, is a striking proof of the little sincere attachment which this army had to the heathen religion; and though this was done in the time of their distress, we do not find that they ever repented of it, or declared themselves Heathens, and thought of appointing a heathen emperor, when they were in a place of safety. They did not even join the party of Procopius, whom Julian had left at the head of a body of forces in Syria, and whom it is generally thought, he designed for his successor. Sometime after this, Procopius did set up for the empire, but without success.

On being proclaimed emperor, Jovian made a peace with the Persians on the best terms that he could; and both the army and the empire were convinced that, disgraceful as it was, it was better than could have been reasonably ex-

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iii. C. xxiii. p. 195. Sozom. Hist. l. vi. C. iii. p. 42. Euseb. Hist. L. iv. C. i. p. 147.

As Ammianus Marcellinus does not mention this circumstance, it may be thought not to be sufficiently authentic; but it is such a circumstance, as a heathen writer may well be supposed to have chosen to pass over in silence. That the *auspices* were taken according to the heathen ritual, which Mr. Gibbon alleges against this account of the Christian historian, is no contradiction of it. As these auspices were taken to determine how they should conduct themselves, after the election of Jovian, Mr. Gibbon might as well have adduced it as a proof, that Jovian himself was a Heathen, though Ammianus says, that he was a zealous Christian, *Christianus a legibus studiosus*, L. xxv. p. 880. In the confusion and distress in which the army then was, each party would practise their religious rites, without consulting any one. *Amm. Marcellinus*, L. xxv. p. 818. It is evident, at least, that the army did not reject him on account of his attachment to Christianity; and though, according to Ammianus, he was at first named emperor by a few only, their choice was approved by all the rest, and no other emperor appears to have been thought of while he lived. When he died, Valentinian, a man who had been banished by Julian for his Christian zeal, was chosen by the same army. I do not see, therefore, but that it is very possible they might have chosen Jovian in the manner that is described by the Christian historians. (P.)

pected, in the embarrassing circumstances into which the rashness of Julian had brought them.

The Heathens, no doubt, lamented the death of Julian, and Libanius the sophist wrote an encomium upon him, particularly recommending his work against Christianity. This work, however, from the particular answer to it by Cyril,\* and every thing that we can collect concerning it, appears to have contained nothing new or important, but to have borne marks of the most inveterate prejudice and antipathy, a sure indication of a mind not sufficiently candid to give the arguments in favour of Christianity their proper weight.

Accordingly, it does not appear that this work of Julian, which had more of humour than of argument in it, made a serious impression on any person whatever, notwithstanding the singular advantage of having an emperor for its author. The only seeming advantage which Julian had, arose from the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, which had been embraced by too many of the leading Christians of his time. The manner in which Libanius† speaks of this work sufficiently shews this. “In the long nights of the winter he wrote those books, which shew the folly of that religion which teaches that a man of Palestine was a God, and the son of God.” What Socrates says, in reply to Julian’s ridiculing Christianity for thus deifying a man, shews to what difficulties Christians were reduced by this doctrine. “Heathens,” he says, “cannot understand this doctrine till they believe it;” and for this purpose he quotes Isaiah, ch. vi. : *Unless ye believe, ye will not understand.*‡

We have now another christian emperor, and one who, as far as we can judge, had the prudence and good sense not to tread in the steps of Constantine and his sons, who had favoured that party of Christians to which themselves were attached, and persecuted all the rest, much more than they did the Heathens. The reign of Jovian did not extend to many months : but in that time he might have laid a foundation for his future measures. But though it is very probable that he himself was a *Consubstantialist*, he does not appear to have shewn much more favour, at least, to that party than to the others. He wrote, however, it is said, to Athanasius, who had returned to his see on the death of Julian, together

\* See *Bletérie*, L. v. pp. 383—386. — *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 374—376, 394—411.

† Cited by Socrates, L. iii. C. xxiii. p. 196. See *Lardner*, VIII. p. 375. Note.

‡ Socrat. Hist. L. iii. C. xxiii. p. 203. (P.) See *Lardner*, VIII. p. 397.

with other orthodox bishops who had been banished by Constantius, and for some reason or other had not been restored till they were expressly recalled by this emperor.

In this letter, Theodoret says that Jovian desired Athanasius to send him an accurate account of theology, and that Athanasius, assembling those bishops whom he thought the best informed, wrote to Jovian to persuade him to adhere to the Nicene faith; telling him that it was the faith of all the christian churches, both in the West and in the East, except a very few who were of the Arian opinion, and that to this letter he subjoined a copy of the Nicene Creed.\* But Philostorgius says, that Candidus and Arianus, who were near relations of the emperor, prevented Athanasius (who had gone to Edessa to meet him, and endeavour to get into his good graces) from effecting his purpose; that the emperor heard what was said by both the parties, but, without declaring for either, and referred the discussion of their differences to another time.†

The opinion and the measures of the new emperor were certainly of great consequence to all the different sects, and therefore, on his arrival in the Roman territories, or as soon as it could be supposed that he could be at leisure for any thing of the kind, he would, no doubt, be waited upon, as Socrates says he was, by persons of every communion, hoping to gain him to their party. But I wish to think that one emperor at least might be able to give to them all, such an answer as he did to one of the parties of Arians.

Those who held the opinion which Constantius had always contended for, viz. Basil of Ancyra, Sylvanus of Tarsus, and Sophronius of Pompeiopolis, who had opposed the doctrines of the Anomæans, and maintained that the Son was of a substance *similar* to that of the Father, addressed Jovian, to congratulate him on his accession to the empire, and requested that what had been settled at Ariminum or Seleucia might stand, and every thing else be set aside, as done by factious persons; or that an universal council should be held, and that those who had met in different places in the reign of Constantius should not be regarded. It is also said that this party, who are frequently called *Macedonians*, farther requested, that the other party of Arians, who held that the Son was *dissimilar* to the Father, might be banished, and bishops of their own persuasion put in their places. But

\* Theod. Hist. L. iv. C. ii. m. pp. 148, &c. (P.)

† Philostorgii Hist. L. viii. C. vi. p. 523. (P.)

Jovian returned their address without any other answer than that he disliked contention, but loved those who were friends of concord; and this proper answer, it is said, checked all farther altercation.\*

About the same time a synod was held at Antioch, at which were present Eusebius of Samosata, Pelagius of Laodicea in Syria, Acacius of Cæsarea in Palestine, Ireneo of Gaza, and Athanasius of Ancyra, joined with Meletius of Antioch, who was a Consubstantialist, and presented a paper in which they expressed their approbation of the Nicene Creed, subjoining a copy of it, merely, says Socrates, because they thought the emperor approved of it. It was presented by Meletius, and he found it in a book of Sabinus, entitled, *A Collection of the Acts of Synods*. In this address they say they acknowledge the necessity of some standard of faith, and that they had always adhered to the creed which had been made at Nice, according to the cautious explanation of so unusual a word as that of *consubstantial* by the fathers, viz. that it expresses the Son being *produced without passion*, and his being *like* to the Father, as to his substance; that it is not to be understood in the sense in which the Greeks had used the word *substance*, but had been adopted for the purpose of refuting Arius, who had said that Christ was produced *out of nothing*; an opinion which the Anomæans, who had lately sprung up, had boldly and impudently asserted, to the destruction of the peace of the church.

Notwithstanding the censure of the historian, I have no doubt but that the generality of those who signed this address were very sincere, because Eusebius of Nicomedia, and the other heads of the same party, which prevailed in the reign of Constantius, had no objection to the Nicene Creed, except what arose from the term *consubstantial*, and *this* they made no scruple of receiving when it was explained in this manner. The only person who can, with any probability, be charged with prevaricating on this occasion, was Acacius of Cæsarea, because in the late reign he had joined the Aëtians. Though Meletius admitted the above-mentioned explanation of the term *consubstantial*, Paulinus, the other orthodox bishop of Antioch, condemned it.

The answer which Jovian made to this address was to the same purpose with the former, viz. that he would disturb no person on account of his faith; but that he would love and esteem, above all the rest, those who exerted themselves the

\* Socrat. Hist. l. iii. c. xxv. p. 206. Sozom. Hist. l. vi. c. iv. p. 222. (P.)

most to restore the peace of the church. This was indeed worthy of a great prince.

Themistius the philosopher, in an oration which he wrote on his consulship, highly commends this emperor for these generous sentiments, for giving liberty to all people to worship as they pleased, and repressing all flattery.\*

As this heathen philosopher praised this emperor for his universal toleration on the subject of religion, it does not appear to me to be at all probable that, on his accession to the empire, he ordered, as Socrates says, all the heathen temples to be shut up, so that the heathen priests presently absconded, and that an immediate end was put to all the business of public sacrificing, with which all men had been disgusted in the reign of Julian; though no doubt, whatever of this kind had been done to please Julian would be discontinued. It is probable also that what he says of the heathen philosophers, who had flocked in crowds to the court of Julian, being now glad to change their peculiar habits, and to mix with the crowd, dressed like other people, would be in a great measure true.†

That Jovian gave no orders for the suppression of Heathenism is the more probable, as it was always said that his successor Valens, who persecuted all the Christians who were not of his persuasion, left the Heathens unmolested: and as we do not know that he either made, or altered, any laws relating to that subject, it is probable that, in this respect, he acted as his predecessor had done.

We do not find that any person was, in fact, molested on account of his religion in this reign, and though a short one, it allowed him time sufficient for that purpose. Jovian may therefore be considered as having been sincere in his declarations against persecution, and in favour of universal toleration, and if he had lived longer, he would (whatever had been his own private opinions) it may be hoped, have been such a model for other princes with respect to their conduct in matters of religion, as had not been given by any of his predecessors, and which has been followed by very few who have come after him. But this prince died suddenly, before he reached Constantinople, in a room in which he slept: owing, as was generally thought, either to its having been newly plastered, or which will now be thought much more probable, to the fumes of charcoal that were burning in it.

\* Socrat. Hist. l. iii. c. xxv. p. 298. — P. — *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 123, 4.

† *Ibid.*, c. xxiv. p. 296. — P.

Ammianus Marcellinus says that Jovian was addicted to wine and women; but he says that he was of a benevolent disposition, and of a cheerful temper.\*

## SECTION II.

*From the Accession of Valentinian and Valens, A. D. 364, to the Death of Athanasius, A. D. 371, containing an Account of the Persecution of the Catholics, and the moderate Arians, by Valens.*

JOVIAN being dead, the choice of the army fell upon Valentinian, the same who has been mentioned as thinking himself defiled by the holy water with which he was sprinkled, when he was entering a heathen temple together with Julian, † and whom he had banished on pretence of some deficiency in his military duty, but who had been recalled by Jovian, and had met him at Nice. At the request of the soldiers, Valentinian made Valens, his brother, partner with him in the empire, and assigned to him the government of the East, while he took upon himself that of the West.

It happened that the two brothers were of different opinions on the subject of the Trinity, Valentinian adhering to the Nicene Creed, but without persecuting the Arians; while Valens, who had been brought up under Eudoxius, was not only a strenuous assertor of the Arian doctrine, and in its more obnoxious form, viz. that of the *Anomæans*, but an unrelenting persecutor both of the *Consubstantialists* and of the other Arians.

The state of parties, and the situation of the principal bishops at the accession of these two emperors, are thus stated by Socrates. Liberius was bishop of Rome. At Alexandria, Athanasius was at the head of the *Consubstantialists*, and Lucius of the Arians. At Antioch, Euzoius was at the head of the Arians, and Paulinus and Meletius at the head of separate congregations of *Consubstantialists*. Cyril was at Jerusalem, and Eudoxius the Arian at Constantinople, though the *Consubstantialists* had a small congregation in the city, and the Macedonians, who had separated from the *Acacians* at Seleucia, had churches of their own in several cities. ‡

Valens soon discovered his attachment to the Arian party

\* L. xxv. p. 330. (P.) † See *supra*, pp. 407, 408.

‡ Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. i. p. 213. Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. vi. p. 225. (P.)

by banishing Meletius from Antioch, though he suffered Paulinus to remain there on account of his high character for piety : but he banished all others who refused to communicate with Euzoius.

The bishops of the Macedonian party having applied to the emperor to call a council, he thinking that they did not differ from Eudoxius and Acacius, consented to it; and accordingly they met at Lampsacum, seven years after the holding of the synod at Seleucia; and there they confirmed the creed which had been composed at Antioch, and which had again been subscribed at Seleucia, condemning that of Ariminum, to which the historian says they had themselves consented. They also passed a sentence of deposition against the followers of Acacius and Eudoxius, the latter not having been able to prevent this decision, on account of the civil war with Procopius, which was then depending, and which prevented the emperor from attending to ecclesiastical matters;\* so that Eleusius of Cyzium had the upper hand, maintaining the opinion of Macedonius, which, he says, had made but little progress before; but the confirmation of it in this synod he took to be the reason why it afterwards prevailed so much on the borders of the Hellespont.

Thus the doctrine of the Son being *like* the Father was for the present established. But Eudoxius having given his representation of the matter to the emperor, he presently annulled all the decrees of the council, and, sending the members of it into banishment, he gave their churches to the friends of Eudoxius.†

Valens, having suppressed the rebellion of Procopius, shewed his resentment at what had been done at Lampsacum, by compelling Eleusius, who had distinguished himself the most in favour of the Macedonian party, to assent to the doctrine of the *Anomæans*, which Socrates calls that of the *Arians*: and indeed properly enough, as their doctrine of the Son being *unlike* the Father, was the natural and necessary consequence of what had been asserted by Arius, that the Son was *made out of nothing*, while the Father alone was uncreated.

Eleusius, however, soon repented of his compliance, and

\* Procopius was a formidable rival of Valens, a considerable time. He was received with great joy at Constantinople, but was at length deserted by his chief supporters, on account of his grievous exactions, for which the government of Valens had been complained of. — *P.*

† Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. iv. p. 216. — Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. vii. p. 227. — *P.*

in the presence of his congregation acknowledged himself unworthy of being their bishop, as he had denied the faith. But they, greatly respecting his virtues, insisted upon his continuing to be their pastor, which he would have done, but that Eudoxius, having ordained Eunomius the bishop of Cyzicum, he was obliged, by the orders of the emperor, to quit the place, and his followers built a small church for themselves without the city. Eunomius, however, not being able to recommend himself to his congregation, was obliged to leave the place, and to take refuge with Eudoxius at Constantinople.\*

About this time, which was the twelfth year after the destruction of Nicomedia by an earthquake, there was another, which destroyed the city of Nice, and after this a third, which overthrew part of the city of Germa on the Hellespont, preceded by a fall of large hailstones at Constantinople. These were interpreted by the orthodox party as divine judgments for the favour that was shewn to the Arians. But, says Socrates, neither Eudoxius nor Valens regarded them, but still went on banishing the orthodox bishops. Two, however, by particular providence, escaped, viz. Basil of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, and Gregory of Nazianzum, in its neighbourhood, the former of whom obtained the surname of *the great*, and the latter that of *theologus*, or the divine; and we shall find them acting an extraordinary part, in carrying the system of orthodoxy higher than any persons had done before them.†

The vanity of all attempts to controul men's opinions by force, or to engage them, by any kind of intrigue, to subscribe what they do not really believe, appeared remarkably in the general, and to all appearance, the cordial reception which was given to the Nicene faith, in the Western empire, presently after the death of Constantius, who had taken so much pains to change it, and who had so far succeeded, as to compel all the bishops to subscribe the creed which had been presented at Ariminum. Now, however, owing in part to the influence of Valentinian, who was a *Consubstantialist*, and in part to their former prejudices, (to which the sentiments of their masters, Constantine and Constans, the sons of Constantine the Great, as well as those of the father himself, no doubt contributed,) the Western bishops in general, and Liberius himself at their head, were the avowed advocates of the Nicene faith. And the see of Rome, being

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. vi.—viii. pp. 217, &c. (P.) † Ibid. C. xi. p. 223. (P.)

considered as at the head of the whole Western church, which was in concord with it, was now as much as in any preceding time, the common refuge of the distressed in any part of the empire. A bishop in communion with this great see, the influence of which, without any formal agreement, or act of council, was so overbearing, could not be despised or trampled upon, whatever his neighbours might think of him.

So tyrannical were the proceedings of Valens, and those of the high *Arian* or *Anomæan* party, that the *Consubstantialists* were almost exterminated in all the Eastern empire; and that in Thrace, Bythinia, the country about the Hellespont, and even the provinces more to the East, they had neither churches nor clergy. The Macedonians also, or the more moderate Arians, were dreadfully harassed. In this situation, alarmed at the prospect of the evils impending over them, they conferred together by messengers, (for they could not meet in a body,) and agreed to have recourse to Valentinian, and the bishop of Rome, and to join their communion, rather than that of Valens and Eudoxius. Agreeing, therefore, with the *Consubstantialists*, they sent a solemn embassy to Italy, consisting of Eustathius, bishop of Sebastia, who had been so often deposed, Sylvanus of Tarsus, and Theophilus of Castabala, in Cilicia, to inform Valentinian and the Pope (as by anticipation we may now call the bishop of Rome) that they wished to be in communion with them, since they did not differ in respect to articles of faith, but held the *Consubstantial* doctrine.

The emperor not being at Rome, these ambassadors were received by Liberius alone, and at first he expressed much distrust of them, as having been of the *Arian* party. But they assured him that they had repented, that they reprobated the doctrine of the *Anomæans*, and were really *Consubstantialists* as well as himself, confessing that the Son did not differ in any respect from the Father; and indeed that by the phrase of *the like substance*, they never had any meaning different from that which had been annexed to the phrase of *the same substance*. This verbal acknowledgment, though it was as express as words could make it, not removing all suspicion, these ambassadors gave Liberius a copy of their faith, in writing, in which they expressed in the fullest manner their consent to the *Homoousian* doctrine, and subjoined the *Nicene Creed* itself.

Upon this, Liberius deferred no longer to receive them into his communion. He, moreover, wrote in their favour to

the principal bishops in the East, acquainting them with the satisfaction which they had given him. He also took this opportunity of assuring them that, though the bishops of the West had been deceived at Ariminum, they had all abjured the blasphemies of that council, and were unanimous in their adherence to the faith of Nice. He exhorts them to do the same that *they* had done, if they had been drawn aside by force or artifice; and he concludes with declaring, that they should hold no communion with any who would not now reject all the blasphemies of Arius, together with those of the Sabellians, and other heretics.

With these letters the ambassadors went to Sicily; and having called a synod of the bishops of that island, and made profession of the Nicene faith before them, they received letters from them similar to those of Liberius. With all these letters they returned to their friends in the East, whom they found assembled at Tyanis, and among them were Eusebius of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, Athanasius of Ancyra, Pelagius of Laodicea, Zeno of Tyre, Paul of Emesa, Gregory of Nazianzum, and many others, who had met at Antioch, in the time of Jovian, and had there assented to the Nicene Creed.

Being greatly encouraged by the reception which their ambassadors had met with in the West, they proposed to call a council at Tarsus, and there make profession of the Nicene faith; but they were prevented by Eudoxius, whose influence with Valens was so great, that he was more exasperated against those bishops than ever.\*

They were also farther discouraged by what passed at an assembly of thirty-four bishops of Asia Proper. For though these approved the zeal of their brethren to unite the churches, they objected to the term *consubstantial*, and declared their preference of the creed of Antioch and Seleucia, as having been composed by Lucian the Martyr, and approved by their ancestors.

The emperor, not content with forbidding the council at Tarsus, ordered that all the bishops who had been deposed in the time of Constantius, and had not recovered the possession of their sees, in the time of Julian, should be expelled from their churches.

The magistrates of Egypt, having received this order, endeavoured to carry it into execution with respect to Athanasius, notwithstanding the objection of his numerous friends,

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xii. p. 223. Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. x. p. 230. (P.

who alleged that he did not come under the description of the bishops who were to be banished, as having been recalled by Constantius himself, and afterwards expelled by Julian.

Though the governor seemed to acquiesce in this plea, Athanasius, probably fearing the consequences of a tumult, withdrew of his own accord and concealed himself. Afterwards the emperor himself wrote to him to invite him to return, probably fearing the resentment of his brother, on his account. The Arians themselves also thought that he might be the cause of more disturbance out of his see, than in it.

It was while Athanasius was bishop of Alexandria, that Christianity was introduced into Ethiopia, where it seemed to have been extinct, notwithstanding the conversion of the eunuch of Candace, queen of that country, by Philip. Meropius, a philosopher of Tyre, a Greek by nation and religion, had taken a passage in a ship, on the Red Sea, and had with him two boys, Frumentius and Œdesius. Their vessel was cast away on the coast of Abyssinia, when Meropius was slain in defending himself against the natives, but the two boys were carried to Axum, where the court then was. Both of them being much admired, Œdesius was set over the king's household, and Frumentius, being entrusted with the education of the king's sons, impressed their minds in favour of Christianity: and, going to Egypt, was ordained bishop of Abyssinia by Athanasius, then bishop of Alexandria. By this means the nation in general was by degrees converted to Christianity.\*

The case of Athanasius himself excepted, Sozomen says that this persecution of Valens very much resembled that of the Heathens, all being banished who would not receive the creed of the emperor.†

Eudoxius dying after he had held the see of Constantinople eleven years, according to Sozomen, and nineteen, according to Socrates, Demophilus was chosen by the Arians to succeed him. But the advocates for the Nicene faith took this opportunity of ordaining Evagrius, by means of Eustathius, who had formerly been of Antioch, but, having been recalled from banishment by Jovian, lived at Constantinople. A great disturbance beginning to be occasioned by this event, the emperor banished both Evagrius and Eustathius.‡

The Arians, encouraged by this success, were more than

\* Bruce's Travels, p. 568. — P. Geddes, *Ch. Hist. of Ethiopia*, 1699, p. 19.

† Sozom. Hist. l. vi. c. xii. p. 233. — Socrat. Hist. l. iv. c. xiii. p. 229. — P.

‡ Ibid. c. xiii. p. 245. — Ibid. c. xiv. p. 239. (P.)

ever insolent and outrageous, which compelled the other party to have recourse to the justice and clemency of the emperor. But instead of obtaining any redress of their grievances, they are said to have been treated with a degree of treachery and cruelty so shocking to humanity as not to be at all credible. Eighty of the catholic clergy, the chief of whom were Urbanus, Theodorus and Menedemus, waiting upon the emperor at Nicomedia, to beg his protection against the violence of the Arians, he was very much provoked, but without expressing much anger at the time, he is said to have given orders to Modestus the prefect, to put them all to death. This inhuman order the officer is said to have executed by sending these eighty bishops to sea, as if they were going into banishment, and privately ordering the crew to set the ship on fire, and then leave it. In consequence of this, the ship was burned, and they all perished miserably. A famine which after this event afflicted all Phrygia was thought to be a punishment for this cruelty and injustice.\* That the bishops were sent to banishment, and that they perished by the ship taking fire, is not improbable; but that this was done by order of the emperor, or of the prefect, is highly improbable. As to the famine, in order to its being a proper judgment in this case, it ought to have affected the emperor and his Arian subjects only.

Not satisfied with this act of cruelty, the emperor, being at Antioch, is said to have persecuted the *Consubstantialists* more than ever, putting many of them to death in various ways, and some by throwing them into the river.† It must be considered, however, that all the historians are *Consubstantialists*, that no names of any persons so put to death are mentioned, and that Sozomen contents himself with saying that such things were *said* to have been done.‡

The people of Edessa, according to our historians, were saved from a general massacre by the intrepidity of a woman. The emperor desiring to see a church in that city, and being offended at the crowds of people who were assembled on that occasion, ordered them all to be put to death, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrances of the military officer, merely because they were *Consubstantialists*. The order, however, being given, many persons refrained from going to the place. But very early in the morning a woman with a child in her arms presented herself; and when the officer would have dismissed her, by reminding her of his orders, she said she

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xvi. p. 331. Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xiv. p. 236. (P.)

† Ibid. C. xvii. p. 232. (P.)

‡ Hist. L. vi. C. xviii. p. 240. (P.)

had heard of them, and that she had come on purpose to suffer martyrdom, and likewise to give her child that honour. The emperor, it is said, seeing the resolution of the people, recalled his order.\* But it is not at all credible that any such order was ever given.

While Athanasius lived, the emperor did not think proper to disturb the *Consubstantialists* in Egypt. But he dying † in the second consulship of Gratius, and the first of Probus, ‡ and Peter, another *Consubstantialist*, being chosen in his place, the Arians took that opportunity of seizing upon the churches of Egypt. The emperor being then at Antioch, Euzoius, the bishop of that city, prevailed upon him to send him thither, in order to place Lucius, § an Arian, in the see of Alexandria; and this he effected by a military force, imprisoning and dispersing the orthodox clergy; the commanding officer having orders to banish all those whom Lucius should think proper to be so disposed of. Some of them, it is said, were tortured. Peter himself, having made his escape, fled to Damasus, bishop of Rome. ¶

The monks of Egypt being zealous advocates for the Nicene faith, Lucius, not being able to gain them over by persuasion, employed force; ¶ and taking with him the military commander of Egypt, advanced against them into the desert. But though he exercised great cruelties upon them, it was without any effect; so that at length he desisted from his attempts. At this time there were several monks of great eminence in Egypt, particularly the two Macarii, Pambo, Heraclides, and other disciples of Anthony, Ammon, Didymus, Arsenius, Isidorus and Ammonius; of all of whom many idle things are related by Socrates and others, not worth repeating after them.\*\* A great champion of the Trinitarians at this time in Egypt, was Didymus, a blind man,

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xviii. p. 253. Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xviii. p. 246. (P.)

† Notwithstanding the figure that Athanasius makes in the ecclesiastical history of his age, and his long continuance on the public theatre of action, we have no data by which to form a just idea of his character in private life. All we know of him is, that he was a steady champion for the Nicene faith, and must have been possessed of a considerable degree of firmness and resolution, though he does not appear to have had the spirit of martyrdom that Mr. Gibbon ascribes to him. (P.)

‡ "In 373, when he had been bishop 40 years." — *Lardner*, IV. p. 281.

§ See *Lardner*, IV. p. 132.

¶ Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xx. xxii. pp. 234, &c. Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xix. p. 241. (P.)

• Fleury says he made a law to compel them to bear arms. It is probable that many persons chose this idle mode of life, who had considerable property, and endeavoured by this means to exempt themselves from an obligation to civil offices. (P.)

\*\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xxiii. xxiv. p. 236. Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xx. p. 237. (P.)

but who excelled in all branches of science. He wrote three books on the subject of the Trinity.\*

According to Sozomen, a great majority of the Egyptians at this time adhered to the Nicene faith. It was also preached among the *Osdroeni*, and in Cappadocia, by Basil of Cæsarea and Gregory of Nazianzum. At Antioch he acknowledges that the Arians were the most numerous, though the Catholics were not few. The Scythians, he also says, retained the orthodox faith, which was professed by Vetricano, their bishop. The emperor, paying him a visit, would have persuaded him to communicate with the Arians; but finding that the people would not communicate even with himself, he ordered the bishop to be banished. Seeing, however, that the people took this very ill, he revoked his order. This was at Tomi, on the Euxine Sea, the capital of the Scythians, who were at that time an useful barrier between the empire and the more northern barbarians. †

This violent persecution of the orthodox, Socrates says, was in a great measure repressed by the remonstrances of Themistius, ‡ a heathen philosopher, who addressed the emperor on the subject, at Antioch; representing to him, that the difference of opinion among Christians was not near so great as among the Greeks, whose sects amounted in all to more than three hundred, and that the Deity was pleased with this diversity of opinion, because it appeared, by this very circumstance, that his majesty was so great, that it was difficult to attain to the knowledge of it. Upon this it is said that Valens refrained from persecuting any to death, and contented himself with banishing those who were obnoxious to him. § This is the first instance we have met with of any heathen philosopher pleading the cause of toleration: but it was only when the Heathens stood in need of toleration themselves, and when the experience of some centuries had opened their eyes with respect to the folly of persecution. Valens's engagement in the Gothic war is said to have been another reason of his ceasing to persecute the orthodox. Having left Antioch to go upon this expedition, the orthodox party in Alexandria, encouraged by the letters which Peter had brought from Damasus, the bishop of Rome, expelled Lucius, the Arian bishop, and put Peter in his place. ||

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xxv. p. 244. (P.) Lardner, IV. pp. 420—422.

† Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxx. p. 244. (P.) ‡ See *supra*, p. 436.

§ Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xxxii. p. 255. (P.) Lardner, VIII. pp. 431, 432.

|| Ibid. C. xxxv. xxxvii. pp. 257, 258. (P.)

What makes it almost certain that the account of the persecution of the orthodox by Valens is much exaggerated by the historians, and that he never proceeded farther than the banishment of the bishops who were obnoxious to him, (which had been done in the former reigns,) is, that the bishops who composed the council at Constantinople in the time of Theodosius say nothing of the punishment of death, or of any thing besides banishment, in their synodical letter, in which they enumerate all their hardships under Valens. One Stephen, indeed, is said to have been stoned to death after his return from banishment. But this was probably by the mob, and after the death of Valens.\*

### SECTION III

*Of Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nazianzum, with the Change that took place in the Doctrine of the Trinity, chiefly by their Means.*

WHILE, after the death of Athanasius, Didymus, as I have observed, was opposing the Arians in Egypt, the catholic faith had two most able defenders in Asia Minor, viz. Basil of Casarea, and Gregory of Nazianzum, of whom, because they carried the doctrine of the Trinity to its present height, and also greatly distinguished themselves by their eloquence and their writings, I shall give a more particular account.

When they were young men they both studied at Athens under the celebrated sophists Himerius and Prohaeresius, where they were acquainted with Julian, and after this they attended the lectures of Labanius at Antioch. Being there famous for their eloquence, they were by some advised to teach it, and by others to apply to the bar. But despising these arts, they both betook themselves to the monastic life, which was in great vogue at that time, and considered as the highest pitch of religion. They also particularly applied themselves to the study of the works of Origen; and whereas the writings of this great man had been thought to favour the Arians, they took great pains to shew that he had been misunderstood, and that his works were really favourable to the contrary doctrine.

Basil was first promoted to the rank of deacon by Meletius at Antioch. Afterwards he went to Casarea, in Cappadocia,

\* Theod. Hist. l. v. c. ix. p. 203. P.

the place of his nativity, where Eusebius was then bishop; but differing with him, and the other clergy of the place, he retired to the monks of Pontus. This flight of Basil greatly encouraged the Arian party; but afterwards returning to Casarea, he was reconciled to Eusebius, and succeeded to the bishopric, after his death. In the meantime, his friend Gregory strenuously supported the Trinitarian doctrine at Nazianzum, where his father had been bishop, and afterwards at Constantinople, where himself was bishop for some time, in the reign of Theodosius.

Valens, hearing how much these two men exerted themselves in opposing his favourite system, sent for Basil to Antioch, and, after some discourse on the subject, it is said, threatened him with death, if he did not embrace *his* faith. Basil was so far from being intimidated by this threatening, that, in an insulting manner, (which seems to shew that he did not think he had much to fear,) he challenged the emperor to put him to death. But the historian says, that when he was under confinement, a son of the emperor was taken very ill, and that the father, being alarmed, sent for Basil, and told him that if his was the right faith the child would be restored to his prayers. Basil replied, that if the emperor believed as he himself did, and the church should by that means be united, he could assure him that his child would recover. But presently after he died, and the emperor dismissed the bishop. This story having so much the air of fable, it is probable that the whole history of Basil being threatened with death, and of his behaviour on that occasion, with which it is connected, is entitled to very little credit.

Basil had two brothers, Peter and Gregory, of whom the former was devoted to a monastic life; but Gregory even rivalled his brother in eloquence, and was afterwards bishop of Nissa, in Cappadocia.\*

It is in the writings of these three champions of orthodoxy, that we first find the high Trinitarian doctrine of the *full equality* of the Son to the Father. The Anti-Nicene fathers had uniformly maintained the great inferiority of the Son to the Father, as they did that of a beam of light to the sun. The Nicene fathers went no farther than to assert that the Son was of the *same substance* with the Father, and nothing was said of his *equality* to him till this period, though it is

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xxvi. p. 245. Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xv.—xvii. pp. 287, &c. (P.) Lardner, IV. pp. 400, 406, 407, 415, 416.

no difficult consequence from the idea of his being of the same substance, and therefore *truly God*. Because, if he be of the same nature with the Father, and is as truly God as he is, he cannot want any attribute of proper divinity, and therefore must be *in all respects* equal to the Father.

This doctrine, however, would have staggered the Christian world, and especially the common people, who were well grounded in the doctrine of the *unity of God*, too much to have been borne with any patience, in an earlier period. Besides, it is only by giving much attention to any proposition that all its consequences are distinctly perceived. But all the real consequences of any acknowledged doctrine must at length be admitted: and whatever repugnance there may be in the minds of any persons to the admission of them, it must give way in time. Now controversy, more than any thing else, draws the attention of men to their principles, and to all the consequences of them: and this it was which at length produced the doctrine of the Trinity, as it was maintained by these three writers, and as it has been explained and defended from their time to the present, though it did not immediately obtain the sanction of any council.

Athanasius does not appear to have advanced any farther than the doctrine of *consubstantiality*, and that of God having *always been a Father*; but that the Son is *equal* to the Father does not, I believe, occur in any of his writings, not even the latest of them. This doctrine, however, is expressed in a great variety of phrases, and is strenuously contended for in the writings of the three champions of orthodoxy who are now before us. “The Son,” says Basil, “is all that the Father is.”\* “There is,” says Gregory of Nissa, “a whole Father in a whole Son, and a whole Son in a whole Father.”†

“Whoever,” says Gregory of Nazianzum, “maintains that any of the three persons is inferior to the other, overturns the whole Trinity.”‡

The orthodox having now three persons in the Trinity, each of them possessed of all the attributes of divinity, found themselves more embarrassed than ever with the objection to their doctrine, as making *more Gods than one*. For unquestionably, if the Father, Son and Spirit, separately considered, be each of them possessed of all divine attributes, in the same degree, there must be *three* complete Gods, and *not one* only. The orthodox writers of this age, therefore

\* *De Trinitate*, Op. I. p. 380. P.

† Op. II. p. 903. P.

‡ *Quæst. xx.* Op. p. 778. P.

were obliged to have recourse to new illustrations of their doctrine, unknown to their predecessors, which may be seen in my *History of early Opinions concerning Christ*.

But being obliged to acknowledge that all their illustrations were deficient, they had another resource, equally unknown in former ages, which was, that the doctrine of the Trinity was a *mystery*, absolutely inexplicable by reason, and to be received by *faith* only; and whatever is incomprehensible to us in nature was now first adduced as an argument for acquiescing in the unintelligible mysteries of theology. The authority of the church was also brought in, to silence all cavils from the quarter of impertinent reasoning. "There are mysteries," says Gregory of Nazianzum, "in all nature, and in the mind of man. If you, who inquire concerning those things, do not understand yourself; if you do not understand those things which you can examine with your senses, how can you understand God, what and how great he is? This is great folly."\*

"Some tenets in the church," says Basil, "we receive as preserved in writing, but some are of apostolical tradition, handed down as *mysteries*; both of which have the same force with respect to piety; and no one will question them who is at all acquainted with the laws of the church."†

Austin also, who wrote in a later period, pleaded for implicit faith, on the authority of the prophet Isaiah. "It was, therefore," he says, "rationally said by the prophet (ch. vi.), *Unless ye believe, ye will not understand*; where he doubtless distinguishes these two things, and advises that we first *believe*, that we may be able to *understand* what we believe; so that it seems reasonable that faith should precede reason."‡ It is obvious, however, to conclude, that it could only be some great absurdity in doctrine that could lead men to have recourse to so manifest an absurdity in the mode of defending it. For nothing can be more palpably so, than to require that a *belief* of any proposition should precede, and not follow (as in all cases it necessarily must) the *understanding* of it. What would any person, unacquainted with Greek, say to my requiring his assent to any proposition expressed in that language? Would he not reply, that he could not possibly tell whether my proposition was true or false, till he understood the meaning of it? Now it is evident that phrases and propositions, in a known language, which convey

\* *Orat.* xxix. Op. p. 403. (P.) † *De Sp. S. C.* xxvii. Op. II. p. 570. (P.)

‡ *Epist.* ccxxii. *Opera*, II. p. 800. (P.)

no distinct ideas, are the very same in this respect as it they had been the words of an unknown tongue.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *Transactions in the West till the Death of Valentinian,* A. D. 375.

HAVING seen what was doing in the East, let us now turn our eyes towards the West, where Valentinian governed. And it is something remarkable, that as, after the death of Constantine, the Western emperors were of the Nicene faith, when the emperor of the East was an Arian, so it happened now. But Valentinian, though a zealous Christian, and of a religious persuasion different from that of his brother, did not interfere as he did in ecclesiastical matters; but for the most part very wisely left the bishops to conduct their own affairs as they pleased.\*

The West was not, however, altogether free from the effects of clerical ambition and faction; for upon the death of Liberius, A. D. 356, Damasus being chosen in his place, Ursinus, a deacon, got himself elected, and formed a separate congregation; and some of the citizens taking part with one of the bishops, and some with the other, and both sides having recourse to arms, several persons were killed. But at length the prefect of the city put an end to the sedition by fixing Damasus in the see.†

The only bishop of eminence in the West, who espoused the Arian doctrine at this time, was Auxentius of Milan, who, with a few others, held that the Son was of a nature different from that of the Father, being Eumonians. Some attempts were also made to promote this doctrine in Gaul, on which account a synod was assembled at Rome, consisting of bishops from many provinces, when Auxentius and his party were excommunicated, the Nicene faith was confirmed, and the creed of Ariminum condemned.‡

Auxentius being deposed, the synod requested that the emperor himself would appoint a person to succeed him.

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xv. p. 245. P. Eardner quotes the testimony of *Gregory*, T. iv. C. i. p. 217, and, on the authority of *Ammianus* and *Zosimus*, commends Valentinian's moderation towards Hellenists, as well as Christians. *Lodov.* VIII. p. 479, IX. pp. 96, 97.

† Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxv. p. 250. Soer. H. Hist. L. iv. C. xxix. p. 250. P. *Lodov.* IV. p. 397. See also a quotation from *Ann. Marcell.* and Remarks, VIII. pp. 473, 474.

‡ Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxiii. p. 246. P. See *supra*, p. 357.

But he very handsomely declined it, and some of the people wishing for an Arian bishop, and others an orthodox one, and a dangerous sedition being apprehended in consequence of it, Ambrose, who was then the civil governor of the province, went into the church to prevent it; and being a man universally esteemed, they all with one voice cried that *he* should be their bishop, though he had not even been baptized.

He was very far from being desirous of this office, and for some time resolutely refused it; but the emperor approving of the nomination, he consented, and was presently baptized and ordained. Ambrose was a man of singular integrity and courage; and this he soon shewed, by reprovng some of the magistrates in the presence of the emperor himself, who was so far from being offended, that when it was complained of, he said he knew what he himself had to expect from his freedom.\*

Ambrose was a strenuous defender of the Nicene faith, and appears in his writings to have carried the doctrine of the Trinity as high in the West, as Basil and the two Gregories did in the East. The famous Austin was his disciple, and adopted his sentiments in most things.

Valentinian hearing of the controversies in the East, and with the concurrence of his brother, (and, as Theodoret says, before he became an Arian, a change which he ascribes to the influence of his wife and of Eudoxius,†) called a council in Illyricum; and the bishops assembled there, confirmed the Nicene faith. No new creed was composed upon this occasion, but a synodical letter was addressed to the bishops of Asia, Phrygia, Carophrygia, and Pacatiana, which had probably been the principal seat of the controversies which occasioned the calling of the synod. In this letter the members of the council, without entering into any argument, strongly assert the necessity of holding the Holy Spirit to be consubstantial with the Father and the Son, and anathematize those who maintained the contrary doctrine. They moreover say, that the kingdom of heaven is prepared for those who believed as they did in this respect, but nothing is here said of the *equality* of the persons in the consubstantial Trinity.

Both the emperors joined in enforcing the decrees of this council, which was held on the confines of both their territories, and they both joined in a letter to the bishops of

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xxx. p. 252. Theod. L. iv. C. vii. p. 158. Seezer Hist. L. vi. C. xxiv. p. 248. (P.) Lardner, IV. pp. 447, 448

† L. iv. C. xii. p. 168. (P.)

the same provinces to which the synodical epistle had been sent. In this letter the emperors reasoned much more on the subject than the bishops had done, particularly explaining the sense in which the term *consubstantial* was to be understood; and it is observable that, as they explain it, it might be applied to any *creature*, so that both the parties might agree in the same subscription; but it would only be in words, nothing in reality being decided by it.\*

While the council was assembled at Illyricum, they received an epistle from Damasus, bishop of Rome, and the other bishops who had deposed Auxentius, exhorting them to continue firm in the Nicene faith, and expressing their hope that this would soon become universal, as those who had been deceived at Arminum had presently after repented of their compliance.†

Ecclesiastical history says nothing farther concerning Valentinian, who died suddenly, A. D. 375, after giving vent to his indignation in a speech to the Sarmatian ambassadors,‡ in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the fourteenth of his reign. He was succeeded by his two sons, Gratian, whom he had raised to the purple, A. D. 367, and Valentinian the Second, whom the army proclaimed emperor immediately on his death, though he was then but a child.§

## SECTION V.

*From the Death of Valentinian, A. D. 375, to that of Valens, A. D. 379, containing an Account of the Controversy concerning the Holy Spirit, the Opinions of Apollinaris, and the Divinations of some Heathen Philosophers, with a View to find who should be the next Emperor.*

TOWARDS the end of the reign of Valens, who survived his brother four years, the controversy about the Holy Spirit, which had begun some time before, was much agitated, almost as much as that concerning the consubstantiality of the Son had ever been, and on this question both the sects of the Arians, viz. those who held that the

\* Theod. Hist. Eccl. C. viii. c. 13, pp. 153, 8. — P.

† Sozom. Hist. E. vi. C. xxiii. p. 246. — P.

‡ He appears to have thought himself insulted by their low rank and mean station, and in his passion to have burst a blood vessel. “Ces envieux étoient de vilaine extraction, pauvres et mal vêtus. Le jeune empereur, croyant qu’on lui faisoit insultes par leur état, entra en fureur, et leur parla avec tant d’emportement qu’il se cassa une veine.” Noye, *Dict. V.* 1704.

§ Sozom. Hist. E. vi. C. xxxi. p. 278. — P.

Son was of a substance *like*, and those who held that it was *unlike* that of the Father, agreed. For both considered the Holy Spirit either as the spirit or power of God the Father, and therefore not a *person* distinct from him, or an intelligent being below the Son in rank, and of a substance unlike that of the Father. But all those who thought the Son to be of the same substance with the Father, thought the same with respect to the Holy Spirit. This, however, had not always been the case, as is evident with respect to Eusebius the historian, who held that the Holy Spirit was created by the Son, which was also the opinion of all, before the council of Nice, who thought the Holy Spirit to be a person.

The great defenders of the *consubstantiality* of the Holy Spirit after Athanasius, who appeared in this controversy a little before his death, were Apollinaris of Laodicea, Basil of Cæsarea, and Gregory of Nazianzum. But according to Sozomen, the letter which I have mentioned from the bishop of Rome contributed very much to establish the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Spirit in the East.\* It is evident, however, from the letters of Basil, that the doctrine of the divinity of the Spirit, was very unpopular in all his dioceses, and in the East in general; and that there were many more Unitarians in those countries than any historians speak of.

About this time the two Apollinarises, father and son, the same who had distinguished themselves by their ingenious compositions to supply the place of those Greek classics, which Julian did not permit to be read by Christians, † distinguished themselves much more by a schism which they made in the church, maintaining, as I have mentioned before, that the *logos* supplied the place of a human soul in the person of Christ. Apollinaris the father, was originally of Egypt, and first opened a school of grammar at Berytus; afterwards he removed to Laodicea, where he married, and had this son, who became a teacher of rhetoric in the same city. Being very intimate with Epiphanius, the heathen sophist, and not listening to the admonitions of George, the bishop of the place, to refrain from his society, they were excommunicated by him; and upon this they began to form separate congregations, teaching the doctrine above-mentioned. ‡

\* Sozom. Hist. l. vi. c. xxii. p. 245. (P.) † See *supra*, pp. 310, 311.

‡ Socrat. Hist. l. ii. c. xlvi. p. 163. Apollinaris denied that there was any soul in Christ, separate from his divinity; but did not say he had no soul, possessed of the inferior faculties. He accused the orthodox of making two persons in Christ, and he maintained that the divinity and the flesh made but one nature. *La Cæc. Eccl. Ind.* p. 26. (P.) *Mosheim*, Cent. iv. P. ii. Ch. v. Sect. xvii.

Sozomen adds, that both the father and the son had given offence to the bishops of Laodicea, who were Arians, by their attachment to Athanasius, and that they greatly promoted the interest of their party by the numerous hymns which they composed to be sung by persons of all conditions, and in all situations. Their opinion was much opposed at this time by Damasus, bishop of Rome, and also by Peter, bishop of Alexandria. But we shall find more public notice taken of it hereafter.\*

According to Gregory of Nazianzum, Apollinaris held two other doctrines, which gave great offence to the orthodox. One of them was, that the *flesh* which the *logos* assumed, was what he brought from heaven, and that he did not take it of the Virgin. The other opinion was, that *the logos suffered* along with the body to which it was united, that it even *died*, and was raised from the dead by the power of the Father, an opinion which we shall find adopted by Eutyches, in a later period. In support of the former of these opinions, Apollinaris alleged the words of the evangelist: "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but—the Son of man which is in heaven," John iii. 13; and also that of the apostle Paul, "the second man is the Lord from heaven,"† 1 Cor. xv. 47. But as no controversial work of Apollinaris is now extant, it is not easy to say what his opinions really were, or how he defended them.

About this time the followers of Eunomius, if not Eunomius himself, greatly alarmed the Christian world by their innovation, as it was called, in the administration of baptism. For, in imitation of the Paulians, or Unitarians, they no longer baptized *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*, but *into the death of Christ*, probably founding their practice on the words of the apostle Paul. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" Romans vi. 3; and thinking that the common form of baptism favoured the doctrine of the Trinity. This practice gave the greater alarm, and, according to Sozomen, it was agreed by all parties, (though I should doubt this with respect to the Eunomians,) that they who had not been regularly baptized themselves, could not confer a regular baptism on others.

The Eunomians, this writer acknowledges, were, in general, men of abilities, and excelled in argumentation. He also owns that many persons were pleased with the gravity and

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxv. p. 220. P.

† Ibid. C. xxvii. p. 234. P.

severity of discipline in the Eunomian churches. They would have drawn many more, he says, into their opinions, if they had not been opposed by Basil, and Gregory of Nazianzum, and if the emperor Theodosius had not banished them from the more agreeable parts of the Roman empire, to those that were desert and barbarous.\*

Sozomen says, that, besides these causes of the suppression of the Eunomian and Apollinarian heresies, the monks contributed not a little to it; for that all those of Syria, Cappadocia, and the neighbouring provinces, adhered closely to the Nicene faith. Otherwise, he says, that all the provinces of the East, from Cilicia to Phœnicia, would have embraced the Apollinarian heresy; and that the Eunomians were in possession of all the country from Cilicia and Mount Taurus to Constantinople. But the common people, holding the monks in great veneration, were easily brought to think that the doctrines which they espoused were right. In like manner the Egyptians ceased to be Arians, by adopting the opinions of the monks in their country. Our author then proceeds to give a long account of the more celebrated monks who flourished at this time in Egypt, Thebais, Scetis, Nitria, Rhinocorura, Palestine, Syria, Cœlesyria, Edessa, Galatia, Cappadocia, and other countries.†

Many of the Goths were brought to embrace Christianity in the reign of Valens, in consequence of his assisting one party of them against the other;‡ the prince whose part he took, embracing the religion of his protector, and recommending it to his subjects. For this reason also these Christian Goths were Arians, Valens himself being so. The other branch of the Goths, however, continuing Heathens, persecuted the Christians, so that many of the Gothic Arians became martyrs.§

Many of the Saracens are also said to have embraced Christianity in the latter part of the reign of Valens; and Mavia, a queen among them, agreed to make peace with the Romans, whose territories she had greatly ravaged, on

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxvi. p. 253. (P.) Lardner refers to "a law of Theodosius still extant, dated 383, prohibiting all heretics, particularly Eunomians, Arians and Macedonians, to hold any assemblies of worship, in public places or private houses." This law appears to have been procured by *Amphilochus*, bishop of Iconium. See his *Stratagem* to excite the emperor against *Heretics*, and the remarks of *Lardner*, IV. pp. 414, 415

† Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxvii. xxviii. pp. 55, &c. (P.)

‡ Their first conversion is attributed to *Audius*. See *Lardner*, IV. p. 80;

§ *Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xxxiii. p. 155.* (P.)

condition that one Moses, a monk, might be permitted to go and settle as a bishop among her subjects.\*

The heathen philosophers were much mortified at the firm establishment which Christianity had acquired in the reign of Valens, and earnestly wished for another heathen emperor, such as Julian had been. And as the Heathens in general, the philosophers themselves by no means excepted, had great faith in divination, a number of them, assembled towards the close of this reign, to find out by this art who was to succeed Valens.

For this purpose, as the process is described by Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen historian, “a tripod made of laurel was artificially prepared, and consecrated with certain prescribed secret charms and invocations. It was then placed in the middle of a room, perfumed with Arabian spices. The cask, made of different metals, upon which it was set, had upon its utmost brim the twenty-four letters of the alphabet, neatly engraved, and set at due distances from each other. Then a person clothed in linen vestments, with linen socks upon his feet, and a suitable covering upon his head, came in with laurel branches in his hands; and after performing some mystic charms, shook a ring, suspended from a rod, about the edge of the dish, which, jumping up and down, rested on certain letters of the alphabet: the priest at the same time uttering certain heroic verses, in answer to the question which had been proposed. The letters which the ring pointed out in this case were four, viz. ΘΕΟΔ, which being put together, composed these two syllables, *Theod*, on which one who stood by presently cried out, that the oracle plainly intended *Theodoros*. Nor did they make any farther inquiries, being all well satisfied that he was the person intended.”†

This Theodoros was a military officer in the emperor's household, and a man of excellent character, though a Heathen, and an earnest wish that he should succeed Valens, with an expectation that the divulging of this oracle, at a proper time, would greatly facilitate their scheme, would probably lead them to impose upon themselves, as well as others, by this mode of inquiry.

These proceedings were, no doubt, intended to be kept secret, but Valens was informed of them; and perhaps not

\* See the Hist. Eccl. C. xxx. § 1. p. 17. Theod. Hist. Eccl. C. xxiii. p. 182. *CP.*  
 † The Works of C. W. p. 117. *P.* Works, IX. p. 117. See Vol. IV. p. 117.

being himself free from superstition, as thinking that demons might sometimes be permitted to do very extraordinary things, (which indeed was the general opinion of Christians in this age,) he considered it as an act of treason; and being exceedingly alarmed and enraged, he put to death all who had been concerned in this business; and not only them, but, as the christian historians say, many other persons in different parts of the empire, whose names began with the four unfortunate letters THEOD, as Theodotus, Theodosius, Theodulus, &c. But as the heathen historians make no mention of a thing so unreasonable and cruel, Dr. Lardner thinks it undeserving of any credit.

Theodorus, whom the Heathens wished to have for an emperor, and whom Ammianus Marcellinus acknowledges to have formed some designs upon the empire (though it does not appear that he had any concern in this business, and probably had no other wish than that of succeeding Valens after his death) was beheaded. Of the diviners themselves, Simonides, a young man, was burned alive, and the philosopher Maximus, the great friend of Julian,\* who had been consulted upon the occasion, and who had disapproved of their proceedings, as an hazardous thing, was beheaded, because he had given no information of it.† But what the orthodox historians, probably to blacken the character of Valens, farther add, of his putting to death all the heathen philosophers throughout the empire, and even those who, without being philosophers, had chosen to wear their peculiar habit, (so that from this time we hear little or nothing of them,) is in the highest degree improbable; and the heathen writers say nothing of any such persecution.‡

As to the deficiency of heathen philosophers, which is not denied, it may be accounted for from the decline of Heathenism in general, and the prevalence of Christianity. I would observe, however, on this occasion, that a much more grievous persecution than this of the Heathens by Valens, even admitting the most exaggerated account of it, was so far from extinguishing, that it even materially contributed to the spread of Christianity. Besides, as it is not said that any of these philosophers had the option of escaping death by becoming Christians, they cannot be said to have died proper martyrs to their religion, though they should have been put to death in consequence of having made profession of it.

\* See *supra*, pp. 395, 396.

† See Lardner, IX. pp. 124, 129, 130.

‡ Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxxv. p. 269. Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xix. p. 25. P.) Lardner, IX. pp. 118—122.

At length Valens died as suddenly as his brother, and much more miserably, A. D. 379. For, after being defeated in a battle with the Barbarians in Thrace, he was burnt, along with his attendants, in a village to which he had fled, and to which the enemy had set fire. He had lived fifty years, and had reigned thirteen along with his brother, and three more after his death.\*

Of both these princes, Mr. Gibbon says, that “they invariably retained in the purple the chaste and temperate simplicity which had adorned their private life; and under their reign the pleasures of a court never cost the people a blush or a sigh. They gradually reformed many of the abuses of the times of Constantius, judiciously adopted and improved the designs of Julian and his successor, and displayed a style and spirit of legislation which might inspire posterity with the most favourable opinion of their character and government.” Though it is said that they were in a great measure illiterate themselves, they were great promoters of learning. They planned a course of instructions for every city in the empire, and the academies of Rome and Constantinople were considerably extensive, especially the latter.† With respect to ability, it is acknowledged that Valens was greatly inferior to his brother.

## SECTION VI.

### *State of Sects in this Period.*

VALENS was the only proper Arian emperor, as he adopted the tenets of Eunomius, at least always favoured that party, and though it is not credible that he should have been guilty of the horrid cruelties which the orthodox historians lay to his charge, the measures which he took to extirpate what he thought to be heresy, though the same with those which had been adopted by Constantine and Constantius before him, were far from being justifiable. With respect to the Heathens, Theodoret says, that he had allowed them to worship in their own way, and waged war with none but these who held the apostolical (by which he meant the *Homoousian*) doctrine. During the whole time of that reign the fire burned upon the altars, the Gentiles offered incense and sacrifices to their idols, and held their feasts publicly in the market

\* Socrat. Hist. l. iv. c. xxxviii. p. 250. Sozom. Hist. l. vi. c. xl. p. 278. (P.)

† Gibbon's Hist. II. p. 592. (P.)

places. They who were initiated in the rites of Bacchus, ran about covered with goat-skins, and tearing dogs to pieces, with that wild fury, which was usual in the solemnities of that god.\*

In this reign both the Arian and the Trinitarian doctrine were much advanced, the Arians in general being Euno-  
mians, maintained that Christ was properly *a creature*, and of a substance *unlike* that of the Father; and the Trinitarians avowing, what they had not done before, that all the three persons in the Trinity were not only *consubstantial*, but likewise in all respects perfectly *equal*, though this doctrine had not as yet acquired the sanction of any council.

### 1. *Of the Unitarians.*

No mention is made by historians of any Unitarians in this reign. But after being so numerous not long before, it cannot be supposed that no such Christians existed. It is probable that some of them, under the name of Paulians, or Photinians, held separate assemblies, and that a great number of the common people, who were Unitarians, continued in communion with the Catholic church, in which no subscription was required of them, and no trinitarian liturgies were then used. The casual mention of them by Athanasius and others, is a sufficient proof of their existence, and that they were numerous, especially among the lower people, whose behaviour was pacific, and who were beneath the notice of solemn councils. It is of them that Athanasius speaks, when he says, "It grieves those who stand up for the holy faith, that *the multitude*, and especially persons of low understanding, should be infected with those blasphemies. Things that are sublime and difficult," (in which light the pre-existence and divinity of Christ were always exhibited by the ancients,) "are not to be apprehended except by faith, and ignorant people must fall if they cannot be persuaded to rest in faith, and avoid curious questions."†

We see by this how much even the learned of that age were puzzled with such questions as plain people sometimes put to them about their new and mysterious doctrines, and that they could not reconcile them to what is so plainly taught, and so copiously and forcibly inculcated in the Scrip-

\* Lardner's Test. IV. p. 368. (*P.* Works, IX. p. 129.)

† *De Incarnatione Verbi contra Paulum Samosatensem*, Opera, I. p. 591. (*P.*)

ters, concerning one God, and the subordination of Christ, and of all other prophets, to him.

We shall even see in a period much later than this, viz. the reign of Justinian, that Faecundus calls the Unitarians the *Graeci fidelium*, the *common herd* of believers, of whom he says, that they were *imperfect* in the faith, resembling the whole christian church in the time of our Saviour, and till the publication of the gospel of John, when it was acknowledged that Christians in general had not attained to more knowledge than that of the humanity of Christ, and were ignorant of his pre-existence and divinity. It may also be collected from Epiphanius, that the Unitarians, under more denominations than one, were numerous in his time, as they must have been, in Africa, when Austin wrote; since many things that he advances are pointed against them.

## 2. *Of the Novatians.*

Valens, in his zeal for Arianism, banished from Constantinople the Novatians, who were *Consubstantialists*, and shut up their churches. He even banished their bishop Agelius, a man, says Socrates, of an apostolical character, who usually walked barefoot, and in a simple tunic. But his anger was softened by Marcian, a man of religion and address, who had instructed two daughters of Valens in the art of grammar, and who had held a considerable rank in the army near the emperor's person, (having probably been of the prætorian guards,) but was now a presbyter among the Novatians. Out of respect to him, the churches of the Novatians were again opened.\*

The Novatians about this time made a change with respect to the celebration of Easter, for which it is not easy to assign a reason: since both Novatus himself, and all his followers, in every part of the world, had not before made any difficulty of keeping this festival as it had been settled by the council of Nice. But now, in a synod held at Pagus, in Phrygia, some of the Novatians agreed to celebrate this festival at the same time with the Jews. This, Socrates says, he had from an old man, the son of a presbyter, and who, together with his father, were present at this synod, though neither Agelius, the Novatian bishop of Constantinople, nor Maximus of

\* Socrat. Hist. Liv. C. iv. p. 271. — B. — "Agelius was soon recalled from his banishment, and officiated in the churches as before." — *Laudner*, III. p. 227.

Nice, nor those of Nicomedia or Cottuæum, were there; and these were generally considered as at the head of the sect. On account of this synod, however, the Novatians were afterwards divided into two parties.\*

### 5. *Of the Donatists.*

It is not a little extraordinary that such people as the Catholics represent the Donatists to have been, viz. more like Heathens than Christians, indeed more like brutes than men; should, notwithstanding all measures, whether of gentleness or rigour, continue to increase, so that, without the aid of civil power, the Catholics were not able to make head against them.

Valentinian was no more sparing of *wholesome severity*, as in that age it was deemed to be, than any of his predecessors. One law of his is particularly levelled against them and the Manichæans, by which they were declared to be incapable of receiving any public bounty, of making a testament, or disposing of their goods; some were made incapable of inheriting the estates of their fathers, and the slave of a Donatist forsaking his master, obtained his liberty.

Yet under all these discouragements it is acknowledged that the Donatists were exceedingly numerous, and divided among themselves, and their cruelties to each other are said not to have fallen short of those which they exercised against the Catholics; Donatus, bishop of Bagnia was, in a tumult, thrown into a well, and in another place Marculus was thrown from a high rock. These, and other shocking particulars, are collected by Dr. Long from the writings of Austin.†

In this reign, the Donatists held a council at Carthage, where Parmenian was their bishop, in which Ticonius, who was at the head of a party which separated from Donatus, and which this council did not put an end to, attended. This Ticonius had given offence to the other Donatists by his writings, by which he endeavoured to extend the sect of the Donatists beyond the limits of Africa. About this time, also, Parmenian wrote against the Catholics, and was answered by Optatus, bishop of Milevi, who gives an account of the origin of the Donatists, and describes their customs. But the enormities which he attributes to them are not

\* Socrat. Hist. L. iv. C. xxviii. p. 249. Sozom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxix. p. 249. (P.)

† *History of the Donatists*, pp. 77, &c. (P.)

credible with respect to any people professing Christianity. Parmenian had proposed a public conference with the catholic bishops, but he afterwards declined it, alleging that he should be defiled by communication with the impure.\*

## SECTION VII.

### *Of the Contest for the See of Rome after the Death of Liberius, and the Corruption of the Clergy in the City.*

IN this period of my history, we have the first remarkable instance of the degree to which the wealth and power annexed to the see of Rome could inflame the passions of men.

On the death of Liberius, A. D. 366, there appeared to be two parties in the church of Rome, the remains, it is said, of those who had favoured *him*, and of those who had taken the part of Felix. One of these declared for Damasus, who was a native of Spain, and had been attached to Liberius, and the other for Ursicinus. The partisans of each meeting in different churches, they were both elected at the same time, and the people entered so warmly into the contest, that Inventius the prefect thought it necessary to interpose; and taking the part of Damasus, he sent Ursicinus and his principal adherents into exile. His friends, however, rescued him from the prefect, and conducted him to a church, which the party of Damasus soon beset; and forcing the doors, unroofing the building, and setting fire to it, one hundred and thirty persons of both sexes were killed.† Ursicinus and his adherents fled, and thus Damasus was established by force.

The partisans of Ursicinus, however, did not cease importuning Valentinian till they obtained an order for their return to the city. But, by the influence of Damasus, he was once more expelled, and with many of his adherents he went into Gaul. Others of his friends took possession of a church in the city, and held it till it was taken from them by the civil power.‡

Annius Marcellinus, who gives an account of this sedition, observes, with respect to it, that when he considers the splendour of the city, he does not wonder that the possession of this see was so eagerly contended for: as the suc-

\* *Le Sieur Hist. A. D. 368. cP*  
*Histoire des Papes. I. pp. 225, &c. P*

† *Liberius, VIII. p. 478*

cessful candidates were sure to be enriched by the oblations of the matrons; they rode richly habited in chariots, and the luxury of their tables exceeded that of kings. "They would be truly happy," he adds, "if, despising the magnificence of the city, they would imitate some of the bishops of provincial towns, whose temperance in eating and drinking, plainness of apparel, and looking above the world, recommended them to the Deity and his true worshippers."\* This is an excellent remark of a Heathen, who thus bears testimony to the virtues of those bishops who were removed from such temptations as the opulence of Rome and the greater sees afforded. And in general even those greater bishops were men of virtue.

We see traces of the corruption of some of the Christian clergy of this period, in a law of Valentinian, by which those who were called *Continentes*, were forbidden to enter the houses of widows and minors, or to take any thing of them, or in any manner whatever from women to whom they should have attached themselves on pretence of religion. By this law whatever was given them in this way was to be confiscated. Jerome mentions this law, confessing its reasonableness, but lamenting the occasion of it.

"It is a shame," he says, "that players, charioteers and courtesans, should not be excluded from inheritances, and the clergy and monks should be prohibited to receive them, and this not by persecutors, but by Christian princes. I do not," says he, "complain of the law, but grieve that there should have been occasion for it. The cautery is proper, but how came the wound which required it?"†

## SECTION VIII.

### *Of the Council of Laodicea.*

It was in this reign, probably A. D. 364, that the council of Laodicea, consisting of about thirty bishops, was held; a council famous for fixing the present canon of the books of scripture, as well as many things relating to church discipline.

It appears by the acts of this council, that many persons still continued to celebrate Easter on the fourteenth day of the month, according to the custom of the Jews with respect to their passover. Also the agapes, or love-feasts,

\* *Amm. Mar.* L. xxvii. p. 562. (*P.*) *Laodicea*, VIII. p. 474.  
*Epist. ii. ad Nepotianum*, Opera, I. p. 11. (*P.*)

had continued in some churches, as they were now expressly forbidden.

In this council the invocation of angels is condemned as idolatrous. This custom, which is alluded to by the apostle Paul, Col. ii. 18. Theodoret says, continued long in Phrygia and Pisidia; and that therefore it was condemned at this synod which was held in Phrygia. Still, however, he says, there may be seen in that country, and others contiguous to it, oratories of St. Michael. These people, he says, worshipped in this manner out of humility, thinking the Supreme Being to be inaccessible to them, but that he might be rendered propitious by the mediation of angels.\* Little was it then foreseen to what a height this species of idolatry would arise in a later period, and that the number of christian *mediators with God* would in time exceed that of the heathen deities; that this worship would be carried on in the same forms, and would engross almost all the devotion of the Christian world. We have had examples of persons requesting the prayers of martyrs, when they should be in heaven, but those requests were made to them before they died. As yet we have had no example of any address made to them after they were dead. About this time, however, it was the custom of some women to offer cakes on certain days to the Virgin Mary, from which they got the name of *Collyridians*—a custom which Epiphanius says prevailed in Arabia, but originated in Thrace, and the upper Scythia. But this custom did not extend far, and was generally condemned.†

By the decrees of this council, we perceive that the fast which preceded the celebration of Easter was much extended, so as to take in three weeks. So strict was this fast, that by this council the administration of the eucharist was forbidden on it, as also the anniversaries of the martyrs, except on Saturdays and Sundays, because these days were always considered as festivals. For the same reason marriages were also forbidden during this fast.‡

## SECTION IX.

### *Of the Writers in the Time of Valens.*

ONE of the principal writers, as well as actors, in ecclesiastical matters, from the time of Constantine to that of

\* Theodoret, III. p. 375. P.

† Epiphanius, Op. 1. p. 1057. (P.) "Letter from Rome," *Medellina*, III. p. 87.

‡ Theodoret, *loc. cit.* p. 843. P.

Valens, (for in these later periods I do not propose to notice them all), was Athanasius of Alexandria, whose history has been given already. He was by no means what we should now call a *writer by profession*, since almost every thing that he wrote was on some particular occasion, either in defence of himself, or against his adversaries. Consequently almost all his writings relate to the Arian controversy. We have, however, besides his writings of this class, a work of his against the Gentiles, and the life of the monk Anthony, to whom he was particularly attached; a work which, like other lives of monks, bears the marks of great credulity and superstition; as may be seen in the particular account I have given of it, pp. 377—382.

There were several hermits of the name of Macarius, and it is uncertain to which of them we owe the tracts which are come down to us under this name; but there are fifty homilies addressed to the monks, and rules for a monastic life.

Of Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, much hath been said in the preceding history. He was a strenuous defender of the doctrine of the Trinity, on which subject we have a large treatise of his in twelve books. He also wrote a treatise on synods, and some commentaries on the Scriptures. Besides these, we have some fragments of his, collected by another person, and which are of great use with respect to the history of those times.

Notwithstanding the numerous writings of Apollinaris, nothing now remains of his besides a translation of the Psalms into verse. The works relating to his particular opinions are all lost; and on this occasion Du Pin says, that the Catholics had so great a horror of the books of heretics, that they would not preserve even those of them which did not relate to their heresy, and which might have been useful to the church.

Cyril of Jerusalem has left a number of catechetical, and also of mystigogical lectures, the former addressed to catechumens, and the other to persons lately baptized.

We have a Greek translation of the works of Ephrem the Syrian, a deacon of Edessa, consisting of moral discourses. They were so much admired as to be read in many churches after the Scriptures. This writer was born in the reign of Constantine. He very early embraced the monastic life, and was much esteemed by Basil.

Basil, surnamed *The Great*, of whom an account was given in the preceding history, was one of the most con-

siderable writers of his age. We have of his, a treatise of the work of the six days, thirty-one homilies on other subjects; two books on baptism, a commentary on the first sixteen chapters of Isaiah, five books against Eunomius, and of monastic constitutions. But the most curious and valuable of his remains are about four hundred *letters*, which give us a clear idea of the history of his times; on which account Du Pin proposed to give a translation of them into French. It is, indeed, very much to be wished, that there were translations of them into the modern languages.

About 370, Basil composed forms of prayer, and rules for the decent performance of the communion service, which, by the consent of the bishop, Eusebius, were used at Cæsarea in Cappadocia.\*

His brother, Gregory of Nyssa, wrote on subjects similar to those of Basil, viz. several pieces relating to the doctrine of the Trinity against Eunomius, on the work of the six days, and many miscellaneous tracts.

Gregory of Nazianzum, the great friend of Basil, distinguished himself so much by his writings on the subject of the Trinity, that he got the name of *Theologus*. He also wrote against Julian, by which means many fragments of the work of that emperor against Christianity have been preserved, and several miscellaneous tracts.

Epiphanius, a native of Palestine, and bishop of Salamis, in Crete, of whom some mention will be made in the next reign, in which he died at a very advanced age, was the author of many works, the principal of which are still extant, viz. *Anchoratus*, or a discourse concerning faith, against the Macedonians, on weights and measures, a large work against heresies, and an epitome of the same. Of these he enumerates not less than eighty. Though he is in many respects a credulous writer, this work of his is, upon the whole, very valuable.

To this period I must refer the spurious work which bears the title of *Apostolical Constitutions*, drawn up in the name of the apostles, who are represented as employing Clement for their secretary. They are first quoted by Epiphanius, and are of use to give us an idea of the opinions, but still more of the practices, which prevailed in what was called the Catholic church of this period.†

\* Bingham's *Origin of Ecclesiastical Laws*, 1708, p. 696. — *P. See Luber's*, IV. pp. 323.

## PERIOD XI.

FROM THE DEATH OF VALENS, A. D. 378. TO THAT  
OF THEODOSIUS, A. D. 395.



## SECTION I.

*Of the State of Things at the Accession of Theodosius, and his Determination in Favour of what was deemed the Orthodox Faith.*

WE are now come to a reign very similar to that of Constantine, viz. that of an emperor who, like him, was successful in war, zealous for the Christian religion, and who employed all his power to support what he held to be the orthodox part of it. It is to his interference that we owe the present general reception of the doctrine of the Trinity, and its having ever since made a part of all the civil establishments of Christianity.\* Socrates, in his introduction to the history of his reign, says, that from the time that his emperors became Christians, ecclesiastical matters were regulated by them, and that the greatest councils decided according to their pleasure.† This, indeed, is sufficiently evident from the plainest facts, without the explicit confession of this honest historian.

The emperor that I refer to was *Theodosius*, descended from an honourable family in Spain, (like Constantine, often surnamed *The Great*,) who, upon the death of Valens, was raised to the empire by Gratian, from the opinion that he had of his merit, without regard to any other consideration; an opinion which his able and upright conduct abundantly

\* "The Catholics had suffered many hardships in the reign of Valens; afterwards, in the reigns of Gratian and Theodosius, they came into power. If they had more truth on their side than the Arians, I wish they had also excelled in moderation and equity; which are shining virtues, highly becoming weak and suffering creatures one toward another, perfectly consistent with a zeal for truth, and less suited to promote its interests than force and violence." *Lectures IV. on the History of the Christian Church.*

† Socrat. Hist. L. v. p. 263. (P.) See *supra*, p. 257.

justified. To him Gratian assigned the government of the East, while he retained that of the West, or rather a part of it, viz. Britain, Gaul and Spain; leaving to his younger brother, Valentinian II., the government of Italy, Illyricum and Africa.

Before the arrival of Theodosius, the care of the whole empire devolved upon Gratian, who to his other virtues added those of a very good commander. Had Valens waited till he had come to his assistance, when he was hastening to join him, it is probable that he would not have met with his unhappy fate, which threw Constantinople itself into the greatest consternation. The Goths, however, were repulsed by a vigorous effort of the inhabitants, aided by the Saracens under the queen Mavia mentioned before: and Gratian soon after concluded a peace with them.

At the same time Gratian restored to their sees all the bishops who had been banished by Valens, and gave liberty to all sects of Christians; but as he excepted the Manicheans, Photinians, and Eunomians, none but the Novatians, and the more moderate Arians, at that time commonly called Macedonians, could derive any benefit from the toleration.\*

At this time the Arians, i. e. the Eunomians, were in possession of all the churches of the East, except that of Jerusalem, which was under Cyril. But the Macedonians, after their agreement with Liberius and the Consubstantialists, to which they had been driven by the persecution of the Eunomians, held no separate assemblies till after this law of Gratian. Taking advantage of it, some of them recovered the sees from which they had been expelled; and forming a synod at Antioch, they decreed that the Son was not of *the same*, but only of *like* substance with the Father. Many of their body, however, thinking this to be a factious measure, quitted their communion, and adhered to that of the Consubstantialists. Some of the bishops, who were at liberty by this law of Gratian to return to their sees, were not solicitous about it; but, having experienced the mischiefs of dissension, were content to live in communion with the churches which they had formerly governed.†

In consequence of this law of Gratian, Meletius returned to Antioch, and Paulinus being then very old, it was, after much contention, agreed, that the whole church should be

\* See the Hist. Eccl. Græc. tom. 2. p. 59. Social. Hist. L. v. C. 1. p. 261. — *F*  
 † See the Hist. Eccl. Græc. tom. 2. p. 263. — *P*

governed by the survivor of them; and in the mean time Meletius went to reside at Constantinople.\*

Theodosius, arriving in the East, was as successful in his wars against the Barbarians as Gratian was in the West. Whether the latter had a view to any other qualifications than those of a soldier, a Christian, and an honest man, is not said; but it soon appeared that Theodosius was as zealous a *Consubstantialist* as himself. In common with Constantine, Constantius, and other eminent persons of that age, he had not been baptized; but being taken ill at Thessalonica, and finding that Ascholius, the bishop of that city, was a *Consubstantialist*, he chose to be baptized by him; and upon his recovery he published a law to oblige all his subjects to profess the doctrine of the Nicene Creed, and ordered that all the churches in which it was not professed should be considered as heretical.† Accordingly, on his arrival at Constantinople, he gave Demophilus, the Arian bishop, the choice of quitting his profession, or the city; and choosing the latter, he and his followers assembled in a church without the gates. Thus, says our historian, the Arians were expelled from the city of Constantinople, after they had kept possession of it forty years.‡ He was succeeded by Gregory of Nazianzum.

The Homoousian party, however, were apprehensive of the influence of the Arians, and especially of Eunomius, on account of his great powers of persuasion. For, as he lived as a private person in Bythinia, many resorted to him from Constantinople; and the emperor himself expressed a wish to have an interview with him; but he was diverted from his purpose by his wife Flaccilla, who dreaded the consequences of it.

It is said that Theodosius was confirmed in the Trinitarian doctrine, by the address of Amphilocheius, an old bishop, who, suspecting him of wavering in his opinion, after saluting him with all due respect as the emperor, behaved with unbecoming freedom to his son. The emperor being offended at this, the old man said he did it on purpose that he might give him some idea of the displeasure which their heavenly Father would conceive against those who did not worship his Son as they did himself.§ At this time, however, the

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. i. p. 281. Soerat. Hist. L. vii. C. v. p. 266. (P.)

† Ibid. C. iv. p. 282. (P.)

‡ Soerat. Hist. L. v. C. vii. p. 268. Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. v. p. 283. (P.)

§ Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. vi. p. 284. (P.) See *supra*, p. 455, Note \*.

emperor's son had not the title of *Augustus*, and, therefore, the old bishop's example was not in point, if his intention was to inculcate the doctrine of the perfect equality of the Son to the Father. This story is referred by Theodoret to a later period in the history, viz. till after the return of Theodosius from the defeat of Maximus\*. But neither of the sons of Theodosius was emperor till after his death.

## SECTION II.

### *Of the Council of Constantinople, A. D. 381.*

THE emperor, being now confirmed in his own opinion, called a council, as Sozomen says, of the bishops of his own communion, both to establish the decrees of the Council of Nice, and to elect a bishop for the church of Constantinople, many persons having complained of Gregory, the friend of Basil, as having been brought to them from a distance; but many more were, no doubt, dissatisfied with him on account of his high Trinitarian principles, as his church had been in the possession of the Arians forty years.

Theodosius, however, hoping to gain the Macedonians, as they did not differ much from the Catholics, permitted their bishops to attend. Accordingly, there were assembled about one hundred and fifty *Consubstantialists*, and twenty-six of the Macedonians, the latter chiefly from the cities in the neighbourhood of the Hellespont; and at the head of them were Eleusius of Cyzicum, and Marcianus of Lausacum. Among the *Consubstantialists*, Timothy, bishop of Alexandria, presided.

When they were assembled, the emperor, and the bishops of his own persuasion, did every thing in their power to prevail upon the Macedonians to concur with them in subscribing the *Homousian* doctrine, reminding them of their having voluntarily done so, when, in the former reign, they had applied to Eudorus, and after that time had made no difficulty of remaining in communion with them. But they could not be prevailed upon; and leaving Constantinople, they wrote to their friends, exhorting them to adhere to their principles, and never to consent to the doctrine of the Nicene Creed. From this it is evident, that they had sufficiently repented of their former compliance, and even that

the persecution which they must have expected from Theodosius, would not induce them to act the part that they had done in the time of Valens.

The bishops of the *Homogousian* party being now alone, chose Nectarius, a layman, and a person of senatorial rank, for bishop of Constantinople. At the time of his election he was not even baptized, though pretty far advanced in years. But, like Ambrose, who, in circumstances very similar to his, had been made bishop of Milan, not being able to decline the honour that was offered him, he first went through all the forms of baptism, wearing a dress proper for the purpose, according to the custom of that age, and after other necessary steps, was regularly ordained bishop. Gregory, whose ordination had been much objected to by Timothy of Alexandria, and by the oriental bishops in general, made no objection to their proceedings, and peaceably departed for Nazianzum.\*

Nectarius, being now bishop of Constantinople, joined his brethren, who remained after the Arian bishops had left the place, as a member of this celebrated council, the second in rank after that of Nice; having, like it, obtained the title of *œcumenical*, or universal, though it consisted of no more than one hundred and fifty bishops.

The first thing of any importance that was done in this council was to confirm the doctrine of the Nicene Creed, adding, as if it had been a necessary consequence of it, that the three persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, were *equal in power and glory*. This they called confirming the doctrine of Nice. But it is a remarkable instance of persons imposing upon themselves with respect to the antiquity of their opinions. For it was going much farther than the Nicene fathers had any idea of, and what they would have unanimously disclaimed.

They believed the Son to be of *the same* substance with the Father, but they had by no means any such idea with respect to the Holy Spirit, and still less would they have thought of making either the Son, or the Holy Spirit *equal* to the Father. Now, however, this doctrine, which has

\* It might be in part from resentment of his treatment in this council, that this Gregory, being afterwards invited to attend one, said, that he avoided all assemblies of bishops, that he had never known any of them to terminate well, and, that so far had they been from removing any evils, they had increased them; that their contention and love of power were not to be described. *Epist. xliii. Opera*, p. 814. The observation, however, is very true, and will apply to all the councils, of which we have a sufficiently distinct account. But the same is the case with the assemblies of other men, whose views and interests interfere. (P.)

been the standard of orthodoxy ever since, was first confirmed by the authority of a general council, after having been advanced, and contended for, in the writings of the more zealous divines. It was also determined, that no churches should remain in the possession of any bishops who did not hold this new doctrine.\*

It likewise appears from the synodical letter of this council, which is preserved in Theodorict, that the doctrine of Apollinaris, viz. of Christ having taken only *flesh* of the Virgin, and not having a proper human soul, was condemned in it. Damasus, bishop of Rome, and a synod of bishops assembled there, joined this council at Constantinople in the condemnation of this doctrine, and in the excommunication of Apollinaris himself and Timotheus his disciple. They also anathematized those who said that the Holy Spirit was made by the Son, or that he is not of the same power and substance with the Father and the Son; and in a separate condemnation of all heresies, they insert the opinion ascribed to Apollinaris, of the divine nature of the Son suffering, and not his body and soul only. This writing contains the highest orthodoxy of the age, expressed in the most definite and unequivocal language, very similar to that of the Athanasian Creed, (as it is now called,) as it particularly condemns those who say that, in consequence of acknowledging the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, separately considered, to be each of them properly *God*, there will then be *three Gods*, and not *one God*, only.†

In this council a new distribution was made of the dioceses, because in the late persecution much confusion had been introduced with respect to the former regulations. To the bishop of Constantinople was assigned the city, and the province of Thrace; to the bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, was given Pontus, &c. It is to be observed, that these *dioceses*, as they were called, were not under the jurisdiction of *bishops* as such, but of metropolitan bishops, being the bishops of the chief towns and provinces. In that age a bishop is never said to have had the government of more than one *church*, or *parish*, though it sometimes consisted of several congregations. But the bishops of these metropolitan sees presided over whole provinces, in which were many bishops.‡

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. vii. viii. p. 285. — Socrat. Hist. L. v. C. vii. viii. p. 265.

† Theod. Hist. L. v. C. x. p. 269. — P.

‡ Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. ix. p. 287. — Socrat. Hist. L. v. C. viii. p. 268. — P. 266. — *pro*, pp. 263, 266, and Vol. II. pp. 338, 339.

No person can give any attention to this council, and imagine that there was any thing like freedom of discussion in it. The emperor assembled only those bishops who, he thought, would concur with him in fixing such a creed as he approved, and in doing every thing else that he wished them to do; and they were not half the number that Constantine, in a much earlier period of the Christian history, had assembled at Nice. Theodosius would not have invited the Macedonians to attend this council, but with the hope of persuading them to join the other bishops; and as soon as this appeared to be impracticable, they were dismissed. This being so soon after the time of Valens, who had assembled several councils of Arian bishops, and much more numerous than this, there can be no doubt but that, if Theodosius had been so disposed, he might very easily have brought together more bishops than he did upon this occasion, to fix almost any other creed that he should have thought proper.

That the bishops assembled in council had any supernatural direction in forming their decrees, does not seem to have been imagined in this age. All that they pretended to, was to declare what, in their opinion, had been the faith of their ancestors; and in ascertaining this, they did not proceed in any regular method of inquiry into the state of opinions in former times, but decided according to their own opinions, which were formed under the influences that have been described.

### SECTION III.

#### *Other Endeavours of Theodosius to support the Catholic Faith.*

THIS zealous and well-disposed emperor, unwilling to give up his favourite project of uniting all Christians in one common faith, had recourse to another method of gaining his end. He summoned the heads of all the different sects, thinking that, by conferring amicably together, they might come to some agreement. But Nectarius, the newly-chosen bishop of Constantinople, and Agelius, the bishop of the Novatians in that city, who were both Consubstantialists, after discoursing together on the subject, advised the emperor not to permit the different sectaries to dispute together; since no differences had ever been composed by that means, but had always been the more inflamed. They therefore wished that he would propose to them whether they would abide by the opinions of those Christians who wrote before

the origin of the late differences, thinking that, if they agreed to put the matter upon this issue, they might easily be confuted, and if they refused, they would be excommunicated by their own churches.

Accordingly, this proposal was made to them by the emperor, and a proper time was allowed them to give their answers. But upon this they were divided, some thinking the proposal a reasonable one, and others the contrary, especially as they entertained different opinions concerning the ancient writers; and upon this occasion not only did the heads of the several sects differ from each other, but even those who were of the same sect. Thus the scheme of these two bishops proved to be no better than that of the emperor. He therefore tried another of his own.

Finding that the heads of the different sects could not come to any agreement with respect to their answer to his question, he, in the next place, desired them to bring their several creeds in writing. Accordingly, one was presented by Demophilus, on the part of the Arians; another by Eunomius himself, on the part of his sect; and another by Eusebius of Cyzicum, on the part of the Macedonians. For the Arians, it seems, were now divided into three parties, though it is not said in what respects those who are here called *Arians* and *Macedonians*, differed from each other; but the latter were, properly, *Consubstantialists* with respect to the Son, though not so with respect to the Holy Spirit. Whether any more creeds were produced is not said. These, however, the emperor took with him into his closet; and having prayed fervently, that God would enable him to discern the truth, he read them carefully over, and then, as the historians say, condemning all that made a division in the Trinity, he adopted the consubstantial faith only; and as the Nicæans held this faith, he allowed their congregations the same privileges as those of the catholic churches.

As it is not said that the emperor received any answer to his prayer, (which could only be ascertained by some miracle,) it is evident that his decision, however carefully and piously formed, was only his own private opinion, and therefore certainly not more authority than that of any other person. It is evident, now, too, that the emperor had not perfect concurrence in the decisions of his council; for if he had, no more an appeal to the emperor would have been superfluous. As to the leaders of these parties whose creeds the emperor had rejected, the historians say that they went home much concerned, but comforted their adherents on the occasion,

and on the defection of their friends, by saying, that *many were called, but few chosen*; a doctrine which they had not preached when they were the majority.

The emperor, thinking that he had now done all that was in his power, to promote uniformity of opinion, by *peaceable* methods, had recourse to *force*. For by a law he enacted on this occasion, he forbade all who had been declared *heretics*, to hold any assemblies for public worship, to teach their opinions, or to ordain bishops.\* Some he banished from the cities, and others from the empire itself; and some he branded with infamy, excluding them from all the rights of citizens. But the historians say, that though he annexed heavy punishments to the breach of these laws, he was not rigorous in exacting them, hoping to bring the sectaries into the pale of his church by terror, as well as by rewards. for he greatly favoured those who came over of their own accord.†

This history is a very instructive one, shewing how ineffectual are all schemes to produce uniformity of opinion in a short time. But we may be confident that, without the interference of any authority, this will be the natural consequence of free discussion, with respect to every question of importance, in a due course of time. It is in vain for men to attempt to accelerate the course of nature. Truth is sure to prevail, and every thing that reasonable men desire will be gained; but sufficient time must be allowed for the purpose.

During these proceedings at Constantinople, Maximus declared himself emperor in Britain,‡ and in opposing him Gratian lost his life, after a reign of fifteen years, but from the death of his father not quite eight years.§ But Theodosius

\* By the Theodosian code, if any heretic ordained a clerk, or himself received the office, he was fined ten pounds of gold, and the place in which it was performed was confiscated. This was enforced by Honorius, against the Donatists. *Bingham* [L. p. 20. (P.)]

† Soerat. Hist. L. v. C. x. p. 272. Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. xii. p. 202. Notwithstanding the enacting of laws which denounced the penalty of death on certain heretics, there is hardly any instance of its being put in execution, before the case of Priscillian. (P.)

‡ "Il prit pour un affront sanglant, la préférence que Gratien avoit donnée à *Théodose*. Le chagrin qu'il conçut d'avoir été ainsi négligé, lui fit prendre la résolution de se conférer lui-même la Dignité Impériale." *Rapin*, L. i. p. 66.

§ Gratian had been educated with the greatest care, by his father Valentian, and was, in all respects, an accomplished prince. He was deserted by his troops, who thought he gave too much preference to strangers. He concurred with Theodosius in all measures to suppress what they deemed to be heresy. On the death of Gratian, Valentian II. remained sole emperor of the West. Both of them were

marching against him, his own soldiers delivered him up, and he was put to death.

While this war was carrying on, two attempts were made in favour of Arianism, one in the East, and the other in the West. In the absence of Theodosius, and upon a rumour of his ill success, the Arians in Constantinople made an insurrection, in which the house of Nectarius was burned down.

In the West, Justina, the wife of Valentinian, who was an Arian, but who had no power while her husband was living, endeavoured, by influencing her son, to expel Ambrose from the see of Milan: but the people took the part of the bishop, and prevented it. Notwithstanding this, it is said, she made a law, by which all who did not subscribe the creed of Ariminum should be expelled from their churches, and be punished with death. News, however, arriving of the death of Gratian, a stop was put to her proceedings. As Socrates says nothing of this law to enforce the creed of Ariminum, and only mentions the attempts of Justina to banish Ambrose, it is probable that this was all that she aimed at. Indeed the other project would have been absurd in the extreme.\* Those who apostatized from the Christian religion, were, by the laws of Theodosius deprived of the rights of Roman citizens, and of that of disposing of their estates by will; and Valentinian the younger took from them the benefit of receiving legacies, or succeeding to any inheritance.†

#### SECTION IV.

##### *Transactions of a mixed Nature, Civil and Religious, with an Account of Theodosius's Death and Character.*

WHILE Theodosius was employed in the East, Valentinian the younger was as unfortunate in the West as Gratian had been. For Eugenius and Arbogastes, conspiring against him, put him to death. Upon this, Theodosius marched into the West, leaving both his sons in Constantinople, and defeated Eugenius near Arelate; and when this usurper threw himself at the feet of Theodosius, his guards, who were appre-

\* See the story of Ambrose, the great bishop of Milan, in all matters relating to religion. Gratian was the first of the Christian emperors who refused the title of *Paterfamilias*. See Zonara on this refusal. *Lardner*, IX. p. 48. See also *Becket*, v. 7, N. 6.

† See Socrat. Hist. l. vii. c. xiii. p. 66. Socrat. Hist. l. v. c. xi. xiii. pp. 276, 277. Theod. Hist. l. v. c. xiii. p. 212. *P.*

‡ *Kingsham*, II. p. 97. *P.*

hensive that their master would spare his life, without waiting for his orders, dispatched him. Arbogastes killed himself.

While Theodosius was preparing for this war, it was found necessary to lay heavier taxes on the people than usual; and this was the occasion of a very alarming insurrection at Antioch, where the populace threw down the statues of the emperor and empress, and dragged them about the streets. The emperor hearing of this, and being naturally hasty, gave orders for the slaughter of many of the inhabitants, which, when they were recovered from their fury, threw them into the greatest consternation. Flavianus, their bishop, interceded for them in vain; but some doleful, supplicating songs having been composed on the occasion, some young men, (who were used to entertain the emperor, by singing while he was at meals,) were gained to sing some of them: and Theodosius was so affected by them, that he burst into tears, and pardoned the people. But, according to Theodoret, (who places this story after the subsequent one concerning Thessalonica,) the emperor was pacified by the remonstrances of Macedonius, a monk, who represented to him, that, if he was so much offended at the indignity offered to his lifeless statues, much more would God be offended at the violence which he was about to commit on his living images. Brazen statues, he said, might be replaced, but he could not reproduce a single hair of any man whom he should put to death.\*

Unfortunately, another case of provocation occurred, in which Theodosius did not check his resentment in time, and the effects were indeed dreadful. Butherius, the governor of Thessalonica, had apprehended a celebrated charioteer, for attempting an unnatural crime; but as he was much wanted for the chariot races, which were at hand, the populace were very clamorous for his release, and the officer not thinking proper to yield to their intreaties, they grew tumultuous, and at length killed him. The emperor hearing of this, was in a great rage, and ordered a party of soldiers to put to death a certain number of the people whom they should first meet with, without making any distinction; and in consequence of this rash order, a great slaughter was made in the city: and many of the sufferers being innocent persons, their cases excited particular compassion.

Ambrose, bishop of Milan, being informed of this, when

\* Seeom. Hist. L. vi. C. xxiii. p. 317. — Theod. Hist. L. v. C. xx. p. 229. — P.

the emperor, after his victory over Eugenius, was about to go into the church in that city, he resolutely forbade him his having his hands polluted with innocent blood; and the emperor, having probably repented of his rashness before, was not offended with his freedom, but withdrew, full of shame and repentance. He afterwards made a public confession of his sin, as other penitents did, and was not admitted to communion till after the usual term of penance, and in all that time he refrained from wearing the purple robe. As a part of his penance enjoined by the bishop, he made a law, that all capital punishments should be deferred till thirty days after the orders given for them. This story does great honour both to the bishop and the emperor. He could not be a bad man who, though he committed so great a fault, was capable of acknowledging it in this manner. Ambrose also distinguished himself by his ordering, that the emperors, when they were at church, should not sit, as they had been used to do, in order to be the more conspicuous within the rails of the chancel, but before them, among the people; a custom which Sozomen says was observed ever after.\*

Theodosius made several regulations in favour of public virtue. At Constantinople there had been persons who made a trade of selling prostitutes, and the practice had been tolerated on account of the advantage which the revenue had derived from it. This, however, the emperor put a stop to, as soon as he was acquainted with it; and Florentius, the prefect of the praetorian guards, seeing the loss which would thence accrue to the treasury, sold an estate of his own to make it good.†

During the short time that Theodosius was in Italy, he greatly benefited the city of Rome, in part by his liberalities, but chiefly by removing two great nuisances, the discovery of one of which was accidental, but very fortunate. There was in the city a large building, where bread was made to be distributed to the citizens, and being near some public stews, strangers were by this means often decoyed into it, and being seized upon, were compelled to work all their lives under ground. One of Theodosius's soldiers fell into this snare, but drawing his sword, and killing those who would have detained him, he made his escape; and the emperor being informed of it, ordered all the persons who had been

\* Sozom. Hist. l. vii. c. xxv. p. 17. Theod. Hist. l. v. c. xvii. xviii. p. 5. P.  
Sozom. A. D. 420. P. 1.

concerned in this horrid business, to be punished as they deserved, and the place to be demolished.

It had been a custom in one part of Rome, that women, convicted of adultery, should be exposed to prostitution with any persons who chose to have commerce with them. This indecency was also forbidden by Theodosius, and other more proper punishments provided for the case.\*

Theodosius continued some time at Milan after the reduction of Eugenius, and finding himself indisposed, (Philostorgius says his disease was a dropsy, †) sent for his son Honorius from Constantinople. On his arrival he found himself better, and intended to have presided at the Circensian games, which were to be exhibited on the occasion of his victory; but being worse after dinner, he desired his son to preside, and in the night following he died, A. D. 395, in the sixtieth year of his age, and the seventeenth of his reign, leaving two sons of the same religious persuasion with himself, of whom Arcadius, the elder, reigned in the East, and Honorius, the younger, in the West. Addressing himself to his sons just before his death, he exhorted them, not only as individuals, but as emperors, to cultivate sincere piety. "By this," said he "peace is maintained, and war extinguished: by this, enemies are dispersed, and victories acquired." ‡

Several circumstances in the history of Theodosius, discover much true greatness of mind. He was raised to the empire without any intrigue, or endeavours of his own, by the mere opinion of his merit and ability; an opinion which was abundantly justified by his subsequent conduct. By his ability as a warrior he saved the state, and he was the steady friend of Gratian, who called him to partake of the empire, and to his family after him, without ever seeming to wish for more power than was allotted to him. He very properly revenged the death of his benefactors; but if Maximus would have been content with his success against Gratian, he would have divided the empire with him rather than risk the injuring of it by a civil war.

If Theodosius had the virtues, he had also the faults of Constantine; or rather, he fell into the same *mistake*, in thinking it his duty to support the right faith by civil power. But this had been done without any censure by all the Christian emperors before him, except Jovian, who did not live long enough fully to declare himself; and all who fol-

\* Socrat. Hist. L. v. C. xviii. p. 284. (P.      † Hist. L. ii. C. ii. p. 38. (P.)  
 ‡ Socrat. Hist. L. v. C. xxvi. p. 504. Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. xxix. p. 27.  
 Theod. Hist. L. v. C. xxv. p. 228. (P.)

followed him trod in the same steps. Indeed, the late reformers from Popery did not think it right to leave truth unsupported by civil power. It is much to be lamented that this idea, which has been productive of so much evil, should ever have been taken up, and should have been acted upon so long. But the most enlightened of the present age, cannot suppose that even themselves would have judged, or acted otherwise, than great and wise men did in this early period.

Theodosius was in some respects more tolerant than some of the bishops of his age. For when the monks of Callinica, in the East, who had been disturbed in their devotions by some Jews, had, in revenge, burned their synagogue, he ordered the Count of the East to rebuild it at his own expense; though, by a letter, and the personal application of Ambrose, he was induced to revoke the order.\*

As far as appears, Theodosius, to all the ability of a great general, added a constant desire to administer the affairs of the empire in the best manner, without being drawn aside by private gratification, or personal resentment. That he had strong passions, from which perhaps no truly great man, (by which I here mean a man of great energy of mind, and a capacity for public business.) was ever wholly exempt, is evident from the history of what passed with respect to Antioch and Thessalomea. But in both cases he had great provocation, and his offence was followed by sincere repentance. From the idea that I have of the character of Julian, if he had reigned half so long as Theodosius did, he would have been capable of much greater cruelties, and without repenting of them.

Philostorgius says, that Theodosius was addicted to intemperance, and that the disorder of which he died was brought on by it †. But the orthodox historians praise him for his sobriety and moderation; saying that in these respects he was the reverse of Trajan, whom he greatly resembled in most other particulars, and even in his person.‡

## SECTION V.

### *Of Heathenism in this Period.*

UNTIL this reign it is remarkable that the Heathens had made no attempts to restore their worship, but had seen the

\* Vita Ambrosii, Opera, l. p. 57. P. † Hist. l. xi. c. ii. p. 389. P.  
 ‡ See Victor's character of Theodosius. Lardner, IX. p. 47, Note ††.

destruction of many of their temples, and the prohibition of their sacrifices and festivals, with silent indignation. But the zeal of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, in executing the orders of Theodosius, to destroy the temples in that city, provoked them beyond their usual forbearance, or any prudent regard to consequences.

On the request of the bishop, a temple of Bacchus had been converted into a Christian church; and when the secret places of this temple were laid open, the bishop made a public spectacle of whatever was found in them, and especially of some *Phalli*. This ridiculous exhibition of the symbols of their worship, the heathen inhabitants could not bear; but suddenly rushing upon the Christians, they killed and wounded many, and then took possession of the temple of Serapis, situated on an eminence; and sallying from that place, as from a fortress, they seized many Christians, and when they refused to sacrifice, cruelly tortured them. They even crucified some, and put others to different kinds of death.

The magistrates then interposed, and would have persuaded the people to leave the temple, and cease from hostilities. But this made them the more insolent; and Olympius, a philosopher, encouraged them to persist, and die fighting for their religion. And when they were discouraged at the havoc that was made of their images, he told them that the images were perishable things, but that the divinity which resided in them went up to heaven, and could not be hurt. They therefore remained in the temple, and nothing was done to molest them till the emperor's orders were received. In the mean time, great numbers of the Heathens, alarmed at what they had done, fled to different places, Olympius to Italy, and two grammarians, Helladius and Ammonius, to Constantinople, where Socrates the historian says that he attended their lectures when he was a young man.

At length the orders of Theodosius arrived, and they were those of a truly Christian emperor. He freely pardoned all who had been concerned in the disturbance, hoping that by this generosity he might gain them over to the Christian religion; but he ordered all the heathen temples, without distinction, to be totally demolished.\* In doing this the statues were converted into vessels for the use of the church

\* This order, my author, I suspect, had not sufficiently considered, or he would have deemed it more worthy of an emperor than of a Christian. See Lardner's censure of Constantine, *supra*. p. 280, Note †.

of Alexandria. But Theophilus preserved one of them, that it might be occasionally exposed in public, lest the Heathens should deny that they ever had had such objects of worship. This Ammonius took very ill, as it was preserved, he said, for no other purpose than to turn his religion into ridicule.\*

In some other places also, besides Alexandria, the Heathens at this time fought for their religion, as the people of Petra and Acropolis in Arabia, those of Raphia and Gaza in Palestine, and those of Heliopolis in Phenice. In Syria the people of Apamea, on the river Axius, commonly made use of a garrison of the people of Galilee, and other country people from the villages about Mount Libanus, for the defence of their temples; and Marcellus, the bishop of the place, lost his life in consequence of an over zealous and imprudent attempt to put an end to their worship.

Hearing that the most considerable of their temples was in Aulon, a district of Apamea, he took a company of soldiers and gladiators, in order to demolish it; but being himself lame, he remained at some distance till the business should be done. But while his people were busy in demolishing the temple,† the Heathens, seeing him alone, rushed upon him, and burned him alive. For some time the perpetrators of this murder were unknown, but afterwards they were discovered, and the sons of Marcellus were desirous of revenging their father's death. But a synod of the province forbade it, alleging that it was not reasonable to require any satisfaction for this death, when both the deceased himself, and his children and friends, had cause to give thanks for it, since he had the honour of dying in the cause of God.‡

It is evident, from the fact of these temples and images having been suffered to remain so long undisturbed, that the orders of the preceding emperors for the demolition of such things had not been executed with rigour. The heathen worship was kept up in so many places, that if there had been any thing fascinating in it, it might have had its full

\* *Eccl. Hist. E. v. C. viii. p. 1. Sozom. Hist. E. vii. C. xv. p. 206. Theod. Hist. E. v. C. x. p. 3. P. Lardner, IX. pp. 158—160.*

† When, *Theod. Hist. E. v. C. x. p. 3.* there appeared "a demon, of a black colour, and hindered the operation of the fire, *αὐτὸν δὲ δαίμονα μαύρου χροῦ, ὁποῖον οὐκ ἐπέτρεπε τὴν πυρρὰν ἐπιτελεῖσθαι.*" *P. Lardner, IX. pp. 158, 160.*

‡ *Sozom. Hist. E. vii. C. xv. p. 208. Theod. Hist. E. v. C. xxi. p. 221. P. Lardner, IX. pp. 197—199.* where that imperial Christian thus equitably decides: "The synod was much in the right to determine that the death of Marcellus ought not to be avenged. He had bought it upon himself by his violent proceedings against his neighbours, who, indeed, were erroneous, but nevertheless were quiet and peaceable, so far as appears, and therefore, should not have been disturbed." *v. r. p. 198.*

effect. But every exhibition of the heathen worship, after the promulgation of Christianity, only tended to expose it to ridicule. The same advantage, we need not doubt, all truth and good sense, will have in time, over error and absurdity; and the corruptions of Christianity, when they are fairly exhibited, will fall before the pure and genuine doctrines of it, as Heathenism did before Christianity itself.

A more peaceable attempt was in this period made at Rome, countenanced by a person of the highest reputation, though a Heathen, to restore some of the ceremonies of Heathenism in that city. I mean the request that was made by the senate, and presented by Symmachus, to Valentinian the younger, during the usurpation of Eugenius, to replace the image and altar of Victory, which had been fixed before the senate-house, and at which the senators had been accustomed to swear allegiance to the emperor when they entered upon their office. Constantius, when he was at Rome, A. D. 356 or 357, had ordered this altar to be removed; but, having been restored by Julian, it had continued till it was again removed by Gratian, A. D. 382; when he likewise seized the lands which had been allotted for the maintenance of the priests and the sacrifices, and abrogated the privileges of the vestal virgins.

Complaints were made on the subject; but Gratian paid no regard to them. But not long after his death the senate sent this deputation to Valentinian the younger; and it may not be amiss to consider what was alleged by so able a man as Symmachus in favour of Heathenism, in so late a period. And, very happily, we have this petition entire, so that we can satisfy ourselves that it contains nothing that any reasonable man can now think deserving of attention. The amount of the whole is, that Heathenism was the religion of their ancestors, and that the empire flourished by its means. Speaking in the person of Rome, he says, "Let me live in my own way. I am free, and have a right to do so. This way of worship has brought all the world into obedience to my laws. These rites drove Hannibal from my walls, and the Gauls from the Capitol. And have I lived so long to be corrected in old age? Let me know what this new institution is? Sure I am, to reclaim old age is an unreasonable and dishonourable undertaking."

This petition likewise mentions a general famine, as having followed the confiscation of the revenues which had been appropriated to the maintenance of those ceremonies. But to this it was justly replied by Ambrose, and others who

opposed the petition, that the religion of Rome had been greatly changed since the time of Romulus, and that it was highly reasonable that the world should be allowed to grow wiser. As to the famine, it was only local, and did not afflict the whole empire; and such calamities had been frequent in all times. Accordingly no regard was paid to this petition.

In A. D. 388 it is supposed another petition was made to Theodosius, to procure the restoration of this altar of Victory, and that this request also was supported by Symmachus. But it had no more effect than the former. However, in A. D. 392, which was after the death of Valentinian, Eugenius restored this altar; and at this time, as this usurper was disposed to favour the Heathens, their expectations were greatly raised; victims were multiplied in Rome, all kinds of divination were practised, and Flavianus, the prefect of the city, who was thought to be very skilful in those rites, encouraged Eugenius with strong assurances of success and victory. Notwithstanding this, he was soon defeated; and after his death it cannot be doubted that Theodosius ordered all that had been done with respect to the altar of Victory to be undone, though no particular mention is made of it by historians. It was thought extraordinary that Eugenius, who was a Christian himself, should oblige the Heathens so much as he did in this respect, and Ambrose remonstrated against it. The whole of this account is extracted from Lardner, to whose authorities I refer my reader.\*

We may now express our surprise, that a man of virtue and ability, as Symmachus was, should adhere to a religion in favour of which he had so little to allege. But at this time Heathens of his character were very few, and they were infinitely out-numbered by men of superior virtue and ability who continually became Christians. It is very possible that Symmachus, like Pliny the younger, Marcus Antoninus, and many other Heathens, who were both men of letters and men of business, might have given very little attention to the subject of Christianity; and in this case their opinion ought not to have any weight at all. At this day we see men of the best understandings, either through inattention or prejudice, maintain opinions which those who give more attention to the subject, and are less prejudiced, are well satisfied have no reasonable foundation.

The minds of men are subject to a great variety of influences, which, independently of any thing that can be called

\* Test. IV. pp. 572, &c. *P. Works*, IX. pp. 132—145; where see a translation of the *petition* entire, with the original annexed.

*evidence*, mislead them in judging concerning truth; and nothing more strongly biasses most men, and especially the virtuous and well-disposed, than respect for the opinions and practices of their parents and remote ancestors.

Considering the progress that Christianity had made by its own evidence before the time of Constantine, it can be no wonder that, when it had the additional aid of civil power, it should so soon complete its triumph over Heathenism. It is to be regretted, however, that it should not have been suffered to complete this triumph, as no doubt it would have done, by the same means by which it first made its way in the world. But Theodosius, in whose time the remains of the ancient religion must have been inconsiderable, and not at all formidable, was too impatient to clear his dominions of it.

It having been observed that the Heathens, from ancient custom, went to particular places for the observance of certain rites, Theodosius from the beginning of his reign forbade all access to such places, and many of the temples he entirely destroyed; so that the Heathens, having no places of worship to go to, by degrees frequented those of the Christians, especially when they found some amusement in their festivals.

It being observed, however, that many of the Heathens, when they were deprived of their temples, sacrificed and performed their other rites within their own premises, Theodosius made a new law, by which this private exercise of the heathen religion was punished with confiscation of goods, and even with death.

When this law was carried into execution in Egypt, the people were exceedingly offended that they were not permitted to sacrifice to the river, as their ancestors had been used to do, and were apprehensive that it would not rise as usual, in consequence of it. It was even feared that there would be an insurrection on this account. But the emperor being informed of it, replied, that the flowing of the Nile, and the plenty depending upon it, were not to be preferred to our duty to God. "May the river," said he, "never flow again, if it cannot be procured without charms, sacrifices and blood!" However, the emperor persevered in his measures, and it was observed that the Nile was so far from not rising, that it rose so high that the people were afraid of an inundation; and this was a means of bringing over many of the heathen Egyptians to Christianity.\*

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. xx. p. 500. (P.) Lardner, IX. p. 162. See *supra*, pp. 279, 405.

## SECTION VI.

*Of the Priscillianists and Unitarians in this Period.*

In this reign there arose a new sect in the West, which is not so much as noticed by any of the Greek writers. I mean the *Priscillianists*, who held a mixture of Gnostic and Unitarian opinions. The origin of this sect, says Sulpicius Severus,\* is from Egypt, from which country one Marcus, a native of Memphis, brought it into Spain. His first converts were Agape, a woman of rank, and Helpidius, a rhetorician; but the name was derived from their disciple *Priscillian*, a man of a noble family, very wealthy, learned and eloquent. In other respects also this writer gives him a very high character, saying that he equally excelled in the qualifications of body and mind, that he was capable of bearing watching, hunger and thirst, that he was not desirous of acquiring any thing, and very moderate in the use of what he did possess.

As soon as Priscillian began to teach, he made many converts, both among persons of rank and those of the lower classes; and the women flocked to him in crowds, his modest appearance inspiring all persons with reverence. By this means his doctrine soon spread through all Spain, and was received by some bishops, among whom were Instantius and Salvianus. Adyginus, the bishop of Corduba, in whose neighbourhood the new sect spread the most, engaged Idatius, an old bishop, to oppose them. But he being much too violent, the Priscillianists were increased, rather than diminished, in consequence of his interference.

After much controversy, a synod was held on the subject at Saragossa, at which the bishops from Aquitania, in Gaul, were present; and the Priscillianists not choosing to attend, they were condemned in their absence, and in this sentence were particularly involved Instantius and Salvianus, who were bishops, and Priscillian and Helpidius, who were laymen; and those who should receive them into communion were ordered to be excommunicated. In the mean time, Instantius and Salvianus ordained Priscillian a bishop, but Idatius, and Ithacius, who had been appointed to acquaint other bishops with the decrees of the synod, being more urgent than ever to suppress this rising sect, before it should have acquired more strength, very imprudently, says our

\* Lib. C. xlvii. p. 29. P. He is largely quoted and translated by *Lochner*, W. 1 p. 19—198.

author, applied to the secular judges to banish the heretics from their cities. In consequence of this a rescript was procured from the emperor Gratian, by which they were banished not only from the cities, but from the empire, so that for some time they were totally dispersed.

But Instantius, Salvianus and Priscillian went to Rome, to clear themselves of what was laid to their charge, before Damasus, the bishop of that city, and in their way they made many converts, especially among the more serious kind of the lower people. Damasus refusing to see them, and Ambrose of Milan being equally hostile to them, they applied to Macedonius, an officer near the emperor's person, and by his means procured an order to restore them to their churches; and on this Instantius and Priscillian returned to Spain; for Salvianus had died at Rome.

The enemies of Priscillian being disappointed in their farther applications to Gratian, turned their eyes towards Maximus, who had assumed the empire in Britain; and on his arrival at Triers, and hearing what was suggested against Priscillian and his friends, he appointed a synod to meet at Bourdeaux. There Instantius was deposed, but Priscillian appealed to the emperor. When the cause came to be heard, Ithacius, who undertook the accusation of Priscillian, was so violent, that he accused almost all persons of a studious turn, of being favourers of Priscillian, without excepting even Martin, the bishop of Triers, who had strongly objected to bringing this case before a civil tribunal, and at whose intercession Maximus had promised that no capital punishment should be inflicted in the case.\* But on the application of other bishops, he referred the cause to Evodius, the prefect, a violent man, who sentenced Priscillian to be put to death; and accordingly he was executed, together with several of his disciples, of whom also some were banished, and others had their goods confiscated.

These proceedings, however, were so far from putting a stop to the doctrine of Priscillian, that it was propagated farther than ever, in consequence of them. For his followers, who had before respected him as a saint, now honoured him as a martyr, and the bodies of those who had been put to death on this occasion, were carried to Spain, and buried with the greatest solemnity. The followers of Priscillian, our author says, even swore by his name: and the disturbance

\* St. Martin, in France, excommunicated a bishop, for accusing certain heretics to Maximus, the usurper of the empire, who put them to death. F. Paul's *Hist. of the Inquis.* p. 8. (P.) Lardner, IV. pp. 461, 467, 470, 471.

which arose from this business was not at all allayed fifteen years afterwards, which was the time of his writing; but he ascribes much of the confusion which then prevailed in the country, to the ambition, and other vices, of the clergy.

That the Priscillianists held some Gnostic opinions, cannot be doubted, because they are universally ascribed to them. They considered matter as the cause of all evil; they condemned marriage, and said that the souls of men were of a divine substance; and having offended in heaven, were sent into bodies as a punishment of their sins. Like many of the early Gnostics, the Priscillianists were famous for their asceticism and mortifications, and therefore were probably the same persons whom Philaster calls *Abstinentes*, in Gaul, Spain, and Aegrotane. With respect to the person of Christ, Austin says they agreed with Sabellius; and Pope Leo, who was their bitter enemy, says that they had drawn in the person of Paul of Samosata and Photinus.

It was in a synod of Bracara, (Braga,) the metropolis of Galicia, in Spain, which was called for the purpose of condemning the Priscillianists, that the addition of *Filioque*, (and to the Son,) which afterwards was the great bone of contention between the Eastern and Western churches, was first introduced into the Constantinopolitan creed. The bishops who were assembled on this occasion, in repeating the creed of this council, instead of contenting themselves with saying, according to it, that the Holy Spirit proceedeth *from the Father*, said, who proceedeth *from the Father and the Son*; being led to it, it is supposed, by something which approached to it in an epistle which Pope Leo addressed to them.

The Visigoths, who were Catholics, received this addition, and it was admitted in the councils of Toledo. It also passed into Gaul, as we learn by the synod of Arles, held under Charlemagne. The church of Rome did not receive the creed with this addition, till a long time afterwards, by Nicholas I., according to some, and Sergius III., according to others. But Bohemus says, it was done by Benedict VII., who, at the request of the emperor Henry, ordered the creed to be sung in the church of Rome with this addition, after the gospel, as it had been usually sung in the West.

This addition to the creed, was the principal cause of the schism between the Greek and the Latin churches; the former complaining, and seemingly with reason, that the Latins made this addition to the creed without the authority of a

general council.\* This is one remarkable instance of great effects arising from small causes; but all history, civil as well as ecclesiastical, abounds with them. Trifling as this circumstance of the addition to the creed may be thought, it is of as much importance as any thing that was decided at the general councils of Ephesus, or Chalcedon.

That the Priscillianists were not, in all respects, Gnostics, or Manichæans, is evident from their receiving, according to Austin, all the books of Scripture, even the apochryphal ones, though he says they misinterpreted or perverted them.†

### *Of the Unitarians.*

We hear very little of any Unitarians in this reign; there is, however, an account of Bonosus, a bishop in Macedonia, who was accused of the heresy of Photinus, and likewise of maintaining that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had commerce with her husband Joseph, after his birth. Nysius of Thessalonica, and other neighbouring bishops, taking the affair into consideration, they condemned Bonosus, and forbade those who had been ordained by him to hold any communication with him. Mention is also made of Bonosians, who were Photinians, in a council at Arles, held in the time of Pope Siricius, i. e. between A. D. 385, and A. D. 394.‡

## SECTION VII.

### *Of the Arians and Novatians in this Reign.*

IN this reign the Arians were much divided among themselves, the Eunomians as well as the other denominations of Arians. Eunomius himself, while he lived in Constantinople, performed divine service in the suburbs of that city, or in private houses within it. In this situation he wrote many books, and had many followers; so that in a short time his disciples in that place and neighbourhood were very numerous. On this account he was banished to Chalcedon, where, according to Philostorgius, he lived in a garden near the walls of the city. This, however, was not found to be sufficient; for Theodosius, having discovered that some persons in his court had adopted the opinions of Eunomius, not only

\* Sueur, A. D. 447. (P.)

† *Hist. of Early Opinions*, B. iv. C. iii. (P.) See Vol. VII.

‡ *Binnii Concilia*, I. Pt. i. p. 564. Le Sueur, A. D. 389. (P.) Bonosus thought

“Mary had other children after the birth of Jesus.” *Lardner*, IV. p. 568.

baniſhed them from his palace, but ſent Eunomius himſelf from Chalcedon to Halmyris, in Mæſia, upon the Danube.

But this place being ſoon afterwards taken by the Barbarians, he was baniſhed to Cæſarea, in Cappadocia, and as he had formerly written againſt Baſil, the biſhop of that city, he was permitted to live on an eſtate of his own in Dacrocœni, where, Philoſtorgius ſays, that himſelf, when he was twenty years of age, ſaw him. He deſcribes him as a man of a moſt engaging perſon and addreſs, as well as extraordinary genius. He was, I doubt not, a man of excellent character, as well as of great ability. This writer ſays, that neither Aëtius nor Eunomius officiated as biſhops, though they were conſidered as the heads of all the biſhops of their perſuaſion. Eunomius he ſays, never adminiſtered the Lord's Supper after he left Cyziçum.\*

Having mentioned theſe particulars concerning Eunomius, it may not be amiſs to place here what Philoſtorgius ſays concerning the end of Aëtius. When he left Conſtantinople, he retired to Lesbos, where he lived on an eſtate which Julian gave him, in the neighbourhood of Mitylene. Being accuſed to Procopius of taking the part of Valens, it was with difficulty that he eſcaped death during that uſurpation. After this he lived with Eunomius and Florinus, at Conſtantinople, and not long after died, Eunomius himſelf loſing his eyes.†

Eunomius was ſucceeded by Theophrontius, a Cappadocian, as Eunomius himſelf was. Being converſant in the philoſophy of Aristotle, he maintained, that as things changed from being future, to the preſent, and from that to the paſt, the Divine Being himſelf, as to his knowledge, muſt change alſo. But his hearers, being offended at this doctrine, expelled him from their church, and after this he had diſciples who bore his own name.

Not long after, Eutychius, another Eunomian, maintaining that ſince Chriſt had all things delivered to him from the Father, he muſt know even the day of judgment, and others of the ſect not approving of this opinion, he left them, and went to Eunomius, who was ſaid to approve of his ſentiments, a ſhort time before his death. But he who had in the mean time been made biſhop of the Eunomians at Conſtantinople, not receiving Eutychius upon his return, he alſo formed a ſect of his own. And ſome ſay it was not

\* Philoſtorg. *h. i. l. ix. c. 17. p. 7.* *l. x. c. vi. p. 503.* *P. Labbe, t. i. p. 122.*

† *Phil. l. c. vi. p. 503.* *P. Bede, p. 122.*

Eunomius himself, but either Theophronius, or this Euty-chius, who changed the form of baptism, from being administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, into that of *the death of Christ*.

About the same time, the Arians of Constantinople, who were not of the sect of Eunomius, disputed among themselves whether God could be called a *Father* before the production of the Son, Marinus maintaining the affirmative, and Dorotheus, from Antioch, the negative; and as Dorotheus kept possession of the ancient church, the followers of Marinus formed separate congregations. Selina, the Arian bishop of the Goths, and the successor of Ulphilas, was of his party. After this, many of the Arians, taking offence, joined the Catholic church. But after the division had continued fifty years at Constantinople, the two parties united, having agreed that they would never have any more controversy on this subject.\*

In this reign also, the Novatians were divided upon the subject of keeping Easter, some of them following Sabbatius, who, having been a Jewish convert, adhered to the Jewish custom of celebrating this festival on the fourteenth day of the month, and were called *Sabbatians*; while the rest of the Novatians conformed to the custom of other Christians, in this respect. The followers of Sabbatius were chiefly from Phrygia and Gallatia.†

## SECTION VIII.

### *Of the Donatists in this Reign.*

CONSIDERING how numerous the Donatists were, we cannot be much surprised to find them, like other numerous sects, divided among themselves, as they were in this reign.

On the death of Parmenian, their bishop, of Carthage, they met at Bagaia, to choose a successor to him, when there were two competitors, Primianus, who is said to have been the more zealous Donatist, and Maximianus, a relation of the famous Donatus. The majority were for Primianus; but the friends of Maximianus, consisting of forty-three bishops, were dissatisfied with the election, and formed separate congregations.

At another meeting, held at Cubursussita, a hundred

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. xvii. p. 301. Socrat. Hist. L. v. C. xxiii. xxiv. pp. 300, &c. (P.)

† Ibid. C. xviii p. 301. Ibid. C. xxi. p. 289. (P.)

bishops appeared on the side of Maximianus; but still they were inferior in number to the partizans of Primianus; and at a third synod, held at Bagaia, three hundred bishops rescinded all that had been done in favour of Maximianus; and, as Austin says, they availed themselves of the imperial laws against such as divided their church. This, however, was probably in argument only, as the imperial officers would hardly allow those who were deemed sectaries themselves, the benefit of laws enacted against sectaries.

The Maximianists themselves, though the smaller party, were afterwards divided into two others, viz. the Rogatians and the Claudianists. These divisions seem to have respected the heads of the party only, and not any matter of doctrine or discipline.\*

## SECTION IX.

### *Of the Variety of Customs among Christians in this Period.*

SOCRATES, on occasion of mentioning the preceding difference among the Novatians, with respect to the time of celebrating Easter, proceeds to give an account of other varieties in the customs of Christians in this period, and in times preceding it, which is extremely curious, and abundantly justifies his inference, that the unity of the church ought not to be broken for the sake of such differences. I shall, therefore, recite the principal of his observations.

“The fast which precedes the festival of Easter, is observed differently in different churches. At Rome they fast three whole weeks before Easter, excepting Saturday and Sunday; but in Illyricum, all Achaia, and Alexandria, they fast six weeks, and call it *Quadragesima*,” (our *Lent*;) “others, however, begin the fast on the seventh week before Easter, and though they fast only three of these weeks, fasting only five days in each, they still call it *Quadragesima*, the reason of which I do not understand.

“Nor do Christians differ only in the number of fasting days, but also in the manner of fasting. For some abstain from all animal food, others eat fish only, and some fowls as well as fish, saying that, according to Moses, they also were produced out of the water. Some abstain from all fruits, and from eggs. Some live on bread only, and others abstain even from that. Some fast till the ninth hour, but after that eat

\* Long's History of the Donatists, p. 80. P.

all kinds of food without distinction. Other still different rules are observed in different places, and innumerable reasons are produced for them; but since there is no scripture precept on the subject, it is plain that the apostles left all persons at their entire liberty in these respects.

“ There is no less difference in the customs relating to public worship. For, whereas all other churches receive the communion on Saturday, those of Alexandria and Rome, following some ancient tradition, refuse to do it. But the Egyptians in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and also those of Thebais, have indeed assemblies for public worship on Saturday, but do not receive the communion as other Christians do; for, after having feasted on all kinds of food, they receive the communion in the evening. Moreover, at Alexandria, the Scriptures are read and explained on the Wednesday and Friday, and every thing is done as in time of public worship, except the celebration of the eucharist: and this is a very ancient custom of the church of Alexandria; for it appears that Origen gave lectures on those days.

“ In Alexandria also, the readers and the singers are taken without distinction from among the catechumens, or the complete Christians, whereas all other churches admit no catechumens to that rank.

“ I have observed also, another peculiar custom in Thessaly. If any of the clergy there sleep with his wife to whom he was lawfully married before his preferment, he is deposed; whereas, in the East all the clergy, and even the bishops, are left at their full liberty in this respect; for many of them have children while they are bishops. The person who introduced this custom into Thessaly was Heliodorus, bishop of Trica, in that country, the same who, when he was a young man, wrote the *Æthiopics*. The same custom also passed to Thessalonica, Macedonia and Achaia.

“ In Thessaly they baptize only at Easter, so that there, many die without baptism. At Antioch, in Syria, the situation of the churches is the reverse of what it is in other places, for the altar is not placed at the East, but at the West end of them.

“ In Achaia, Thessaly and Jerusalem, prayers are made when the candles are lighted, according to the practice of the Novatians at Constantinople. At Casarea, in Cappadocia, and at Cyprus, the bishops and presbyters always interpret the Scriptures in the evening of Saturday and Sunday, after the candles are lighted. The Novatians in the

neighbourhood of the Hellespont do not pray in the same manner as those at Constantinople. In most of their churches, however, they conform to the custom of the catholic church. Upon the whole, you will hardly find two churches in all the sects which exactly agree with respect to their prayers.

“ At Alexandria no presbyter preaches: a custom which was introduced there after Arius had made so great a disturbance in that church. At Rome they fast every Saturday. At Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, they excommunicate all who sin after baptism, just as the Novatians do. The same is done by the Macedonians on the Hellespont, and the Quartodecimans in Asia. The Novatians in Phrygia do not admit to their communion those who have married two wives. Those of Constantinople neither openly receive nor openly reject them, but in the West they openly receive them. These differences, in my opinion, arose from the bishops in different churches, whose peculiar customs have been transmitted as a law to posterity.”\*

Sozomen mentions several of these varieties in the customs of different churches, and likewise other peculiarities with respect to discipline at this period, among which are the following:—

“ In the province of Scythia, though there are many cities, there is but one bishop: whereas, in other provinces, even villages have regularly consecrated bishops, as in Arabia, Cyprus, and among the Novatians and Montanists in Phrygia. At Rome there are no more than seven deacons, after the example of those who were appointed by the apostles; but in other churches the number of deacons is not limited. At Rome they sing the Hallelujah only once a year, on Easter Sunday; so that many of the Romans make use of it as a kind of oath, saying, *may they live to hear or sing that hymn.*

“ In the church of Alexandria there is this peculiarity, that the bishop doth not stand up while the gospels are read, a thing which I never saw or heard of in any other place. There also the arch-deacon only reads that sacred book, in other churches, the deacons. In many churches the presbyters only read, in others, on the principal festivals, the bishops themselves read, as on Easter Sunday at Constantinople.

The same custom is not observed in all places with

\* Sacra. Hist. L. i. C. xxii. p. 294. *B.*

respect to prayers, psalms, and the books that are read in the time of public worship. *The Revelation of Peter*, which is rejected as a spurious book by the ancients, is read once every year in some churches in Palestine, on Good Friday, which is a religious fast in commemoration of our Lord's sufferings. The book that is called the *Revelation of the Apostle Paul*, which was unknown to the ancients, is greatly commended by many of the monks. Some say that this book was first found in the reign of Theodosius. For they say, that in the house of Paul, at Tarsus, there was a marble chest in a subterraneous place, in which this book was deposited, and, that it was discovered by a particular revelation. But when I made inquiry concerning it, I was informed by an old presbyter of the church of Tarsus, that he had never heard of any such thing, and that he suspected it to be a fiction of the heretics.\*

I mention this last circumstance as a specimen of the manner in which relics, and other remains of antiquity, were commonly said to be discovered in this age, that the reader may judge how little credit is due to them.

Happy would it have been for the Christian church, if particular *opinions* had been allowed to be held, with as little censure as these peculiar *practices*, and if nothing but good morals had been deemed essential to Christian communion. But instead of improving in liberality, the terms of church communion were continually made stricter than before, till at length no variation even in rites and ceremonies would be allowed. Much ground must be measured back again before we recover the simplicity of the apostolic age.

## SECTION X.

### *Of a Change in the Discipline of the Eastern Churches, in this Reign.*

A CONSIDERABLE change was made in the interior discipline of the church of Constantinople, and afterwards in the Eastern churches in general, in this reign, by discontinuing the office of *penitentiary presbyter*, whose business it had been to direct every thing that related to confession and penance. Before this time there had been such an officer in every church, and, to appearance, the custom was an useful

\* Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. xix. p. 307. (P.) See Toland's *Amyntor*, annexed to his *Life of Milton*, 1761, pp. 166, 172, and *Lardner*, IV p. 262

one. For, as Sozomen observes, since no person who had been excommunicated could be received into the church without confessing the sins for which he had been excluded, it appeared too hard to oblige every person to make such a confession before the whole choir of presbyters, and, therefore, choice had been made of one of the most discreet of them to hear such confessions. This regulation had been made among all the sects of Christians except the Novatians, who received none into their communion after they had been once excommunicated. Also this office of penitentiary presbyter was still kept up in all the sects of Christians except the Catholics of the East, by whom it was discontinued, on the following occasion :

In the time of Nectarius, a woman of good condition, having been excommunicated for some offence or other, applied as usual to the penitentiary presbyter, and he had recommended to her, fasting and frequent prayer; and for this the church, as among the Catholics at this day, appears to have been considered as the most proper place. After some time she confessed that, besides the fault for which she had been enjoined this penance, a deacon had criminal conversation with her, while she was performing her penance in the church itself. Upon this the deacon was excommunicated, and the people were so much disturbed at the scandal which this affair brought upon the whole society, that the bishop thought proper to abolish the office of penitentiary presbyter, and left all persons who had been excommunicated to come to communion as they should judge themselves to be fit for it; and this example was followed by almost all other churches, except that of Rome.

This account, Socrates says, he had from Eudemon, the person who gave this advice to Nectarius; but he expresses much doubt whether the alteration had been favourable to the discipline of the church. Sozomen says, that offences were much increased afterwards, and, that for this reason he approved of the law of Theodosius, which excluded all women from an office in the church, unless they had children, and were sixty years old; which ordered that women, whose hair was shorn, should be refused admittance into the churches, and that the bishops who suffered them to enter should be deposed.

The custom had been for the penitents to stand in a place by themselves, with all the marks of sorrow and contrition, often with their faces to the ground. Out of compassion to their situation, the bishops and others sometimes joined

with them in this mode of prostration, praying with them and for them; and the custom was, that when, after this prostration, the bishop got up, the penitents rose also. He then dismissed them with a prayer, and when they had performed the penance which he enjoined, they were received into communion.\*

## SECTION XI.

*Of the Ornaments of Churches, and of Festivals, and the Increase of Superstition in this Period.*

We see in the works of Gregory, bishop of Nissa, a writer of this age, that it was the custom to ornament their churches, in the East, with pictures, and even statues, representing the acts of the martyrs, and other things, which it was thought would make a good impression on the spectators. In his oration on Theodore the martyr, he says, "When we come into a place like this, in which we are now assembled, in which are the memorials and sacred relics of the saints, we are first delighted with the magnificence and ornaments of the temple of God; where the artist has formed wood into the figures of animals, and has given to stone the polish of silver; where the painter has described to the life the heroic acts of the martyrs, and the frightful form of the tyrants, the fiery furnace, and the glorious triumph of the wrestlers, the figure of Christ, in a human form, presiding over the contest, describing every thing as in a book, understood by all; for the silent picture upon the wall may be said to speak, and instruct. Histories are also drawn upon the pavement of the floor, that we tread upon," &c.†

It is probable that this mode of ornamenting churches, began as early as the reign of Constantine; and had it proceeded no farther, the practice would not have been liable to any censure. There was no religious worship then paid to these images; they exercised the ingenuity of the artist, they gave pleasure to persons of taste, and they instructed those who could not read. It was also an innocent method of drawing the Heathens from their temples, which were ornamented in a similar manner, to the Christian churches.‡

\* Socrat. Hist. L. v. C. xix. p. 287. Sozom. Hist. L. vii. C. xvi. p. 399. (P.)

† Opera, II. p. 1011. (P.)

‡ On "Pictures and Images introduced into the Christian Church," and the effect of "these compliances," see "Letter from Eusebius to Papias, Maldact. v. III. pp. 129, 130.

But, alas! with the same good intentions, some of the zealous Christians of this age took some unwarrantable steps, such at least as soon drew after them consequences highly unfavourable to genuine Christianity. With a view to draw men off from the rites of the heathen religion, they provided many of the same indulgences for them, under the name of Christianity. Thus, though they pretended to suppress the heathen festivals, they allowed the same amusements and gratifications, such as feasting, and every expression of joy not properly vicious, at the same time, and in the same places: but telling the people it was not now done as formerly, in honour of some heathen god, but of a christian saint. This practice is avowed by this Gregory of Nissa, and is by him ascribed to Gregory of Neocæsarea, [*Thaumaturgus.*] in a much earlier period.\* Whoever formed this idea, and however innocent it might be in the first conception of it, (which I am very far from being disposed to deny,) it had very unhappy consequences. For this imitation of Paganism brought in at length a system of worship which differed but little from the former, and defeated much of the good moral tendency of Christianity.

There was a very great increase of the profession of Christianity in this reign, much of which, I doubt not, was the effect of conviction; but too much of it is to be ascribed to this kind of artifice, and a good deal, to open force.

Superstition of various kinds kept increasing in this as in the preceding reign, and especially that of conveying dead bodies and relics of saints from place to place. This grew to so great a height, that, in A. D. 386, Theodosius made a law to forbid the removal of any body that had once been buried, to make any distinction between one martyr and another, or to make a traffic of their relics. People were allowed, however, to shew what marks of respect they pleased to their saints at the places where they had been buried, and to erect what buildings they thought proper upon them. But the demand for relics was so great, that no law could restrain a traffic in them. It was commonly pretended, that the place where the bones, &c. of any ancient martyr were hid was discovered by a vision, and the

\* When he commands for "changing the Pagan festivals into Christian holy days, the better to draw the Heathens to the religion of Christ." *Meditation*, III

general credulity in this case made very slight degrees of evidence suffice.\*

The prayer of Ambrose for Theodosius after his death, shews what was the current opinion concerning the state of the dead in this period. He speaks of him as in the company of the saints, and particularly as embracing Gratian, whose death he had revenged, which, as Suenr observes, is by no means a state of purgatory. He then prays that God would give him that rest which he had prepared for his saints, and that his soul might return from the place whither it was descended, where it could not feel the stings of death. In his idea, therefore, the souls of good men were in *hades*, a place under ground, and not in *heaven* with God and Christ. "I have loved him," says he, "and will not leave him till I have conducted him to the place where his merits call him, where life is perpetual, where there is no contagion of corruption, no groaning, or crying, where this mortal shall be clothed with immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption." † This looks as if Ambrose hoped, that by his prayers he might remove Theodosius from his place in *hades*, into *heaven*, where the martyrs were at that time generally supposed to be. Tertullian is the first who speaks of prayers for the dead. ‡

In this place I shall just mention a few circumstances, noticed by Bingham, as having their origin about this time.

In the time of Chrysostom persons began to attend the communion without receiving it. In the age after this it was ordered, by the Council of Agde, that the people should not depart before the solemnity of the mass. Leo the Great declaimed against those who received the bread and not the wine, at the eucharist. According to Synesius, no person was to receive an excommunicated person into his house, or to eat at the same table with him. Persons were forbidden to converse familiarly with them while living, or to perform their funeral obsequies when they were dead.§

\* Suenr, A. D. 586. (P.)

† "Dilexi, et ideo prosequor eum usque ad regionem vivorum, nec deseram, donec fletis et precibus inducam virum quo sua merita vocant, in montem Domini sanctum, ubi perennis vita, ubi corruptelæ nulla contagio, nullus gemitus, nullus dolor, nulla consortia mortuorum, vera regio viventium, ubi mortale hoc induit immortalitatem, et corruptibile hoc induit incorruptionem." *Oratio Ambrosii pro Theodosio*, Ambrosii, Opera, V. p. 122. (P.)

‡ De Coronâ, C. iii. Opera, p. 102. (P.)

§ Bingham, pp 760, 776, 786. II. p. 56. (P.)

In the fourth century the canonical singers were made an order of clergy, were ordained with certain rites and ceremonies, and charged, in this ordination, to believe with their hearts what they sung with their mouths, and to approve by their works what they believed with their heart.\*

\* Williams, p. 84. (P.)

## PERIOD XII.

FROM THE DEATH OF THEODOSIUS, A. D. 395, TO  
THAT OF HONORIUS, A. D. 424.



### SECTION I.

*From the Accession of Arcadius, A. D. 395, to the Deposition  
of Chrysostom, A. D. 403.*

AFTER the death of Theodosius, his son Arcadius, on whom devolved the government of the East, returned to Constantinople, and Rufinus, the prefect of the prætorian guards, being put to death on suspicion of treason, Eutropius, the eunuch, succeeded to his power, which, as the prince was weak, was in a manner unbounded; but abusing his authority, he also was afterwards put to death.

Sozomen gives the following account of the state of religion at the beginning of this reign: The two emperors confirmed all that their father had done in favour of the *Consubstantialists*, and added much of themselves to the encouragement which he had given them; \* and the subjects imitating their princes, many of the Heathens came over to the Christian religion, and heretics to the catholic church. The number of Arians and Eunomians continually diminished, chiefly on account of their differences among themselves; but the Novatians retained their privileges, and derived much credit from the ability, the learning, and the exemplary conduct of their bishops, particularly Sisinius of Constantinople; who is spoken of as a person highly accomplished, both as a scholar and a man of the world. †

\* Honorius excused the inferior clergy from the tax on trade and commerce, in which they were allowed to be concerned, on account of the funds of the church not being sufficient for their support, together with that of the inferior clergy. *Bingham*, p. 179. (P.)

† Sozom. Hist. L. viii. C. i. p. 323. Socrat. Hist. L. vi. C. xxii. p. 340. (P.) "Sisinius was educated with the emperor *Julian*, under Maximus the philosopher." Socrates says, that "he was beloved by men of all sects." He "died in 407, and

Nectarius, bishop of Constantinople, dying about this time, the great reputation of John, a presbyter of Antioch, (who afterwards, for his eloquence, obtained the name of *Chrysostom*,\* and whose history will make a great part of that of this reign,) induced both the prince and the people to make choice of him for his successor; though Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, envied him that elevation, and wished to have a presbyter of his own church raised to that dignity.

Chrysostom was a native of Antioch, originally designed for the bar; but being disgusted with that profession, he applied himself to sacred literature, and persuaded two of his friends, Theodorus and Maximus, who had attended the lectures of Libanius along with him, to do the same. Afterwards, this Theodorus was made bishop of Mopsuestia, and became famous as the master of Nestorius. Maximus was bishop of Seleucia, in Isauria. But before their elevation to these bishoprics, they had led a monastic life, under Diodorus and Celerus, of whom the former was afterwards advanced to the bishopric of Tarsus, and wrote many books, in which he explained the Scriptures in their obvious and literal sense. He is also said to have held that opinion which was afterwards called Nestorianism, and to have taught it to Theodorus, as the latter did to Nestorius himself.

While Chrysostom was at Antioch, he wrote several of his books, as well as acquired great reputation by his eloquent preaching. He was a man of great simplicity of character, severity of manners, and freedom of speech, which brought him many enemies.† His whole history shews, that, notwithstanding his great virtues, he was very haughty and arbitrary.

This temper, and these manners, which led him to be very strict with his clergy, and to depose many of them, soon created him enemies in his own church; and he also made himself enemies at court, both by his uncompliant temper, and his invectives against Eutropius, who was over the bed-chamber, and Gamas, the Goth, who was master of the horse. The former had offended him, by petitioning for a law to take offenders from the churches in which they took sanctuary, and the latter, by proposing that the Arians, of whom he was

was succeeded by Chrysostom, who, "in his younger years, ſubſiſt'd a military captain, and had been Governor of the British Islands," *Lucian*, III. p. 229, 270. "The emperor, Chryſoſtom, made deputy of Britain by Theodosius, demeaned himself worthily," *Hist. Rom.* p. 111.

\* "Of *calvary* mentioned. He was not so called till long after his death," but "bishop of Constantinople," *Lucian*, V. p. 121.

† See at *Hist. Levi. C. i.*—in pp. 295, &c. *P. v.*

one, might have the use of one of the churches within the city. He also gave offence to other courtiers. But his greatest enemy, after some time, was the empress Eudoxia, and with respect to her, Chrysostom certainly behaved very improperly.\*

Chrysostom's most faithful adherents were the people, with whom his eloquence made him amazingly popular. Indeed, people of all ranks crowded to hear him: and by his means many of the Pagans became converts to Christianity, and many sectaries were brought over to the catholic church. It would have been well if this eloquent preacher had confined himself to this mode of making converts; but he made no scruple of having recourse to others, which less became a Christian bishop. In a very harsh manner he threatened Sisinius, the Novatian bishop of Constantinople, that he would take his church from him. But being a man of the most pleasing manners, and a great favourite at court, as on every account he deserved to be, and as the Novatians were protected by the laws, it was not in the power of this imperious bishop to carry his threats into execution.† The Arians were more in his power, though we have no account of any particular violence that he was guilty of with respect to them.

Chrysostom did not confine his attention to the city of which he was bishop, but also took strict cognizance of every thing within his diocese, as a metropolitan; and there being much corruption, and many abuses, in the churches, he expelled from their sees no less than thirteen bishops in the neighbourhood of Ephesus only, and also the bishop of Nicomedia, and put others in their places. He was, however, blamed by many for his behaviour on this occasion, as he deprived many of the Novatians, with whom he had no business, and also the *Quartodecimans*, of their churches; and for making Heraclides, one of his own presbyters, bishop of Ephesus; he being generally thought to be unworthy of that honour. By doing what he thought to be his duty in these cases, but in a more arbitrary manner, and with more severity, than became him, he made himself still more enemies; and they now began openly to accuse him of exceeding the bounds of his authority.‡

He was particularly accused of cruelty in inveighing against Eutropius, as he lay under the communion table of

\* Socrat. Hist. L. vi. C. v. p. 3. 4. (P.)

† Ibid. C. xxii. p. 341. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. xix. p. 398. Sozom. Hist. L. viii. C. vi. p. 559. (P.)

the church, in which he had taken refuge, when he was out of favour at court, and thought his life in danger; the bishop having taken this opportunity of making an harangue to the people, in which he declaimed against the insolence of the great, and of the instability of all human power.\* He particularly drew upon himself the ill offices of Serapion, his archdeacon, who was a proud and quarrelsome man; of Olympias, a rich young widow, who had been made deaconess, but whom he reproved for making an improper distribution of her wealth; and of the monks in general, many of whom he reproached for leaving their monasteries, and coming abroad into the world unnecessarily. All these joined in taking every opportunity of censuring him, and among other things for never going to any entertainment, but always eating by himself, which they attributed to pride, but his friends to the particular attention that he was obliged to give to his diet, in consequence of his weak constitution, and the intensity of his studies.†

Chrysostom had also a quarrel with Severianus, bishop of Gabala, in Syria, of whom he himself had been very fond, and to whom he had committed the care of his church when he went on his progress through Asia; and also with Antiochus, bishop of Ptolemais, who on some occasion had come to Constantinople. But both these men had acquired great reputation as preachers, so as in some measure to rival Chrysostom, in what he most excelled, and no doubt prided himself in. Serapion contributed much to inflame this quarrel with Severianus. The latter being much admired by the emperor and empress, this quarrel gave them much disturbance, and the empress herself condescended to interpose between them; and at length, by her earnest entreaties, in which she placed her young child Theodosius on the knees of Chrysostom in the Church of the Apostles, she in some measure succeeded.‡

Chrysostom was not a little hurt in consequence of a controversy between his adversary Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, and the monks of Egypt; of which, for this and other reasons, being one of the most important circumstances in the ecclesiastical history of this period, it will be necessary to give an account.

The more ignorant of these monks, who were a great majority of them, maintained that God was corporeal, and had

\* Sazon Hist. Eccl. viii. c. viii. p. 106. P. — 3. Ibid. c. ix. p. 107. P.  
 † Ibid. c. x. p. 108. Socrat. Hist. Eccl. c. x. p. 125. P.

the form of man; hearing with real ears, and seeing with real eyes, as he is represented in the popular language of the Scriptures. Theophilus, the bishop of Alexandria, in a paschal letter, (which it appears to have been the custom of the bishops of that city to write annually,) condemned this opinion. But the monks thereupon coming in crowds to the city, and threatening his life, he dissembled with them, and made them believe that he was of their opinion; and when they required him to condemn the books of Origen, which they said were unfavourable to it, he assured them that he was as much displeas'd with the opinions of Origen as they were.\*

This business might have ended here, had it not been for the animosity which Theophilus had conceived against four brothers, whose names were Ammonius, Dioscorus, Eusebius and Euthymius (who for their size were commonly called *the tall*), to whom he had been much attached, and whom he thought ungrateful. One of these, viz. Dioscorus, he had made a bishop, but the other three, notwithstanding his earnest remonstrances, would leave him, and follow the monastic life, as they had done before he invited them to Alexandria. In order to do these men an injury, it is said that Theophilus accused them to their friends of being favourers of the opinions of Origen, and believing God to be incorporeal. This excited almost a civil war among the monks, who had little to do but to dispute; and by them were first introduced the two appellations of *Origenists* on the one hand, and *Anthropomorphites* on the other, both being used as terms of reproach.†

At length, Dioscorus, Ammonius, and about eighty more of the monks, having seen through the malice of Theophilus, left Egypt, and went first to Jerusalem, and thence to Scythopolis; thinking that place a convenient retreat, as it abounded with palm trees, the leaves of which the monks made use of in their manufactories. But Theophilus having sent to Constantinople to do them all the ill-offices in his power, Ammonius and his friends went thither also, accompanied by Isidorus, from the church of Alexandria, to complain of Theophilus. Chrysostom received these monks very kindly, and though he did not admit them to communion, yet, as he had heard no accusation against them, he permitted them to pray in his church. He also wrote to Theophilus

\* Sozom. Hist. L. viii. C. xi. p. 340. (P.)

† Ibid. C. xii. p. 341. Socrat. Hist. L. vi. C. vii. p. 319. P.

in their favour, desiring him either to restore them to his communion, as persons who thought justly concerning God, or else to send some person properly authorized, to accuse them. But to this Theophilus made no reply.

Some time after this, Ammonius and his friends complained to the empress of the ill usage of Theophilus, and she received them very graciously, promising that a synod should soon be called, and that justice should be done them. This being reported at Alexandria, with the addition, which was not true, that Chrysostom had received the monks into his communion, Theophilus was more than ever inflamed against him; and from this time it is said that he formed a plan to eject him from his see.\*

Carefully concealing his designs, Theophilus for the present only wrote to the distant metropolitans, requesting that they would join him in censuring the works of Origen. Epiphanius, the metropolitan bishop of Cyprus, entered into his measures, and having called a synod of the bishops of that island, passed a regular censure upon Origen, but upon what account is not said. It is not, however, at all probable, that he, or any of the bishops of this age, would take part with the monks of Egypt, and condemn the works of this great man, because he supposed God to be incorporeal.

When Theophilus heard what had been done in Cyprus, he also called a synod of the bishops, and did the same in Egypt. But Chrysostom paid no attention to what they had done, which gave great offence to these two metropolitans; and his own clergy, perceiving that something was in agitation against their bishop, with whom they were on very kind terms, did every thing in their power towards calling a council on the subject, which, accordingly, seems to have been summoned, and on this business Epiphanius went to Constantinople, and Theophilus, having sent the bishops of his diocese before him, followed leisurely himself.†

Epiphanius, while he was at Constantinople on this business, declined having any communication with Chrysostom, and conferring privately with the other bishops, urged upon them the necessity of condemning the works of Origen, and excommunicating Dioscorus and his companions. But partly through the remonstrances of the other bishops in favour of Origen, and partly through the civilities of Dioscorus and his friends to himself, he became sensible of the impro-

\* See in Hist. L. vi. C. xiv. p. 114. P.

† See in Hist. L. vi. C. ix. x. pp. 103, 104. P.

priety of his conduct, and left the city; but he died before he reached Cyprus.\*

At this critical time, Chrysostom unfortunately drew upon him the indignation of the empress, by an invective against women, in which he was thought to allude to the empress herself; having been offended at her, on the idea, whether just or not, that she had taken part with Epiphanius, and others, against him, and that when her son was sick, she had employed Epiphanius to pray for him. In this state of things the bishops assembled at Chalcedon, where Cyrinus, a friend of Theophilus, was bishop; and there, the enemies of Chrysostom being the majority, and he not choosing to obey their summons, but appealing to a more general council, a sentence of deposition was pronounced against him. At the same time, Theophilus behaving kindly to the monks, and receiving them into his communion, they made no complaints against him, nor was any thing said about the works of Origen. This was the more easily managed, as Dioscorus had died just before, and Ammonius was sick at the time of holding this council. †

## SECTION II.

*From the Deposition of Chrysostom, A. D. 403, to his Death, A. D. 407, and that of Arcadius, A. D. 408.*

THE people of Constantinople, hearing of what had passed at Chalcedon, were so tumultuous, that it was with great difficulty that Chrysostom could obey the order of the council, so as to withdraw from the city privately. After this, the people assembling from all places, and crowding to the palace, the emperor could not resist their importunity to have their bishop recalled. Accordingly, an order was issued for the purpose, and notwithstanding all the remonstrances of Chrysostom, that he ought not to return to his see, till those who had deposed, should be brought to reinstate him, he was obliged to resume the episcopal functions. At the same time, the sailors, and other persons from Egypt, taking part with their bishop, and the people of Constantinople with theirs, both sides had recourse to arms, and many were wounded, and some killed: in consequence of

\* Sozom. Hist. L. viii. C. xiv. xv. p. 344. Socrat. Hist. L. vi. C. xiv. p. 329. (P.)  
 † Ibid. C. xvii. p. 347. Ibid. C. xv. p. 351. (P.)

which, Theophilus left the city, and returned to Egypt. After this, a synod of about sixty bishops assembled at Constantinople, and rescinded all that had been done against Chrysostom at Chalcedon.\*

Chrysostom, confiding perhaps in his popularity, and irritated against the empress, gave way to the natural vehemence of his temper, on occasion of a statue of her being erected on the south side of a church, just before the senate-house, and the pompous ceremonies with which it was placed there, all which, he said, was done in contempt of the church, and accordingly he exclaimed against it in his sermons. This the empress took so ill, that she endeavoured to call another synod. But the bishop was so far from being intimidated, that he reproached her for her conduct, more openly than ever, calling her another Herodias, who wished to have the head of another John, meaning his own, in a charger. Such language as this can never be justified; and it is no wonder that the empress was now bent upon his ejection, and that the emperor, who was wholly governed by her, was drawn into her measures.

Accordingly, on the Christmas-day following, the emperor declined going to church as usual, and sent to inform the bishop, that he should not communicate with him till he had given satisfaction with respect to the charges advanced against him; and he replying that he was ready to answer any thing that could be laid to his charge, a synod of the neighbouring bishops was assembled, and in this he was condemned, for having resumed the episcopal functions without proper authority. When he pleaded that the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon had been reversed by another, which was subsequent to it, it was replied, that the latter was not so numerous as the former, and therefore could not, according to the canons, reverse its decrees. This law had been made by the Arians, when they deposed Athanasius, and were apprehensive of a change in the future temper of the times: and of this the Catholics, who had no better precedent to serve their purpose, thought proper to avail themselves.† Who does not see the decisive influence of the will of the governing powers, in these three councils?

After this sentence, Chrysostom desisted from discharging any of the episcopal functions, and confined himself to the

\* See our Hist. T. viii. C. xviii. xix. pp. 548, 550. Socrat. Hist. L. vi. C. xvi. xvii. pp. 552, 554. P.

† Ibid. C. xx. p. 551. Ibid. C. xxvii. p. 565. P.

episcopal house: but his adherents, whenever they had opportunity, to shew their attachment to him, formed separate congregations, and were called *Joannites*. As it was evident that the people would never be quiet till the bishop was removed, the emperor banished him to Cuseusum, in Armenia; but though much contrivance was used in conveying him out of the city, a tumult could not be prevented, and in it the church and senate-house mentioned above, were burned down.\*

The friends of Chrysostom still refusing to communicate with his enemies, though Arsacius, a very worthy man was appointed to succeed him, the emperor sent soldiers to disperse them, wherever they were assembled; and, as is almost unavoidable when soldiers are employed, many persons were plundered of what they had of most value, and many quitted the city, especially one Nicarete, a native of Nicomedia, of whom Sozomen gives the highest character.

When all was quiet within the city, the prefect began to make inquiry who were the authors of the fire; and being a Heathen, he seemed to rejoice in the calamity, and inflicted heavy punishments on many persons.† On this occasion, many of the friends of Chrysostom forming separate congregations, a law was made to prevent any of the Catholics making any such schisms for the future, on the penalty of excommunication.‡

Innocent, bishop of Rome, being informed of these proceedings against Chrysostom, by Cassian, and others of his friends who had been sent from the East for the purpose, was much displeas'd at them, and wrote a letter of consolation to him, and another to the people of his see, censuring their conduct; and observing that an Arian synod, by the rules of which they had been guided, ought not to have served as a precedent for the Catholics, and that it was necessary to call a more general council to restore the peace of the church. But the pains which he took for this purpose were defeated by the enemies of Chrysostom at Constantinople.§

The death of the empress, some peculiar circumstances in that of Cyrinus the bishop of Chalcedon, Chrysostom's inveterate enemy, and also a great hail which fell at Constantinople presently after his banishment, were interpreted by

\* Sozom, Hist. L. viii. C. xxi. xxii. p. 352. (P.)

† Ibid. C. xxiii. p. 354. Socrat. Hist. L. vi. C. xviii. p. 335. (P.)

‡ Ibid. C. xxiv. p. 356. (P.)

§ Ibid. C. xxvi. p. 359. (P.)

his friends as marks of the divine displeasure at the conduct of his enemies.\* In the mean time, he, having much wealth at his command, from the liberality of his friends, and especially of Olympias the deaconess, employed it in acts of generosity, especially in redeeming from the Isaurians many persons whom they had carried away as slaves, in their incursions to plunder the country; and in consequence of this conduct, he lived in great reputation among the Armenians, and many persons flocked to him from Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.† This being a great mortification to his enemies, they procured an order for his removal to Fityus; but he died on the journey at Comanis in Armenia, owing, it is said, to the hardships to which he was exposed.‡

In the reign of Theodosius II. ample justice was done to the memory of Chrysostom, his relics being then carried with great pomp, and an amazing concourse of people, to Constantinople, on which occasion the Propontis was covered with vessels, and these being all furnished with torches, they made a most magnificent spectacle. When the relics were deposited in the church, the emperor himself looking towards the coffin, solemnly asked pardon in the name of his ancestors for the injuries which they had done him.§

Arcadius himself did not long survive Chrysostom, but died A. D. 408, universally beloved for his piety and gentle disposition, without any reflection but that of having been governed too much by his favourites and his wife. He left a son of the name of Theodosius, just weaned, and three daughters, of whom the eldest, Pulcheria, was remarkable for her virtue and piety, and the care which she took of the education of her brother, in whose name Anthemius, the prefect of the prætor, upwards, administered the affairs of the government.

### SECTION III.

#### *Of the Disturbances in Egypt.*

SINCE the empire became Christian, the Jews had not suffered much, the catholic emperors having had no other objects of their hostilities besides the Heathens and the Arians. But they sometimes brought themselves into

\* Eccl. Hist. II. c. l. v. C. xix. p. 558. (P.)

† S. Rom. Hist. l. viii. C. xxv. p. 567. (P.)

‡ Eccl. Hist. C. xxvii. p. 367. (P.) — Jussef Hist. L. v. C. xxxvi. p. 256. (P.)

difficulties, and suffered in consequence of their turbulent disposition, and their inveteracy towards the Christians. In this reign they were expelled from Alexandria for their cruel and licentious proceedings on the following occasion :

The people of this city were always disposed to factions, and the Jews, who resided there in great numbers ever since the time of Alexander the Great, were as ready as any other of the inhabitants to enter into them ; and, at this time, the people were much divided about a set of players, who exhibited on a Saturday, when the Jews, having nothing else to do, attended. They seeing one Hierax, a school-master, and a great admirer of Cyril, (the bishop who had succeeded Theophilus,) being always ready to begin to clap whenever he preached, enter the theatre, cried out that he came thither for no other purpose than to raise a disturbance ; and the Jews being favoured by Orestes, the civil governor, who was jealous of the power of the bishop, on account of his frequently controuling him in his measures, Hierax was seized, and on some pretence, which is not mentioned, he was exposed to torture on the public theatre.

This proceeding greatly exasperated Cyril, who sent for the chief of the Jews, and threatened them with his vengeance if they did not desist from their ill-offices to the Christians. But they, thinking they had the favour of the governor, were not disposed to conciliation. On the contrary, a number of the lower sort of them, having agreed upon a signal by which to distinguish one another, drew together a great concourse of people in the night, by a cry which they raised, that the principal church in the city was on fire, and in the confusion which this occasioned they killed many Christians.

The authors of these murders being known, Cyril, without consulting the governor, went the next day with a great multitude, and both seized upon the synagogue, and expelled all the Jews from the city. The prefect, displeased at this irregular and violent proceeding, and concerned to see such a number of people leave the city, complained to the emperor, to whom Cyril also wrote, to explain the reasons of his conduct. The bishop and the prefect being now declared and irreconcilable enemies, the monks of Nitria, taking the part of the bishop, came to the number of four or five hundred, and attacking the prefect, wounded him dangerously on the head with a stone, and dispersed his attendants. But the people of the city coming to his assistance drove away the monks, and seizing on one of them, viz

Ammonius, who has been mentioned before, they exposed him to so great torture that he died under it. This man Cyril buried in a church with great parade, as if he had been a martyr, though the historian says, that sensible and moderate persons saw his death in a very different light, as he did not suffer for his profession of Christianity, but in consequence of engaging in civil faction.

The party of Cyril incurred still more blame by the shocking violence of which they were guilty with respect to the celebrated Hypatia, who, though a woman, taught philosophy in the public Platonic school at Alexandria. Because she was often observed to be in conversation with Orestes during this disturbance, it was imagined that she was in the party against the bishop; and in consequence of this a number of his friends, with Peter, a reader in the church, at their head, seized upon her as she was going home in a chair, and dragging her into a church, they first stripped her naked, and then killed her with tiles; and having torn her, limb from limb, they burned the parts in a public place in the city. This horrid outrage, unworthy even of brutes, justly brought a great degree of odium on Cyril, and the Christians in general. This happened in Lent, in the sixth year of Theodosius, A. D. 414.

In this last act of violence the Jews are not mentioned as having taken any part. If they had, it would have been that of Hypatia, but at that time they were probably out of the city. But several of them suffered by the order of the emperor on another occasion. At a place called Immester, between Antioch and Chalcis, the Jews were entertaining themselves with deriding the Christians, and Christ also. To do this more effectually, they tied a christian boy to a cross, at first only in ridicule, but at length they began to beat him, and whether they intended it or not, he died of the ill usage. The emperor being informed of the transaction, ordered the governor of the province to make inquiry into the fact, and in consequence of it all the persons concerned suffered capital punishment.\*

#### SECTION IV

##### *An Outline of the political Events of the Reign of Honorius*

As we are drawing near to the fall of the Western empire, which makes a distinguished era in ecclesiastical history, it

\* See Hist. L. vi. C. xii.—xvi. pp. 263, &c. P.

may not be displeasing to the reader if I give a sketch of the political events of it.

Both the sons of Theodosius being left very young, viz. Arcadius about eighteen years of age, and Honorius not more than eleven, they were committed to the care of able guardians, the elder to that of Rufinus, and the younger to that of Stilicho, who was originally a Vandal, but who had risen by his merit to the command of the army, and had married a niece of Theodosius.

Stilicho was successful in his wars against the Goths, who had ravaged Greece; but by the intrigues of Eutropius, who, on the death of Rufinus, governed in the East, he was there declared a public enemy, the governors of the two parts of the empire being then jealous of each other. At the persuasion of Eutropius, Gildo, who commanded for Honorius in Africa, revolted against him, but he was reduced by Stilicho.

A. D. 387. Alaric the Goth, invaded Italy, but being defeated by Stilicho at the battle of Pollenza, he quitted it. After this battle Honorius abolished the shows of gladiators, which, though forbidden by Constantine, had been tolerated by his successors.

A. D. 405. Italy was again invaded by Alaric and Rhadagaisus the Pagan, with an army of not less than two (some say four) hundred thousand men, but they were completely defeated by Stilicho, with little loss. Rhadagaisus was taken and put to death, and his immense army was totally destroyed and dispersed.

A. D. 407, the Roman army in Britain chose Constantine for their chief, and he soon made himself master of Gaul and Spain; and Honorius, unable to oppose him, acknowledged him as a partner in the empire.\* About the same time

\* "The Vandals having broke in and wasted all Belgia, even to those places from whence easiest passage is into Britain, the Roman forces here, doubting to be suddenly invaded, were all in uproar, and in tumultuous manner set up Marcus, who it may seem was then deputy. But him not found agreeable to their heady courses, they as hastily kill: for the giddy favour of a mutinying rout is as dangerous as their fury. The like they do by Gratian a British Roman, in four months advanced, adored, and destroyed. There was among them a common soldier whose name was Constantine, with him on a sudden so taken they are, upon the conceit put in them of a luckiness in his name, as without other visible merit to create him emperor. It fortun'd that the man had not his name for ought: so well he knew to lay hold, and make good use of an unexpected offer. He therefore with awakened spirit, to the extent of his fortune dilating his mind, which in his mean condition before lay contracted and shrunk up, orders with good advice his military affairs: and with the whole force of the province, and what of British was able to bear arms, he passes into France, aspiring at least to an equal share with Honorius in the empire." Milton, *Hist. B.* ii. p. 115.

Sulicho having instigated Alaric to invade Italy, his treachery was discovered, and he was put to death, being succeeded by Olympius.

The next year Alaric advanced and laid siege to Rome, but on the promise of a sum of money he retired. The sum not being paid, and being joined by Athaulphus, who had married his sister, he went to Rome again, and being received by the inhabitants, he made Attalus emperor. Honorius, however, being assisted by Theodosius the younger, who had succeeded his father Arcadius, A. D. 408, continued in Ravenna, and Alaric being offended with Attalus, deposed him. But the inhabitants of Rome refusing to admit him into the city, he took and plundered it, A. D. 410. After this, Alaric retired into Campania, and soon after died, leaving Athaulphus his successor. About the same time Constantine invaded Italy, but being defeated in Gaul, he and his son were put to death.\*

A. D. 412, the Gauls left Italy, and the year following Heraclianus revolted in Africa, but flying at the approach of the troops sent to reduce him, he was put to death at Carthage. From this time Honorius enjoyed the empire in quiet till his death, A. D. 424, after a reign of twenty-eight years from the death of his father.

Honorius, like his brother Arcadius, was a well-meaning and pious, but a weak prince, utterly unequal to the conduct of the empire, in the precarious situation in which it then was; and Italy and all the countries subject to him, were grievously exhausted by the wars in which he was engaged, and especially by the neglect of agriculture, and the famines which were occasioned by those wars. He was succeeded by his son Valentinian III. at that time only five years old.

## SECTION V.

### *Treaties relating to Heathenism*

THE Heathens, seeing the desolation of the empire by the ravasion of the northern nations, said that it was owing to the disuse of their rites, and the prevalence of another reli-

\* His enemy, who had fled to his settling out; for, — siege in Arles, and restoring the charge of his wife, — to save his head, poorly turns priest, — that not availing him, is carried into Italy, and there put to death, having formerly seduced the emperor. — *Noton, Hist. B. ii. p. 115.* — See Rapin, E. i. pp. 109, 110.

gion than that under which it had risen and flourished; and this gave occasion to that excellent treatise of Austin, *Of the City of God*, in which he shewed the vanity of the heathen religion, and how ill-founded this opinion was. But there was at this time a much more effectual confutation of it in the event of the war with Rhadagaisus.

He had revolted from Honorius, ravaged Pannonia, and entering Italy, A. D. 405, with the prodigious army mentioned above, threatened to plunder Rome. As he was a Heathen, and very superstitious, never failing to sacrifice to his gods every morning, the Heathens, who were still in great numbers in the city, gave out that he would certainly succeed, and said that nothing could save them but abolishing Christianity, and restoring the religion of their ancestors. Indeed the Christians were greatly terrified at this invasion. But the total defeat of Rhadagaisus by Stilicho, one half of his army perishing by famine, and the other falling by the sword, together with the death of this barbarian and his son, was an effectual confutation of that opinion of the Heathens, concerning the support which the empire received from the ancient religion.

The Heathens, uneasy, as Austin says, at the long duration of the Christian religion, gave out that an oracle had declared that the ancient religion would be restored, and Christianity abolished, every where, three hundred and sixty-five years after its promulgation, which he says ought to have expired A. D. 398.\* But, on the contrary, that year was peculiarly unfavourable to Heathenism, in consequence of the orders of the Christian emperors to demolish the temples, and destroy the idols. It was in this year that Gaudentius and Jovius, by the order of Honorius, destroyed the temples and images in Carthage, sparing only those which either served for the ornament of the city, or were capable of being converted into christian churches.

One of these temples dedicated to the goddess Ceres, or Astarte, was exceedingly magnificent, and of prodigious magnitude, encompassed also by temples of all the gods. The place," says some African writer, quoted by Dr. Lardner, "was surrounded with beautiful walls, the streets well paved with stones, and adorned with pillars; the whole in compass not much less than two miles. It having been shut up some while before, and after that neglected, was

\* *De Civitate Dei*, l. xviii. c. ult. Opera, v. p. 1131. (P) "Some Gentiles published some Greek verses, as received from an oracle." *Lardner*, IX. p. 113.

grown over with thorns and thistles. And when the Christians proposed to apply it to the use of their own religion, the Gentile people exclaimed against it, crying out that there were dragons and asps which guarded the temple, so that it would be dangerous to come near. But the Christians, instead of being terrified thereby, were the more animated with a desire to clear the ground, and consecrate the place to the truly heavenly king their Lord,\* alluding to the former dedication of this temple to Cœlestis, or the queen of heaven.

In general, the Heathens made no opposition to the demolition of their temples, but when, about the time of this transaction, a temple of Hercules was attacked by the Christians at Sufertia, a Roman colony in Africa, the Heathens resisted, and killed at least sixty Christians. However, the image of Hercules was destroyed.

Another disturbance on this occasion happened at Calama, A. D. 408 or 409, soon after the law enacted by Honorius, in which the solemnities of the Heathens were expressly forbidden; the account of which is thus given by Austin: "On the first day of June, in contempt of laws lately enacted, the Heathens celebrated one of their sacrilegious solemnities, without prohibition from any, passing through the streets, and dancing before the church in an insolent manner, not practised even in the times of Julian; and when some ecclesiastics attempted to interrupt them, they threw stones against the church. About eight days after, when the bishop put the chief men of the city in mind of the laws, of which they were not ignorant, and when they were going to take some care of the affair as the laws directed, those insolent people again threw stones at the church.

The next day the ecclesiastics went to the magistrates, desiring to enter a process against them, but were refused. On the same day they began to throw stones a third time, and also to set fire to the houses of some of the ecclesiastics, and actually killed one person, the rest concealing themselves, or making their escape as well as they could. The bishop hid himself in a private place, where he heard those who were seeking for him with a design to kill him, say that they had done nothing till they found *him*.

St. Nicetas, a Heathen, and a man of distinction in the place, hearing of this disturbance, and apprehensive of the consequences, wrote a respectful letter to Austin, earnestly

\* See *Test. IV.* p. 413. — *P.* — *W.* 3, IX. p. 175.

entreating for mercy. To this he replied, that he and the other bishops were disposed to shew all the gentleness that became Christians ; but that it was necessary to inflict such punishment as might be sufficient to deter others from following so bad an example.\* Whether any punishment was inflicted is not said, but the greatest friend of universal toleration must acknowledge that such flagrant breaches of the peace as this was, on whatever pretence committed, ought to be restrained by proper punishments.

## SECTION VI.

### *Of the Arians in this Period.*

IT happened in the time of Chrysostom, that the Arians not being allowed to hold any assemblies within the city, but only without the gates, gained much popularity by their singing, in which they exercised themselves every Saturday and Sunday, on which there were assemblies for public worship. This they did principally at the gate of the city, in a manner which appears to have been particularly pleasing, one part of the company singing one verse and another the next, and so alternately through the whole piece. This they would often do a great part of the night, and very early in the morning, they would march in procession through the middle of the city, singing all the way till they came to the place of their assembly without the gates ; and in these hymns the Trinitarians were often reflected upon, as they would frequently say, but in Greek verse. “ *Where are they who make three powers into one ?*” &c.

Chrysostom being alarmed at this, and fearing lest the more simple of the Catholics should be impressed with it, engaged a party of his own people to do the same ; and as the hymns of these Catholics were sung with more parade than those of the Arians, being attended with silver crosses and wax lights, the expense of which was defrayed by the empress, the Arians, who exceeded the other singers in number, were provoked at this opposition, and the two parties, after much contention no doubt, having at length recourse to arms, (in which it is most probable that they who had the countenance of the ruling powers would be the aggressors.) some were killed on both sides, and Briso, the empress's

\* Lardner's Test. IV. p. 425. (P.) Works, IX. p. 176.

eunuch, who instructed the orthodox singers, was wounded in the forehead with a stone. On this account the emperor forbade the singing of the Arians.\* To have been impartial, the singing of both the parties should have been prohibited.

The Arians were in great numbers at Synnada, in Phrygia, in this reign, and the persecution of them by Theodosius, the catholic bishop of the place, had a very singular effect. For Agapetus their bishop persuaded his followers to become Consubstantialists, and being more beloved than Theodosius, he was immediately chosen bishop by both the parties. Atticus, the bishop of Constantinople at this time, considering the event as favourable to the catholic cause, confirmed him in the see, and persuaded Theodosius to bear his exclusion with patience.† It is to be observed that these Arians were Macedonians, who differed little more than in words from the Consubstantialists, and who, as we have seen, had made no difficulty of uniting with them on a former occasion.

In this reign Dorotheus, the bishop of the Arians at Constantinople, died at the advanced age of one hundred and nineteen years, and was succeeded by Barba, in whose time the Arians appeared to advantage, in consequence of having two men of great eminence among them, Timotheus and George, of whom the latter was the best skilled in Greek literature, and the former in the knowledge of the Scriptures, which he was able to read in Hebrew. The historian Sozrates was acquainted with Timotheus, and admired the readiness with which he explained the difficult passages in Scripture; but he wondered that these two men should continue Arians, when one of them was a great admirer of Plato, and the other of Origen, both whose principles he thought unfavourable to their doctrine. He says, however, that they greatly improved upon the system of Arius, leaving out many of its impieties and blasphemies. But as this writer does not explain himself, it does not appear in what particulars they varied from Arius, or his followers.‡

The Arians in Italy hoped that Attilus would favour them, because he had been baptized by Sigisarius the bishop of the Goths, and was a man esteemed by Maric, who, like the rest of his nation, was an Arian. But this nominal empire of Attilus was of short duration: for Maric, who had made him emperor, soon deposed him again.§

\* Secret. Hist. l. vi. C. viii. p. 67. — P. — † Ibid. l. vii. C. iii. p. 518. — P. —  
 ‡ Ibid. l. vii. C. vi. p. 576. — P. — § Sozom. Hist. l. ix. C. ix. p. 375. — P.

## SECTION VII.

*Of the Novatians.*

THE Novatians continued to be very numerous in this period, and the Catholics, notwithstanding their agreement with them in so essential an article as that of the doctrine of the Trinity, did every thing in their power to suppress them. Chrysostom could not forbear threatening Sisinus, the Novatian bishop of Constantinople, that he would silence him as a heretic, saying there ought to be only one bishop in one city.\* Cyril, who succeeded Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, was still more violent. He shut up all the churches of the Novatians in that city, and took from them all their sacred vessels and ornaments. He even stripped Theopemptus their bishop, as Socrates says, of all his own effects.†

Notwithstanding these hardships, the affairs of the Novatians, in Constantinople at least, prospered greatly after the death of Sisinus, as well as before. Indeed, there seems to have been a succession of excellent men at the head of their churches in this metropolis, and men who were very deservedly in great favour at court, and with the people in general, though the catholic bishops took much umbrage at them. Sisinus, whose wish was a law to his people, had, on his death-bed, recommended Chrysanthius to succeed him. He was the son of Marcian, who had been bishop of the Novatians before Sisinus, had acquired great reputation by his military services, had been consul, and the emperor's vicar in Britain, and on his return to Constantinople, was candidate for the office of prefect of the city. His case was remarkably similar to that of Ambrose at Milan. For, like him, who had also held high offices in civil life, Chrysanthius was, with much difficulty, prevailed upon to accept the bishopric, and he distinguished himself as much by his faithful discharge of the duties of it afterwards; so that he added much to the credit of the Novatians in Constantinople. Out of his own fortune he contributed to the support of the poor; and he never received from the church more than two loaves, which were offered for the communion service every Lord's day. Out of his zeal to promote the interest of his sect, he engaged Ablabius, a

\* Socrat. Hist. L. vi. C. xxii. p. 341. (P.)

† Ibid. L. vii. C. vii. p. 352. (P.) Lardner, III. pp. 251, 252.

rieterian, whose elegant orations were much admired, to be his presbyter, and who was afterwards bishop of the Novatians at Nice.\*

The Novatians suffered at Rome as much as they did at Alexandria, through the jealousy and arrogance of the catholic bishops, Anastasius first, and afterwards Celestinus, doing the same that Cyril did: for they deprived the Novatians of their churches in that city, and obliged them to hold their assemblies in private houses. Till that time the Novatians had flourished much at Rome, having possession of many churches, with large congregations. But at Constantinople the Catholics acted a more generous part, and behaved towards them as brethren.†

## SECTION VIII.

### *Of the Donatists.*

IN Africa the Donatists continued to give as much trouble in this as in any former period. In A. D. 411, there was a solemn conference between them and the Catholics at Carthage, seven bishops being chosen on each side to manage the debate. On the part of the Catholics the principal was Austin, and on that of the Donatists was Petilian, bishop of Cirtha; and eight bishops were appointed to write. The acts of this conference are preserved, but they are not interesting at present, especially as it had no good effect, and things remained in the same state after the conference as before it. The Donatists did not desire the conference, but were compelled to it by the order of the emperors; and when they did meet, refused to sit in company with their adversaries, considering them as profane persons; and through the whole debate they resolutely maintained that theirs was the only true church. However, Marcellinius, the emperor's deputy, and who was the umpire in the debate, (how far a one may easily be imagined,) declared in favour of the Catholics; and by the sentence of this court, the Donatists were deprived of their churches, and punished in various other ways. His successor, Dulcinius, pursued these unhappy people with the same violence, banishing them from the country; in consequence of which, many of them are said to have destroyed themselves.

\* Secret. Hist. L. vii. C. xii. p. 56. — *P. J. Lardner*, III. p. 276.

† *Ibid.* C. ix. p. 394. — C. xi. p. 399. — *P. J.* *Ibid.* p. 282.

Gildon, who revolted from Honorius in Africa, having taken the part of the Donatists, they are said to have committed great ravages upon the Catholics, and to have massacred many bishops and presbyters; in consequence of which, a law was made to punish those outrages with death. Petilian above-mentioned, complained of this law as a persecuting one, but Austin properly replied, that robbers and murderers ought always to be punished. This Petilian was a learned and eloquent man, and wrote many books in defence of his sect, and among others, an instruction for their clergy, which was much admired. Austin was indefatigable in opposing the Donatists by conferences, preaching and writing, and his success was very considerable. By one means or other, however, they were so far reduced in his time, that we hear very little of them afterwards.\*

There seems to have been no reason why the Donatists might not have been tolerated as well as the Novatians, from whom they differed very little, especially as they were orthodox with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity. It was persecution that made them desperate, so that the long continuance of this schism, and all the mischiefs which arose from it, must be ascribed to the Catholics.

Several councils were held in Africa, in this period, especially one in A. D. 398, when two hundred and fifteen bishops met at Carthage, and made one hundred and four canons; † but as, like the decrees of most other provincial synods, they relate chiefly to matters of interior discipline, I do not think it necessary to trouble my readers with the particulars.

## SECTION IX.

### *Of the Pelagian Controversy.*

IT was in the reign of Honorius that the Pelagian controversy took its rise, a controversy which produced such lasting consequences in the Western part of the world, though they were but little known in the East. To this we

\* Suenr, A. D. 398. (P.) "They subsisted in Africa till the end of the sixth century, or later." *Lardner*, IV. p. 96.

† "On y régla plusieurs choses sur le célibat des diacres et des prêtres, et sur le baptême des enfans." *Tab. Chron.* prefixed to *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* p. cxxviii. There had been a council at Carthage, in 397, "pour réprimer la liberté que se donnoient les évêques des premières sièges, de prendre des titres superbes comme ceux de princes, et des souverains pontifes." *Ibid.* At this council were forty-four bishops, who determined which were "the canonical Scriptures," and "ordained, that nothing beside be read in the church under the name of divine Scriptures" *Lardner*, V. p. 79.

owe the doctrines of *original sin*, *predestination*, and that of the necessity of *supernatural grace*, to every good thought, word, or action, and ultimately that of *atonement*; doctrines of which we find no trace in any former period, but which, notwithstanding, took the deepest root in the Christianity of the Latin church, and which were so far from being removed by the reformation under Luther, that they were much strengthened by that means, and carried farther than before, in order to oppose the popish doctrine of *merit*, as the foundation of the doctrines of *supererogation* and *indulgencies*.

Pelagius was a British monk, (his original name probably *Morgan*, which he translated into Greek,) a man of excellent understanding, learning and good morals, who came to Rome in company with Celestius, an Irish monk, a little after A. D. 400. Offended at the superstition of the times, and especially at the notion of the mere act of *baptizing* washing away sin, he set himself to oppose it; maintaining that it was *good works*, and not *water*, that washed away sin. As one principal argument in favour of his doctrine, he alleged, that the design of baptism could not be to wash away sin, since it was applied to infants who had not sinned. This doctrine, so agreeable to good sense, and the plain tenor of the Scriptures, gave no offence at Rome, where it was first preached.\*

From Rome these two monks went to Africa, and thence Pelagius proceeded to Palestine, where he was well received by John, the bishop of Jerusalem. But his friend Celestius, preaching the same doctrine in Africa, excited the attention, and at length the utmost indignation, of Austin, the great oracle of that country, and indeed of his age, and of future ages.

This great man was shocked, as he says, to hear it advanced

\* Milton says, § 29. "About this time, though troublesome, *Pelagius*, a Briton, and the leisure to bring new and dangerous opinions into the church." *Hist. Brit.* p. 117. Milton would have mentioned Pelagius with more kindness when he wrote his short piece *Of True Religion*, almost the last employment of his pen. He there says of "Eutherians, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Socinians, Arminians," that "all these may have some errors, but are no heretics;" because "heresie is in the will, not in sense, professedly against scripture; error is against the will, in misunderstanding the scripture, after all sincere endeavours to understand it rightly." He then says, "The *Arminian* is condemned for setting up free will against free grace; for that temptation he declaims in all his writings, and grounds himself chiefly on scripture only." Milton, dds. "It cannot be denied, that the authors, or chief revivers, of all these sects or opinions, were learned, worthy, zealous and diligent men; as appears by their lives written; and the same, of their many eminent and learned followers, perfect and powerful in the Scriptures, holy and unblameable in their lives." *Milton's Works*, fol. 1697, pp. 429, 430.

that baptism was not applied for the remission of sins, which is so contrary to the very words of Scripture. From this it is evident that the notion of the baptismal water itself really washing away sin, which we have seen to have prevailed in the time of Constantine, had taken firm hold on the minds of Christians in general, since such a man as Austin did not escape its influence. It does not appear, however, that Austin, or any other person, had given due attention to the necessary consequences of this superstitious and absurd opinion before this time; and they might have remained unknown for ages, if it had not been for the controversy that followed on this subject between Austin and Pelagius. For Austin himself, as well as all other Christian writers on the subject of morals, and especially those who wrote against the Manichæans, (who held that some souls were necessarily wicked,) had advanced doctrines utterly inconsistent with what he maintained afterwards; saying that every man has a power to do the will of God, and to render himself acceptable to him.

But now, having to maintain the literal meaning of *baptism washing away sin*, and children having no sin of their own to be washed away by it, he said that they had *original sin*, (a name and thing entirely unknown before,) as they derived some defilement from Adam, from whom they were descended. Still, however, he did not say, with his followers in a much later period, that Adam was the constituted representative of his whole race, so that the guilt of his particular transgression was transferred to them, and that they were properly answerable for it; for the absurd ideas of *imputed guilt* and *imputed righteousness* were as yet unknown: but he thought that a natural *proneness to sin*, which might be called *defilement*, was derived from Adam to all his posterity.

In consequence of this, he was obliged to maintain that, till this sinfulness was done away, men had no power to do the will of God, and that this power could only be the gift of God, or his *special grace*, imparted at baptism. It was not therefore through life by any proper power of men's own, but only by the aid of this superadded and supernatural grace, that any man could do what was pleasing to God.

It does not appear to have shocked this great and good man, that, upon his scheme, all the Heathens must have been left in a state of damnation. But he owned that their good works (which, however, he sometimes called *shining sins*) were not only entitled to reward in this life, but would

lessen their future torment. The case of children dying unbaptized in infancy was still more puzzling upon this new system. For though it has not at all shocked some of Austin's followers, to think that a new-born child should be destined to suffer the extreme pains of hell-fire to all eternity, no person of the age in which Austin lived was at all prepared to receive it. However, as it was evident that their original sin had not been washed away, he could not, with any consistency with his new doctrine, maintain that they would be in the condition of those who had no sin. He therefore said that their sufferings would be so light, that their condition would be preferable to non-existence.

Before this controversy Austin had maintained, sensibly enough, that in the future state infants would not be the proper subjects either of reward or of punishment, and therefore that, when they entered upon it, it would neither be in a state of happiness nor misery; thinking, probably, that, as they had not gone through a state of trial or discipline here, they would hereafter.

As Austin could not deny that many persons who had been baptized became afterwards very wicked, and therefore could not be supposed to go to heaven; not to give up his doctrine of *baptism washing away sin*, he distinguished between *regeneration*, of which all who were baptized partook, and the capacity of *final salvation*, to which *perseverance* in virtue would alone entitle them. But since, in order to support his doctrine of original sin, he had maintained that by the fall of Adam all men had lost the power of doing the will of God, and of rendering themselves acceptable to him, and consequently that every good thought, word and work must be ascribed to supernatural grace, (which of course was the gift of God, and which, antecedently to good works, no man was entitled to more than another,) this great man was reduced to the farther necessity of maintaining that *persevering grace*, and consequently that *salvation* which was the consequence of it, was the sovereign and arbitrary gift of God, to those whom before the foundation of the world he thought proper to predestinate to eternal life, while all the rest of mankind were, without any fault of theirs, left in a state of *reprobation*, and of course doomed to everlasting punishment.

Shocking as these opinions are, and novel as they were in the age of Austin, his ingenuity was at no loss for arguments to support them, and especially from the epistles of Paul.

and his authority was so great, that after some time, and with some modifications, they were universally received in the Latin church.

To this very day this system, so fatal to virtue, if it were properly pursued, does not fail to recommend itself to many humble and pious persons, by its seeming to take from the *pride of man*, and to give all glory to God. This history, however, furnishes a remarkable instance of the many important consequences which sometimes follow from single and unguarded positions, and consequently ought to be a standing warning to us to give the most rigorous attention to *first principles*, as to *seeds*, from which great and unknown things may arise. Who would have imagined that from the superstitious notion of *baptism washing away sin*, Christianity would ever have been loaded, and disgraced, with such doctrines as *original sin*, absolute *predestination*, with its consequence, *reprobation*, and also with the doctrine of *atonement* in its highest sense, (or that the sufferings of an infinite being are necessary to expiate the sins of men.) and of men's being saved, not by any works of their own, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them?

I shall not give the particulars of this memorable controversy, observing only, that Austin procured the opinions of his adversary to be condemned, in a council held at Carthage, A. D. 419. But notwithstanding this, the Pelagian doctrine was, for some time, received with great applause at Rome. Sozimus, the bishop of Rome, being a favourer of it; nor was Austin's doctrine of predestination in particular confirmed, by any council, within a century after his death. For though it was defended by the most celebrated divines in the West, particularly by Prosper and Hilary, bishops in Gaul, it was never generally received in the East.\*

It also met with particular opposition in the southern parts of France, which was owing in a great measure to the popularity of Cassian, a native of Scythia, and a disciple of Chrysostom, who, after the fall of his master, came to Rome, and afterwards settled in Gaul, and founded two monasteries in the neighbourhood of Marseilles. Cassian, however, was no advocate for the doctrine of Pelagius, in its full extent, but maintained a doctrine which soon got the name of *Semipelagianism*.

\* "I found I still sailed with the stream of antiquity, seeing only one St. Austin, with his two *boatswains*, Prosper and Fulgentius, tugging hard against it, and often driven back into it, by the strong current of Scripture, reason and common sense." *Whitby, On the Five Points*, 1710, *Pref.* p. vi. See also Bishop Watson to Bishop Tomline, on his *Refutation of Calvinism*, *Watson's Life*, 1818, II. p. 419.

Pelagius himself had asserted, that mankind derive no injury whatever from the fall of Adam, and he denied the necessity of *internal grace*. But Austin's doctrine, of some moral depravity affecting all mankind, in consequence of the sin of Adam, and that of the necessity of supernatural grace to human virtue, was generally acceptable. These, therefore, were admitted by the Semipelagians. But to avoid the doctrine of *predestination*, which we have seen to be the natural consequence of the other, they held that, notwithstanding the necessity of divine grace, the imparting of it depended upon ourselves. They therefore said, that it was not necessary to the first beginning of repentance, but only to our progress in virtue: and that all the predestination to eternal life, which is mentioned in the Scriptures, is upon the foresight of those good works which make men the proper subjects of future happiness.

I must observe, however, that the doctrines of Austin, (though it is no wonder that many persons should be staggered at them, and receive them with difficulty,) necessarily follow from those first principles which the Semipelagians admitted. For, if divine grace be necessary to any act of virtue, it certainly must be so to the *first*, which of course is the most difficult of any: and if the imparting of *that* depend upon the arbitrary will of God, all the virtues of a man's life, and, consequently, his final happiness, must be equally dependent upon it. There is, therefore, no proper medium between the doctrines of Austin and those of Pelagius.

As there are only a few more particulars in the history of this controversy, which fall within the compass of my work, I shall not make a separate article of them, but just mention them here. Pelagius, and his friend Celestius, being overcome by the authority of Austin, were, in a manner, obliged to leave the continent of Europe, and they retired to Britain, where their tenets had found a favourer in Agricola, the son of Severinus.\* To counteract them, Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, of Troyes, were deputed by a synod in Gaul, to go over to Britain: and this mission had all the effect that could have been expected from it.† However,

\* See Severinus, a Pelagian, &c. page 10. *Milton*

† They by command preached, in churches, in streets, in fields, and now with great miracles, *by a writer*, &c. and some, rejoined others, and at *London*, in a public disputation, put to silence the chief adversaries. This reformation in the church was *believed to be* the cause of their success, a while after, in the field, for the Britons, marching out against the *Saxons and Picts*, and mistrusting their own power, sent to Germanus and his colleague. Germanus undertakes to be captain, and though the enemy passes on bravely, thus aloud cries *Halleluia*, which, he

upon their return, Pelagianism prevailed so much again, that, seven years afterwards, it was thought necessary that Germanus should visit Britain once more; and he was then accompanied by Severus, the bishop of Trier, the disciple of Lupus, bishop of Troies. And they exerted themselves so effectually, that, it is said, the Pelagians were banished the island, by the consent of all the inhabitants.\*

Whatever was the fate of the proper Pelagians, the Semi-pelagians had respectable advocates in Vincentius, bishop of Lirins, and Gennadius, both of them writers of eminence. Their great opponent was Prosper.

## SECTION X.

### *Of the Writers in the Time of Theodosius and his Sons.*

THIS period abounded with writers, and some of them were men of considerable eminence and reputation, and those in the West were superior, in general, to the Christian writers in that part of the world, in the former period.

Of Ambrose, mention has been made in the course of the history, as a man of singular courage and probity. He was a native of Rome, but of Gallic origin. On his being appointed bishop of Milan, he sold all his estates for the use of the poor, and applied himself wholly to sacred literature,† in which he was a great proficient, and became a voluminous writer. In his tracts on this subject, he appears to have been a strenuous defender of the doctrine of the Trinity, in favour of which he produced many new and singular arguments, or rather illustrations, which were

answered by the soldiers, the Saxons and Piets, supposing the noise of a huge host, throw themselves into flight." Thus was "left to the Britons plenty of spoil, and to the person and preaching of Germanus greater authority and reverence than before." Such is the tale of Constantius, in his life of Germanus, which, however, Milton appears, sufficiently to discredit. *Hist. B. iii. pp. 123, 124.*

\* Bede, L. i. C. xvii. pp. 18, &c. Suenr, A. D. 429. (P.) "The British clergy, too weak, it seems, at dispute, entreat the second time, *German* to their assistance, who—inquiring those authors of new disturbance, adjudges them to banishment. They therefore, by consent of all, were delivered to *German*: who, carrying them over with him, disposed of them in such place, where neither they could infect others, and were themselves under care of better instruction." *Milton, B. iii. p. 127.* Rapin attributes to *Germanus*, a much better employment in Britain, than leading an army, or *deporting* Pelagians; the institution of schools for youth, especially those designed for the church: "pour l'instruction de la jeunesse, et particulièrement pour ceux qui se destinent au service de l'Eglise." *Hist. L. i. Etat de l'Eglise, l. pp. 88, 142.*

† "Ambrose was called to the episcopate, from a secular course of life. For which reason he begs of God, to give him application, and necessary care, to understand the Scriptures." *Lardner, IV. p. 452.*

adopted by his disciple Austin, and which may be seen in my *History of Early Opinions concerning Christ*. Besides his tracts relating to the doctrine of the Trinity, which are three books concerning the Holy Spirit, five concerning faith, and a discourse on the incarnation, we have of his, six books on the sacraments, and as many on the work of the six days, an exposition of twelve psalms, and a variety of miscellaneous pieces.

Jerome was born at Stridon in Pannonia. When he was a boy he studied grammar under Donatus, at Rome, and rhetoric under Victorinus.\* Being determined to learn Hebrew, he was at a great expense in procuring Jewish teachers, and was the only Christian of his age who was master of that language. He travelled through Gaul with Bonosus, a man of fortune, and a companion of his studies, examining all the libraries in their way; and at Aquileia, he contracted a friendship with Rufinus, a presbyter of that place. Arriving at Antioch, he made choice of the monastic life; and residing four years in a solitude between Syria and Arabia, (where he was supported at the expense of Evagrius, a rich citizen of Antioch, in whose company he had travelled from Aquileia, through Dalmatia, Thrace, and several provinces of Asia,) he applied himself diligently to study, and there he began to write.

A. D. 378, he was made a presbyter, by Paulinus of Antioch, and going to Constantinople, a little before the general council there, he attached himself to Gregory of Nazianzum. In 382, Paulinus and Epiphanius took him with them to Rome, where he lived three years with Paula, a woman of high rank and great piety, and there he acted as secretary to Damasus, the bishop. Thence he went to Cyprus, Antioch, Jerusalem and Egypt, where he became a hearer of Didymus, the celebrated defender of the doctrine of the Trinity, in that country; and at length he settled at Bethlehem, where he composed the greater part of his works. Here he had a violent quarrel with Rufinus, and John, bishop of Jerusalem, on account of the principles of Origen, which they defended. He also entered deeply into the Pelagian controversy. But though he was strictly orthodox, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, he wrote nothing of consequence on that subject.

The greatest part of the writings of Jerome are common

\* He relates, however, "when he was yet very young, and at a grammar school, to have seen the execution of the death of Julian." — *Laodæa*, VIII, p. 59.

taries on the Scriptures. But besides these, we have of his, a catalogue of the ecclesiastical writers, the lives of Paul the hermit, of Hilarion, and of Malchus, and a great number of letters, many of which are controversial, and in favour of the monks, as those against Jovinian and Vigilantius, which are written with very unbecoming asperity. Jerome was the most learned of all the Christians of his age, being acquainted with Latin, Greek and Hebrew; and he was a man of great ability, but of a violent temper, and too much attached to the monkish maxims. For so voluminous a writer, his works are of little real value.\*

Rufinus, first the friend, and then the adversary of Jerome, † was a native of Aquileia, where he was made presbyter. Making choice of the monkish life, he went to Egypt, where he became conversant with the monks of Nitria, and with Didymus of Alexandria; but suffering much from the Arians, he removed to Palestine, where, being aided by the wealth of Melania, with whom he had travelled into the East, he founded a monastery, and there he spent about twenty-five years, hospitably receiving those, who, for the sake of religion, made pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Returning to Rome with Melania, A. D. 397, he translated the works of Origen into Latin; but rendering himself obnoxious on this account, and being likewise accused of plagiarism in that respect, he withdrew to Aquileia, where he wrote his books against Jerome. Being condemned as a heretic, by Damasus, bishop of Rome, and his native city being laid waste by Alarie, he retired to Sicily, A. D. 410, and died there in the year following.

Rufinus was one of the very few of the Latins who understood Greek, and almost the only one who took the pains to translate the writings of the Greeks into Latin. By this means we have now several of the works of Origen, which are not extant in the language in which they were written. But he is not thought to have translated exactly or faithfully. Indeed, he professed to alter what was most offensive in the works of his author. Rufinus's own works consist of commentaries on several parts of Scripture, an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, and two books of ecclesiastical history: but they are not of much value. ‡

\* See his *Article*, in *Lardner*, V. pp. 1—74.

† See *Lardner*, V. pp. 3, 9, 11.

‡ *Lardner* says, “the testimony of Rufinus is very valuable. He was a learned man, well acquainted both with the Greek and the Latin waters of the church.” V. p. 77.

Paulinus was a native of Rome, of a patrician and consular family from Gaul. His preceptor, Ausonius, being appointed tutor to the children of Gratian, he came to Rome along with him, and there he pleaded causes, and A. D. 375 was advanced to the consulship. The next year he travelled through most of the Western provinces, where he contracted an intimacy with Ambrose, Martin of Triers, and other considerable persons. After spending fifteen years in this excursion, he was made a presbyter by Eulampius, bishop of Barcelona, in Spain, the people almost forcing him to accept of that honour; and afterwards going to Nola, in Campania, he was made bishop of that city. He was a man of great piety and charity, so that when the Goths plundered Campania, he expended all his fortune in redeeming captives. He also laid out great sums in ornamenting his church with pictures and statues. His works consist of *epistles*, several of which are addressed to Sulpicius Severus, and of *poems*.\*

Austin, who was one of the greatest men, as well as the most voluminous writer, of his age, was a native of Tagasta, in Numidia, where his family was of considerable rank, and his mother Monica was remarkable for her piety and virtue. He distinguished himself so much by his application to literature, that when he was very young he taught grammar in his native city, and rhetoric at Carthage. For some time he frequented the bar, and then he became a Manichaean. But being tired of the wrangling of the lawyers, he, much against the will of his mother, went to Rome, where he had pupils, and thence he was sent by Symmachus, the prefect of the city, to teach rhetoric at Milan, in consequence of an order which he had received from the emperor, to send some able person thither in that character.

At Milan, Austin became intimately acquainted with Ambrose, who contributed much to wean him from his attachment to Manichæism. But he himself acknowledges, that he was reconciled to the doctrine of the Trinity, by reading the works of Plato, which had been translated into Latin, and that otherwise he should have embraced the doctrine of Photinus, and have thought that Christ was a mere man.

Returning to Africa, and being at Hippo upon some business, A. D. 391, he was with much difficulty prevailed upon to accept the office of presbyter; and, contrary to the

\* See his prose works, quoted in *Lardner*, V. pp. 175—178

custom which had prevailed in Africa, Valerius, the bishop of that city, employed him in preaching; and in this capacity he distinguished himself so much, that, contrary also to universal custom, he was, at the request of the bishop, and with much reluctance on his own part, ordained bishop along with him. This was an extraordinary measure which that church took, from their fear of losing a man whom they so highly valued.

In this distinguished rank Austin was, in the language of the apostle, *in labours most abundant*, and in all the duties of the episcopal office, most exemplary. Besides being principally concerned in all the councils of Africa, which were numerous in his time, he wrote more books than any other man of his age, most of them controversial, against the Manichæans, Donatists, Pelagians, and all who were called heretics. To promote learning among his clergy, he formed them into a collegiate body, and subjected them to a regular discipline, similar to that of the monasteries; and this excellent example was followed by other churches, which on this account were called *collegiate* ones. He died during the siege of Hippo, by the Vandals, A. D. 430, at the age of seventy-six.\*

I do not propose to enumerate all the writings of Austin that are now extant, but shall content myself with mentioning the principal of them. Besides his works of controversy, (among which is a large treatise on the doctrine of the Trinity, in fifteen books, in which he maintains the perfect equality of the three persons,) he wrote a most excellent work against the Heathens, entitled *De Civitate Dei*, which is one of the most learned and valuable productions of Christian antiquity. His other works are, commentaries on several parts of Scripture, *Meditations*, *Confessions*, consisting of a most candid and instructive account of the principal incidents of his life, (in which it is much to be wished that more persons had followed his example,) as also in his *Retractions*, a work written late in life, in which with the greatest frankness he acknowledges, and corrects, the mistakes he had made in his earlier productions. Besides these, we have of his a great number of small tracts, and many epistles.†

Sulpicius Severus was a native of Aquitania, in Gaul, and

\* In Austin's time, a canon was made, that no bishop should use any prayer in his church, but such as had been first examined and approved by his fellow-bishops, in council. *Bingham*, p. 610. (P.)

† See numerous quotations from *Augustine*, in *Lardner*, V pp. 80—128

of a noble family. In his youth he studied eloquence, and acquired considerable reputation at the bar, but after this he became a presbyter of Primulia, and was intimate with Martin of Triers, Paulinus and Jerome. At one time he was a Pelagian, but afterwards a Catholic, though a favourer of the doctrine of the Millenarians.\* He wrote in very elegant Latin, a concise ecclesiastical history, from the beginning of the world to A. D. 400, the life of Martin, above-mentioned, three dialogues, one on the virtues of the monks, and two concerning those of Martin, and likewise several epistles.

John Chrysostom, whose history has been given in the course of this work, was the most distinguished of all the Greek fathers, as Austin was among the Latins. The greatest part of his writings are sermons, or expositions of Scripture, delivered as sermons, with practical improvements annexed to them. The most regular of his treatises is a dialogue on the duties of a bishop. But in this, as in all his works, it is evident that he studied eloquence, in which, indeed, he greatly excelled. A serious man cannot help perceiving, that a display of his talents was too much an object with Chrysostom.† On the contrary, Austin does not appear to have written any thing with that view. He never wrote except when he thought he had something of importance to communicate. We, therefore, see more of the man, and of the heart, in his writings.

Synesius was a native of Cyrene, [Ptolemais,] in Lybia, who was sent on an embassy to the emperor Arcadius, about A. D. 400, to present him with a crown of gold; when he delivered an oration on the subject. About A. D. 410, his fellow-citizens pressed him to be their bishop, and though he frankly acknowledged that he could not part

\* See *Lardner*, V. p. 110. "He was against all persecution, and disliked the interposition of magistrates in things of religion," p. 165. See also a remarkable passage on Origen's "notion concerning the recovery and salvation of the devil," Pp. 106, 107.

† "In his first Homily, upon the title and beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, he says, 'To many this book is unknown, by others it is despised, because it is clear and easy.' The first of the Homilies upon the whole book, begins in this manner, 'Many know not this book, nor the writer of it.' Which expressions have induced some learned men to think, that the book of the Acts lay in much obscurity, and was not well known among Christians;" and "had not, at the beginning, in the Eastern churches, the same authority with the gospels and epistles." But it seems to me not a little strange, that any should understand Chrysostom, to speak nothing more than real truth, or plain matter of fact. They are full of rhetorical expressions, in which he exaggerates extremely. *Lardner*, V. p. 110, also III. p. 305.

with his wife, and that he was not even satisfied with respect to the doctrine of the resurrection, they allowed him his wife, and bore with his scruples.\* But after he was ordained, they had no cause of complaint with respect to his faith. He is reckoned an elegant writer, but his works are not of much value. They are, the oration above-mentioned, two books on providence, ten hymns, homilies on the seventy-fourth psalm, several small tracts, and a hundred and fifty-five epistles.

\* A Roman-catholic biographer, thus conceals the first of these reasons for a *nolo episcopari*, and admits the latter: "Synesius n'accepta cette dignité qu'avec beaucoup de répugnance. Elle lui paroissoit *contraire à la vie philosophique* qu'il avoit menée, et il n'étoit pas encore convaincu de tous les dogmes de la Religion Chrétienne." *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* V. 485. On Synesius and Hypatia, see *Lardner*, i X. pp. 82, 83.

## PERIOD XIII.

FROM THE DEATH OF HONORIUS, A. D. 424, TO THE  
FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE, A. D. 475.



### SECTION I.

*Of the Nestorian Controversy, till the Council of Ephesus.*

It might seem that nothing more could have been done, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, after the acknowledgment of the proper deity of Christ, and the perfect equality of all the three persons. But, in the reign of Theodosius II., who succeeded Arcadius, there arose among the Catholics another question, the decision of which occasioned as much disturbance as any that had preceded it.

It was no longer doubted among them, that there was a Trinity in the divine nature, or that one of the persons in this Trinity, viz. the second, or the *logos*, was united to the man Jesus; so that in Christ there were two natures, the divine and the human. But it had not been fully determined that these two natures made *one person*. There was, therefore, room for something very like Unitarianism, under all the forms of orthodoxy. For, by considering the two natures of Christ as distinct from each other, it might be said that Christ was properly a man, and that the divine *logos* dwelled in him, and acted by him; just as the proper Unitarians said, that Christ was a mere man, but that God the Father dwelled in him, and acted by him. And this was the doctrine which, from Nestorius, who advanced it, was called *Nestorianism*, and which is professed by a considerable part of the Eastern church to this day.

It may be questioned, however, whether Nestorius ever held this opinion, or had any clear conception of it, at the time that he drew upon him the notice of his brethren. As, on the other hand, it may be questioned whether the Catholics

themselves held any opinion on the subject that was really different from this, till, in the course of controversy, they came to consider it as heretical. For when it is allowed that there are two natures in Christ, so different as those of *God* and *man*, all the terms that could be contrived to express the *manner* of their union must be equally destitute of ideas. Consequently, when the Catholics did afterwards determine that these two natures make but *one person*, they did not, in reality, add any new proposition to their former creed, because no new ideas can be affixed to the terms. We are now therefore to consider what was in fact a mere controversy about *words*; but which was the cause of as much animosity, as if it had related to the most intelligible and the most important of *things*.

Nestorius was a native of Germanicia, who had been made a presbyter of the church of Antioch, where, like Chrysostom, he had acquired great reputation by his learning, his preaching, and his piety; and on the death of Sisinius, A. D. 427, he had succeeded to the see of Constantinople, whither he had brought Anastasius, one of his fellow presbyters, and a particular friend of his at Antioch. This Anastasius, in one of his sermons, reprov'd some of the common people for calling the Virgin Mary the *mother of God*; saying, that it was more proper to call her the *mother of Christ*, for that God could not be the offspring of a human being. Complaint being brought of this to Nestorius, he openly approved of what had been asserted by his presbyter, and added, as it is said, "that a child of two or three months old could not be a God;" meaning that what was born of Mary was mere man, though a divine nature was superadded to him afterwards.\*

Now in this there was nothing that was really contrary to any thing that had been declared to be orthodoxy by any council, or any eminent writer, such as Athanasius, Basil, or Gregory of Nazianzum. Because it had not been settled, or, as far as appears, so much as considered, at what time the divine nature was superadded to the human nature in Christ, whether at the moment of his conception in the womb, at the time of his birth, or at any other particular period; and it is very probable that had the question been proposed at the council of Nice, it would have been thought of little consequence, provided that when Christ began to

\* Socrat. Hist. L. vii. C. xxviii. xxix. xxxii. p. 380. Evag. L. i. C. ii. p. 253. (P.) Lardner, V. p. 207.

act in a public character, to preach, and to work miracles, he could be said to be truly *God and man*. For every imaginable consequence would be the same in all these cases; and all the arguments by which the doctrine of the divinity of Christ had ever been supported have just the same weight on all the suppositions. But human passions, when they interfere, as they did in a very great degree in this business, can make any question to be of importance; and here it happened that two men of over-bearing and violent tempers met. For such were the characters both of Nestorius, and Cyril of Alexandria, his rival and chief opponent.

Nestorius, immediately on his arrival at Constantinople, distinguished himself by his zeal against heresy; saying, in his first sermon, delivered in the presence of the court, "Give me, O emperor, the earth free from heretics, and I in return will give you heaven. Conquer the heretics for me, and I will conquer the Persians for you." Within five days after his ordination he drove the Arians to such extremity of despair, by endeavouring to take from them a place in which they held their private assemblies, that they themselves set fire to it, and many of the neighbouring houses were consumed along with it. From this circumstance not only the heretics, but those of his own persuasion, gave him the name of the *incendiary*. He endeavoured to suppress the Novatians, out of envy, says Socrates, of Paul their bishop, who was eminent for sanctity of manners.\* But the emperor restrained his violence. He also greatly harassed the Quartodecimans in Asia, Lydia, and Caria; and a sedition being excited at Miletus and Sardis, in consequence of this persecution, many persons lost their lives in it.†

The Macedonians were so much harassed in consequence of the orders of Nestorius, by Antoninus, bishop of Germa, that, out of despair and revenge, they conspired against his life and put him to death. And Nestorius, having obtained this advantage, must them, persuaded the emperor to take all their churches from them, and among them that which they had at Constantinople, at Cyzicum, and many others in the villages about the Hellespont. After this, says our historian, some of the Macedonians joined the Catholics.

In consequence of what Nestorius had maintained concerning Mary, not being the mother of *God* but only of

\* He died in 430. Socrates says, that at his funeral, he in a manner united all sects of religion into one church, for they all accompanied his body to the grave, singing psalms. — *Ecclésiaste*, III. pp. 15, 16.

† Socrat. Hist. L. vii. C. xxix. p. 73. — *P.*

*Christ*, he was by many charged with holding the opinion of Paul of Samosata and Photinus. But Socrates says that, after reading his works, he was satisfied that he held no such doctrine.\* Whatever was the real opinion of Nestorius at this time, Cyril of Alexandria, who was at enmity with him (*ἀπεχθὼς εἶχε πρὸς αὐτὸν*) as his predecessor Timotheus had been with Chrysostom, reproved him by his letters upon the subject; and Nestorius replying to him, a controversy arose, in which Celestinus, bishop of Rome, took part with Cyril; and in a synod held A. D. 430, condemned the doctrine of his adversary. Cyril also called a synod of the bishops of Egypt and Alexandria, in which was recited the letter which Celestinus wrote in consequence of this synod at Rome, and also twelve *propositions*, and as many *anathemas*, drawn up by Cyril himself, against the doctrine of Nestorius. These being approved by the synod, copies of them were transmitted to Nestorius at Constantinople.

Notwithstanding the resolutions of these synods at Rome and Alexandria, Nestorius made no change in his preaching; and in this stage of the business he had several respectable bishops on his side. John, bishop of Antioch, was entirely in his interest, thinking that Cyril renewed the heresy of Apollinaris; and Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, the historian, drew up twelve propositions in answer to those of Cyril, the object of which was to shew that he confounded the two natures of Christ, and gave to his human nature the honour that was due to the *logos*. The emperor himself was so much impressed by the representations of Nestorius and his respectable partizans, that he wrote to Cyril, accusing him of calumny, and of disturbing the peace of the church. Cyril, however, remonstrated, and persuaded him to call a general council to decide concerning the matter in dispute. Accordingly a council was summoned to be held at Ephesus A. D. 431.

## SECTION II.

### *Of the Council of Ephesus, and the Consequences of it.*

EPHESUS not being far from Constantinople, Nestorius was first at the place, Cyril also was there before the time appointed for holding the council; but John, bishop of Antioch, did not arrive in time, because he had not been

\* Socrat. Hist. L. vii. C. xxxii. p. 381. (P.)

able to collect all the bishops of his diocese. However, without waiting for them, Cyril took the place of president,\* which was thought to be improper, if not unfair, though he might plead that there was no other bishop present whose see was so high in rank as his own, except Nestorius himself, who was the person accused. But in equity, neither the *accused*, nor the *accuser* should have presided, but some indifferent person.

The president and all the other bishops having taken their places, the Scriptures, according to the custom of those times,† were placed on a throne in the middle of the assembly, as the authority to which they all appealed, and then Nestorius was called up. But though, since their arrival at the place, he had promised to be ready to attend, yet, after he had been summoned three times, he did not make his appearance: those who were present proceeded to examine into the business without him. Then, having read the letters of Cyril, of Celestinus, and of Nestorius himself on the subject, and having heard the evidence of what he was said to have declared since his arrival at Ephesus, and which he had declared in his sermons at Constantinople, viz. that “a child of two or three months old could never be a God,” they pronounced sentence of deposition against him, and it was signed by more than two hundred bishops who composed this council.

At this council the twelve propositions of Cyril were confirmed, the substance of which is briefly expressed in the following explication subjoined to them: “The holy Virgin is the mother of God, not that the nature of the logos, or the divinity, took its commencement in the holy Virgin, but because that sacred body, animated by a reasonable soul, to which the logos of God was substantially united, was carnally born of her.” In other words, the *hypostatical union*, as it was afterwards generally called, of the logos with both the body and the soul of the man Jesus, took place at the moment of conception.

Five days after this arrived John of Antioch with the bishops of his diocese: and being highly offended at Cyril and the rest for having acted without him, he formed them into a separate synod, and pronounced a sentence of deposition against Cyril, and Memnon bishop of Ephesus. Also,

\* “Coadjutors, one of the ministers of state, presided, as representing the emperor’s person, and directed them how to proceed. But, among the clergy, Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, was chosen *Præses* or chairman.” *Hist. of Pop.* l. p. 44

† See on the Council of Nice, *supra*, p. 298, Note.

some of these bishops being Pelagians, they made a decree in favour of that doctrine. But these two bishops appealing to the members of the original council, who were now joined by legates from the see of Rome, John was summoned to give an account of his proceedings against them; and not appearing after three days, Cyril and Memnon were absolved from their sentence, and on the other hand John and his bishops were deposed and excommunicated. They also made a decree against the Pelagian doctrine.

At first, Theodosius, being prepossessed by the accounts of Nestorius and his friends, did not approve of his deposition, and at the suggestion of Acacius of Berea, then a hundred years old, he gave orders for the banishment of Nestorius, Cyril and Memnon, as equally disturbers of the peace of the church. But the members of the council remonstrating against the deposition of Cyril and Memnon, he ordered seven bishops on each side to appear before him at Constantinople, that by hearing both he might form a better judgment in the case. But being prepossessed against Nestorius by his sister Pulcheria,\* he for some time forbade his friends (of whom John of Antioch was one) to come any nearer than Chalcedon, saying that he would only see the other deputies. He was however so much pressed, that at length he heard them all, but decided against Nestorius. After this, by writing letters to Cyril and John of Antioch, he procured a reconciliation between them, and at length John joined in the deposition of Nestorius. In all this it must be acknowledged that the good natured emperor was governed chiefly by the princess Pulcheria, and as a testimony of her triumph in the cause of the Virgin, she built a magnificent church to her honour, at the port of Constantinople.†

We have seen sufficient marks of faction, and of the influence of civil power, in many of the preceding councils, and certainly they are no less apparent in this, which has obtained the title of the third *œcumenical* or *universal* council, in which the doctrine of the hypostatical union of the two natures of Christ was established. Had John of Antioch and his bishops been present, it is possible that Nestorius might have been acquitted, and Cyril condemned; and the

\* See *supra*, p. 510. Pulcheria appears to have shared the sovereignty. "Sainte Pulcherie fut créé *Auguste* en 414, et partagea avec son frère la Puissance Impériale. Cette Princesse aimoit les lettres et les cultivoit." *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* V. p. 1214.

† *Evag.* L. i. C. iv. v. p. 253. *Nyceph. Hist.* L. xv. C. xiv. ll. p. 607. (*P.*) "It was called 'the new port,' where was also the house of Pulcheria *Augusta*." *Ant. of Const.* p. 103.



The Virgin Mary having, in this solemn manner, obtained the title of the *mother of God*, it is observed that, from this time she acquired a greater share of reverence and attention than had ever been given to her before, though she was not yet regularly worshipped, as she was in a later period.

### SECTION III.

*Of the Eutychian Controversy till the Death of Theodosius II.*  
A. D. 456.

NOT long after the decision of the Nestorian controversy, viz. A. D. 448, two years before the death of Theodosius, another and opposite heresy, as it is commonly called, broke out, viz. that of Eutyches, an abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, and one of the most zealous opposers of Nestorius. He was accused of holding heterodox opinions concerning the person of Christ, by Eusebius, bishop of Dorylæum, who, being a professor of rhetoric, had before disputed with Nestorius.

A synod of thirty-two bishops being assembled at Constantinople to decide this affair, Eutyches at first did not appear, but afterwards he did; and when he was interrogated concerning his opinions, he held, that before the union between the divine and human nature of Christ, they were properly *two*, but, that after the union had taken place, there was only *one* nature. He also maintained that the body of Christ was not of the same nature with that of other men. In consequence of this he was condemned and deposed. Appealing to the emperor, and also to Leo, bishop of Rome, and complaining in particular that the acts of this synod had been falsified by Flavianus, bishop of Constantinople, another synod was appointed to meet at this city, and Flavianus was heard on the subject. But though the acts of the former synod did not appear to have been falsified, another and more general council was appointed to meet to settle this business at Ephesus.\*

At this synod, or council, were present Juvencalis, bishop of Jerusalem, Domnus, who had succeeded John, bishop of

promote a union between the churches of Rome and Russia," thus commend the latter, "She worships and invokes the blessed Virgin, mother of God, and the saints who reign with Christ in heaven, and reverences the reliques of the saints as well as we." *The Russian Catechism*, &c. 1725, p. 179.

\* Evag. l. i. c. ix. p. 261. (P.)

Antioch, and Julius, a Western bishop, who acted as legate to Leo, bishop of Rome; and by the contrivance of Chrysaphius, who had much influence in the court of Theodosius, Dioscorus, who had succeeded Cyril as bishop of Alexandria, presided. Flavianus also, and the bishops of his diocese, were present. But as he and all the bishops who had before condemned Eutyches, were now considered as persons accused of irregular proceedings, they were not allowed to have any vote: and the disposition of the emperor in favour of Eutyches being well known, he was restored, and his adversaries, Flavianus and Eusebius of Dorylæum, were condemned and deposed, together with Ibas, bishop of Edessa, Theodoret of Cyrus, Domnus of Antioch, Daniel of Carrhæ, Irenæus of Tyre, and Acquilinus of Biblos.\*

There were, however, great complaints of irregularity and unfairness in the proceedings of this council. A letter which Leo wrote in refutation of the errors of Eutyches was not allowed to be read, so that his legates retired, and protested against the proceedings. It is also said, that the bishops who were against Eutyches, being refractory, Dioscorus, who favoured him, entered the place of assembly with a number of soldiers, and many monks, (who almost universally took the part of Eutyches, as one of their body,) with one Barsumas, a man of a violent character, at their head, and by threats and actual force, compelled them to adopt their measures; and it was with some difficulty that the Pope's legates made their escape and got to Rome. Moreover, not content with deposing Flavianus, Dioscorus and Barsumas falling upon him with their fists, bruised him in such a manner, that he died in a few days. As a proof that Barsumas intended to murder him, it was alleged that he was heard to cry out on the occasion, *kill him, kill him.*†

Theophilus of Alexandria, a disciple of Apollinaris of Laodicea, La Croze says, was the proper author of the doctrine of the Monophysites; but it was farther advanced by Cyril, the nephew of Theophilus. They said, that if there be two natures in Christ, there must be two sons. Synesius was the friend of Theophilus, and was probably the author of the spurious works of Dionysius the Areopagite, and the sentiments of it are Monophysite. They were first cited by

\* Evag. L. i. C. 8, p. 261. (P.)

† Ibid. L. ii. C. xviii. p. 325. (P.)

Cyril, who, in his controversies, quotes other superstitious writings.\*

After the council of Ephesus, the doctrine of the Monophysites made great progress. The treatise of Cassian on the incarnation, and the works of Marius Mercator, are written upon those principles; and they would have prevailed, if it had not been for the ignorance and malice of Eutyches, from whose language and conduct it appeared that the matter had been carried too far. Cyril had contented himself with asserting the unity of the two natures of Christ; but Eutyches maintained that he had but one nature.†

The business of Eutyches did not end with Theodosius, who died by a fall from his horse in hunting, A. D. 450, after a reign of thirty-eight years. He was a prince of great piety, but weak, and consequently governed by those about him. He left only one daughter, who was married to Valentinian III. His sister Pulcheria, who had been declared Augusta, and reigned along with him, chose for her husband Marcian, a native of Thrace, on account of his excellent qualifications and great virtues, on condition that he should be content with the empire, and the name only of her husband.‡

#### SECTION IV.

*Of the Council of Chalcedon. A. D. 451.*

THEODOSIUS, who had favoured Eutyches, being dead, the aspect of things with respect to him soon changed. Marcian, presently after his accession, received letters from Leo, bishop of Rome, complaining that his epistle had not been read in the council at Ephesus. Those bishops also, who thought themselves injured by Dioscorus, requested that their cause might be heard in a full council, but none of them was so urgent as Eusebius, bishop of Dorylaeum, who said, that himself and Flavianus had been deposed in consequence of the intrigues of Chrysaphius, who had been offended because, when he demanded a sum of money for his ordination, he, to shew him the impropriety of his conduct, had sent him the sacred vessels of his church. He

\* "Histoire du Christianisme d'Ethiopie" par LaCroze, pp. 8, &c. Cyril is supposed by La Croze to have been the forger of the book of Athanasius, which he quotes as favourable to him, as well as of several others. Ibid. p. 32. (P)

† Ibid. p. 32. (P.)

‡ Evag. L. ii. C. i. p. 280. (P.) See *supra*, p. 539, and the reference *Note*.

also complained that Flavianus had died of the attack that had been made upon him, and also, that Chrysaphius and his party were of the same opinion with Eutyches. On this account Marcian summoned a general council to meet at Chalcedon, A. D. 451.

At this council, which consisted of three hundred and sixty bishops,\* there were present the legates of Leo, Anatolius, bishop of Constantinople,† Dioscorus of Alexandria, Maximus of Antioch, Juvenalis of Jerusalem, and the bishops depending upon them. The legates of Leo began with objecting to Dioscorus having a seat along with them, because, without the leave of their master, he had presumed to preside in the council at Ephesus. But this was not allowed to be a sufficient objection, and therefore it was determined, that Dioscorus had a right to his seat. In the next place Eusebius desired to be heard against Dioscorus, for having been the cause of the death of Flavianus, and his own unjust deposition, requesting that the council would judge between them.

After these preliminaries, the acts of the council at Ephesus were read, and the case of Dioscorus being examined, it appeared that he had been the cause of the rejection of the epistle of Leo, and of the deposition of Flavianus, by compelling the Fathers of the council to sign a blank paper, to which the sentence of deposition was afterwards prefixed. For these reasons the bishops of this council deposed Dioscorus, and together with him, Juvenalis of Jerusalem, Thalassius of Casarea, in Cappadocia, Eusebius of Ancyra, Eustathius of Berytus, and Basil of Selencia, in Isauria, for concurring with him in those unjust proceedings.

In the next place the legates of the Pope having repeated their master's complaints against Dioscorus, (to which they added his presuming to excommunicate the Pope, while he himself stood charged by the synod with many great crimes, and receiving those who had been excommunicated for just reasons into his communion,) said, "For these reasons, the most holy and blessed Leo, archbishop of Rome, senior, by us, and the present synod, together with the apostle Peter, worthy of all praise, the basis of the catholic church, and the foundation of the right faith, deposeth him from his episcopal dignity and every clerical office." This sentence, which I recite verbatim as a specimen of the claims of Leo,

\* "About six hundred and thirty bishops." *Hist. of Pop.* l. p. 44.

† Who "seems to have been *prolocutor*, and to have had the greatest influence among the clergy." *Ibid.*

and of such excommunications as all the bishops of the greater sees in that age passed upon one another, was confirmed by this council, without which, it would have had no effect: and those who had been deposed by Dioscorus were restored to their former dignities.

These affairs being dispatched, the fathers of this council proceeded to the discussion of the articles of faith, the result of which was, their condemnation of the opinion of those who said, that what was born of Mary was a *mere man*, and their approbation of the synodical letters of Cyril, by which they censured the doctrine of Nestorius. They likewise gave their sanction to the epistle of Leo, sent to the council of Ephesus, as equally confuting those who made *two sons of God*, (which was said to be the consequence of the opinion of Nestorius,) and those who, with Eutyches, maintained that the deity of the Son was liable to suffer; those who said that there was a mixture or confusion of the two natures of Christ, who said that his flesh was of some celestial substance, or any other than human, or that, though before the union there were two natures of Christ, there was but one, after it.

After the solemn condemnation of these particular opinions, they give a definition of their own faith, in which they acknowledge Christ to be "perfect God and perfect man, consubstantial with the Father as to his divinity, and consubstantial with man as to his humanity; having two natures, without confusion, or one of them being changed into the other, indivisibly and inseparably united; the difference of the natures not being lost in the union, but joined in one person or hypostasis." It was then determined that, whoever should profess any other faith than this, if they were bishops, they should be deposed, if they were of the inferior clergy, they should be degraded, and if monks or laymen, excommunicated.

In this council, La Croze says, that Nestorius, then in exile, would have been summoned to attend, and would no doubt have been received into communion, if he had not been prevented by death. He had appealed to Leo, bishop of Rome, who approved of the confession of faith that he sent him; and in return the letter of Leo was much approved by Nestorius.\*

This being settled, the emperor came to Chalcedon, and entering the place of assembly, he made a speech to the

\* Christianisme d'Ethiopie, p. 32. P.

bishops, in which he exhorted them to peace and concord. After this they had other meetings to settle differences between particular persons, and some other matters of less consequence. Theodoret, having pronounced an anathema against Nestorius, whose opinion he was thought to have favoured, was restored to his see: as also was Ibas, in consequence of their rescinding all the decrees of the council of Ephesus, except the ordination of Maximus, bishop of Antioch. In the last place it was agreed, that the see of Constantinople should rank next to that of Rome.\*

Leo was highly provoked at the decision of this council, in favour of the bishop of Constantinople, and vehemently exclaimed against the arrogance and presumption of Anastasius; and though he confirmed the other decrees of the council, he rejected this, pronouncing it absolutely null by the authority, as he said, of the apostle Peter.† He urged that the church of Constantinople was not founded by any apostle, and he thought that the decrees of this council infringed upon those of the Council of Nice, which he thought it his duty to defend.‡ It is evident, however, that he misinterpreted the canons of the Council of Nice.

## SECTION V.

### *The Consequences of the Council of Chalcedon till the Death of Marcian, A. D. 457.*

THE proceedings of this great council, the *fourth* which has obtained the title of *œcumenical*, or universal, in which the known disposition of the emperor had the same decided influence as in any other preceding council, and the proceedings of which were in many respects conducted with much clamour and confusion, were far from giving universal satisfaction, especially to the numerous friends of Eutyches and Dioscorus, who was banished to Gangra, in Paphlagonia. Both in Egypt and Palestine there were dangerous insurrections, and much blood was shed in consequence of them. Proteus succeeding to Dioscorus, the friends of the latter rose in arms, and insulted the soldiers and magistrates who were appointed to execute the orders of the council; and when many of the soldiers were obliged to take refuge in a temple, which had been the temple of Serapis, the people

\* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. p. 286. C. xviii. p. 209. P.

† Greg. Naz. Orat. l. i. c. 41. P.

‡ Du Pin, IV. p. 26. P.

set fire to the place, and burned them in it. Upon this, two thousand new-raised soldiers were sent to Alexandria, and their irregularities with respect to the wives and daughters of the citizens being the occasion of more mischief than all that had happened before, the people were not pacified till the governor gave way to them, by granting them the usual distribution of corn, and the use of the baths, spectacles, &c. of which they had been deprived on account of this tumult.

Eutyches having gone to the monks in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and complained to them that the true faith had been betrayed at the Council of Chalcedon, inflamed them to the highest degree. They compelled Juvenalis, who had been restored by this council, to anathematize the decrees of it; and not content with this, they put in his place a monk of the name of Theodosius, who had made much disturbance in the council, and had brought the first news of the issue of it. In this business Theodosius and his friends are said to have committed great outrages, and even many murders. But notwithstanding this, being supported by Eudocia,\* the widow of the emperor Theodosius, (who, however, is said to have renounced Eutychianism before she died,) he held the see of Jerusalem twenty months, and ordained many bishops. At length, the emperor, to whom Juvenalis had fled, interposed, and compelled the church to receive him, and to expel the bishops who had been ordained by Theodosius.†

Theodosius himself fled to Mount Sinai; and when his accomplices, joined by Eudocia, wrote to the emperor in his favour, he made a very proper reply; reproving them for the disorders of which they had been the occasion, and requiring their submission to their bishop Juvenalis, who, he said, had interceded for them.

Marcian, seeing there were persons who endeavoured to extenuate the authority of the Council of Chalcedon, made a new edict to support and confirm it; and by another edict he cancelled every thing that had been done against the Eutychians, and ordered that due honour should be paid to his memory. Not content with this, he issued another edict against the Eutychians by name, in which he subjected them to all the penalties which had been inflicted upon the Apollinarians, forbade them to create bishops, priests, or clergy, to make assemblies of monks, to build monasteries, to receive or to bequeath any legacies, or to be enrolled in the army. He

\* See *infra*, p. 569.

† Euseb. *l. vi. c. 20.* p. 161.

banished from the empire the monks belonging to the monastery of Eutyches, at Constantinople, and ordered that it should no longer bear his name, because it had served for a retreat to the enemies of religion. He moreover ordered all the books written in favour of that heresy to be burnt, and the authors of them to be banished: and likewise that those who should teach this heresy should be punished with death, and those who should be assembled to hear it, pay a fine of ten pounds of gold.

Notwithstanding all these severe edicts, Eutychianism prevailed more than ever in the patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria, and there it continues to this day.\* Eutychianism was so generally received in Alexandria, that the emperor issued an express edict to oblige all the people of that place to receive the decrees of the four œcumenical councils, viz. those of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon, and subjected the Eutychians to the punishments inflicted on all other heretics.†

On the death of Marcian, after a reign of seven years, Dionysius, the military commander, being in Upper Egypt, the people of Alexandria set upon Proterius, their bishop, and though he fled into the baptistry of the church, they seized him, and put him to death, together with six other persons. They then dragged his body with ropes, and having mutilated it in this manner, burnt it. It was said, however, by some, that Proterius had brought this upon himself by his own violence, and that he was not killed by the people, but by some soldiers. In his place the people chose for their bishop Timotheus, Flavian, who had been a monk, and was then a presbyter of the church.

## SECTION VI

*Particulars relating to Eutychianism, subsequent to the death of Leo the Thracian, A. D. 447.*

LEO THE THACIAN, who had succeeded Marcian, being retired on the other side of Egypt, directed a circular letter to all the archbishops, and also to the abbots, and heads of monasteries, acquainting them with what had happened, and requiring them to call synods of the bishops of their respective districts, and to give him their opinion on the Council of Chalcedon, and the ordination of

\* See the A. D. 447. P. 197.

† See the A. D. 447. P. 197.

Timotheus. In consequence of this, Leo, bishop of Rome, and all the other metropolitan bishops, assembled their separate synods; and in all of them the ordination of Timotheus was condemned as irregular, and the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon were confirmed. There was, however, one dissenting voice, viz. Amphilocheus, bishop of Sida, who disapproved, indeed, of the ordination of Timotheus, but condemned the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, though some time after he acknowledged their authority.

Among the letters which were written on this occasion, and which have been preserved, there is one of Simeon Stylites, a monk, who is said to have lived many years on a pillar,\* exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather, and to have been highly respected in this superstitious age on that account; and in his letter I find, for the first time, the idea of the spirit of God being present in councils, and influencing their decrees. "If," says he, "our Saviour be present with two or three of his disciples, how much more would the spirit of God be present with so many bishops as were assembled at Chalcedon!" In consequence of these proceedings, Timotheus was banished to Gangræ, and the people of Alexandria chose another bishop, of the name of Timotheus, surnamed Basilus according to some, and Salafaciolus according to others.†

That the Eutychian doctrine was popular at Antioch, as well as at Alexandria, is evident from the reception which was there given to Peter Fullo, a presbyter of the church of Chalcedon, but who had been a monk, and who, like the monks in general, was a favourer of Eutyches; but he was said to have been expelled from the monastery for his irregularities. This man, however, having the favour of the emperor Zeno, (who succeeded Leo, after a reign of only ten months,) seized upon the see of Antioch, while Martyrius, the regular bishop, was at Constantinople, and he was confirmed in it by the order of the emperor. Before this time it had been the custom of many churches of the East, in imitation, it is supposed, of the form of adoration in Isaiah vi. 3, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts," and in Rev. iv. 8, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," to prefix, or to add, these words to their hymns, with the addition of other epithets, as follows: "Holy God, holy Al-

\* "In order to climb as near heaven as he could, he passed 37 years of his wretched life upon five pillars, of 6, 12, 22, 36 and 40 cubits high." *Mosheim*, Cent. v. Pt. ii. Ch. iii. Sect. xii. l. p. 391.

† *Evag. L. ii. C. viii.—xi. pp. 297, &c. (P.)*

mighty, holy Immortal, have mercy upon us!" And by this they imagined that the three persons in the Trinity were characterized. To this *Trisagion* (which this form of invocation was called) Fullo, and probably other monks who were attached to Eutychianism, and who thought that the whole nature of Christ became divine after the union of the two natures, (the less being wholly absorbed in the greater, as a drop of oil would be in the ocean,) and who consequently maintained that the divine nature of Christ suffered, used to add, "who was crucified for us."

This made Fullo so exceedingly popular, that he not only got himself made bishop of Antioch, but ordained one John, bishop of Apamea. And though the emperor ordered Fullo to be banished, and Martyrius to be restored, the latter found the people so much divided, and the majority, no doubt, so greatly against him, that he chose to resign, and contented himself with being a simple presbyter. Fullo, continuing a bishop, openly anathematized the Council of Chalcedon, and taught that the Divinity suffered on the cross.

Basilicus, who for some time supplanted Zeno, was the avowed advocate of Eutychianism, and in consequence of circular letters which he wrote for the purpose, no less than five hundred bishops joined in acquitting Eutyches, and in the condemnation of the epistle of Leo, and of the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon.\* Afterwards, indeed, Basilicus found himself obliged to retract his circular letter. But still the fact shews that the bishops were always ready to go with the court, that is, to be swayed by their interest, and therefore that the real faith of the Christian church, in any period, or even the opinions of the bishops themselves, are by no means to be collected from the decrees of these solemn councils. Had the succeeding emperors been disposed to favour Eutychianism, as much as Endocia, Zeno, and Basilicus, there can be no doubt but that this famous Council of Chalcedon would have been deemed as spurious as the second of Ephesus.†

## SECTION VII.

### *General Observations on the four Œcumenical Councils.*

WE are now come to the termination of the last four *Œcumenical* (or *general*) councils, the decrees of

\* Seeag. l. iii. c. v. p. 138. P.

† In the reign of Basilicus and Zeno, the church of St. Sophia, the library of which had been begun by Constantine, and greatly augmented by Theodosius, pro-

which have been the standard of orthodoxy, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, from that time to the present, in all established churches, and which are equally acknowledged by the Greeks and the Latins. I shall therefore, in this place, give a general retrospective view of the decisions of each of them.

In the Council of Nice it was determined that the Son was *of the same substance* with the Father; in that of Constantinople, that both the Son and the Holy Spirit are, in all respects, *equal* to the Father; in that of Ephesus, that the *two natures* of Christ make but *one person*; and in that of Chalcedon, that these natures continue to be two, notwithstanding this personal or hypostatical union between them.

With respect to the doctrine of the two first councils, I would observe, that the ideas are clear enough; as we very well know what is meant by *sameness of substance*, and also by *equality* with respect to power, rank, &c. But the language of the two succeeding councils conveys no distinct ideas at all; because we cannot possibly conceive how two beings, or substances, so different as those of God and man, can be properly *united*; or if they be united, what kind of union it will be; and though the differences in this case may be distinguished by the words *nature* and *person*, we have no ideas corresponding to that verbal difference.

Nestorius and Eutyches equally maintained that Christ was both *God* and *man*; but the former was censured for making the God and the man to constitute *two persons*, and the latter for saying that, after this intimate personal union, there was but *one nature*. Since, however, it is impossible to give any definitions of the terms *person* and *nature* in these propositions, the difference between these two opposite heresies, as they are always called, is merely verbal, so that the controversy is about words only; and yet for such a difference as this, which it is impossible for any man to understand or explain, have whole bodies of Christians anathematized one another, for ages.

I would farther observe, that rational metaphysics would have prevented the decisions of all these celebrated councils; since, where they are intelligible, they are, logically speaking, *absurd*, involving real contradictions.

That the Son is of the same substance with the Father,

was an inference from his having been originally the proper *reason of the Father*, and afterwards personified. But that any *attribute* should become a *separate person*, and especially that the Being whose attribute it was, should not after this event be deprived of it, is a manifest absurdity. It is still more so to suppose that three persons should be all of them, separately considered, possessed of all the same attributes of divinity, and in the same extent, and yet not be *three Gods*, or three beings possessed of all the requisites of divinity; because we have no different ideas to annex to the terms *person* and *being* in this case. The same good sense and rational metaphysics would have prevented all disputes about the terms *nature* and *person* in the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies.

In fact, if we set aside the doctrine of Arius, or that of a great pre-existent intelligent Being, supplying the place of a human soul in the person of Christ, (which its late rise alone excludes from all pretensions to be the original and apostolical doctrine,) rational metaphysics admit of no other than the simple Unitarian doctrine, of Christ being a man inspired by God. And this is abundantly sufficient for all the purposes of the Christian dispensation, and, indeed, has infinitely greater propriety, and consequently greater effect, than any other scheme whatever; especially as it makes Christ to be, in the proper sense of the words, *the first born among many brethren*, and *in all respects like unto them*, so as to be a proper pattern of the resurrection of man to a future, immortal life; to teach and to exemplify which was the great object of his mission.

Besides, if we say, what this doctrine supposes, that God was properly with Christ, and acted by him, which he himself declared, when he said that *of himself he could do nothing*, and that *the Father within him did the works*, it has the same advantage and effect, as the supposition of his being God himself; because the *power*, though not the *person*, was that of God. There is, therefore, no good reason for contending that Christ himself, personally considered, should be God, unless it should be maintained that his suffering as a God was necessary to the redemption of the world, which those who hold the doctrine of the divinity of Christ always disclaim, since they acknowledge that he suffered as a man only, the divine nature being incapable of suffering.

It is said, indeed, that the union between these two natures are such, as to give a peculiar value to the sufferings

of that part of Jesus which was capable of suffering. But since it is acknowledged not to be so great as to admit of both the natures suffering together, such a union as that which the Unitarians suppose to have been between the supreme God and the man Jesus, (which is all the union of which we can form any idea,) may, for any thing that we know, be sufficient for this purpose also. But the whole doctrine of atonement for the sins of men by the sufferings of any superior Being whatever, and the supposition that God does not forgive sins *freely*, on account of the repentance and reformation of the sinner, (which is the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures, and what is always recommended to our imitation,) implies the greatest reflection on the character of the Supreme Being; and, when properly attended to, must have an unfavourable effect on the minds of his worshippers.

The decisions of these councils had no effect besides what the civil power gave them. Arianism was so far from being extinguished, that it even increased, after the Council of Nice, and it continued long after that of Chalcedon. Besides, it was received by all the Northern nations which were not subject to the Roman power. It is equally true that the Council of Ephesus was little more than the date of the origin of Nestorianism, and the Council of Chalcedon that of Eutychianism; and to this day Nestorianism is the professed doctrine of one part of the East, and Eutychianism of another; and since the fall of the Greek empire, the adherents to these sects are perhaps equal in number to those who are called Catholics among the Greeks.

## SECTION VIII.

### *Transactions of a civil Nature in the West, from the Death of Honorius to the Fall of the Empire.*

WITH the account of this famous Council of Chalcedon, which brings the state of opinions, with respect to the person of Christ, to an important period, I close my history of the Eastern church, and proceed to relate what remains of the ecclesiastical transactions in the West. But from the death of Honorius nothing of much importance occurs till after the period to which I now confine myself. I shall, therefore, do little more than give the outline of what happened after the death of Honorius, that we may see in what manner this great empire (the civil transactions of which

had always the closest connexion with the ecclesiastical ones) fell into total dissolution.

On the death of Honorius, John, his chief secretary, assumed the purple, in Rome; but Theodosius, sending an army against him, defeated him, and put him to death, and then declaring his cousin, Valentinian III. emperor, his mother, Placidia, being regent during his minority. In this reign, Boniface, who commanded in Africa, being suspected of endeavouring to make himself independent, was induced to revolt, and to invite Genseric, king of the Vandals, (who were at that time in possession of Spain,) to join him. Accordingly, the year following, which was A. D. 439, this prince crossed the sea, and though Boniface, whose innocence had, in the mean time, been made to appear, would have persuaded him to return, he pursued his advantage till he had reduced the whole country.

A. D. 447, the northern parts of Italy were ravaged by Attila, king of the Huns; but Valentinian agreeing to pay him an annual pension, he withdrew, and settled beyond the Danube. A. D. 455, Valentinian having debauched the wife of Maximus, one of his officers, the latter entered into a conspiracy against him; and having put him to death, caused himself to be proclaimed emperor. But having compelled Eudocia, the empress, to marry him, she invited Genseric to invade Italy; and upon his arrival Maximus fled, and was killed. Genseric plundered Rome, and carried away an incredible number of captives, and among them Eudocia herself.

On the death of Maximus, Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, who were then settled in Gaul, caused Avitus, who was then an ambassador at his court, to be proclaimed emperor. But when he had reigned scarcely fourteen months, he was deposed by Ricimer, who had the command of the Roman fleet, and who had just before defeated that of Genseric. After an interregnum of three months, he proclaimed Majorianus emperor; but being jealous of his reputation, he put him to death, and in about three months advanced Severus, a native of Eucania, to the same dignity. He dying in consequence of poison given him, as supposed, by Ricimer, the latter, after two years, promoted Anthemius, who had married the only daughter of Marcian, to the empire, and married his daughter. A. D. 472, Ricimer retired from Anthemius, and taking Rome, committed more ravages in it than either Alaric or Genseric had done. He then put Anthemius to death and caused Olybrius to

he proclaimed in his room, and he died a natural death not long after, as Ricimer himself did a little before him.

The following spring, A. D. 473, Glycerius, who had been *Comes Domesticorum*, took the title of emperor at Ravenna. But the year following, Julius Nepos, having been proclaimed emperor of the West, by Leo, emperor of the East, surprised Glycerius, and divesting him of the purple, compelled him to become bishop of Salona, in Dalmatia. After this, Orestes, his general, revolting from him, made his own son, Augustulus, emperor; and Nepos being obliged to fly, took refuge with Glycerius. But the barbarians, who had served in the Roman armies, being refused by Orestes that settlement in Italy, which they had demanded as the reward of their services, chose Odoacer for their leader; and he, besieging Orestes in Pavia, took the place and put him to death. After this he took Augustulus in Ravenna,\* but spared him on account of his youth, and then proclaimed himself *king of Italy*, A. D. 473, in consequence of which, an end was put to the very name of the *Roman empire* in the West.†

## SECTION IX.

*Transactions of an Ecclesiastical Nature in the West, from the Death of Honorius to the Fall of the Western Empire.*

DURING these commotions and revolutions, little was done in ecclesiastical matters, except what has been mentioned with respect to the Pelagians in Gaul.

The Vandals, who, as well as the Goths, and other northern nations, were Arians, having got possession of Africa, persecuted the orthodox, banishing all the bishops of that persuasion from their sees, as Theodosius in his time treated the Arian bishops in his dominions: and it is said that the Donatists joined the Arians in their persecution of the Catholics. The Vandals also persecuted the Manichæans, who took refuge in Rome, where, however, they were vehemently opposed by Leo, who was likewise the great

\* “ Parmi tant de malheurs, on cherche avec une curiosité triste, le destin de la ville de Rome. Elle étoit, pour ainsi dire, sans défense. Les empereurs furent obligés de se retirer à Ravenne, ville autrefois défendue par la mer, comme Venise l'est aujourd'hui.” *Montesquieu*, “ De la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence.” Ch. xix. 1773, p. 50.

† “ Elle fut la fin de l'empire d'occident. Rome s'étoit aggrandie, parce qu'elle n'avoit eu que des guerres successives; chaque nation, par un bonheur inconcevable, ne l'attaquant que quand l'autre avoit été ruinée. Rome fut détruite parce que toutes les nations l'attaquèrent à la fois, et pénétrèrent par-tout.” *Ibid.*

enemy of the Pelagians; and Valentinian the emperor, seconding all his views, he called a synod, which ordered all the Manichæans to be punished as heretics. The Vandals, however, were as zealous Christians as the Catholics; for it is acknowledged that they destroyed all remains of Heathenism in Africa.

The authority of the see of Rome was greatly advanced in this period, by Leo, who, countenanced in this, as well as in every thing else, by the emperor Valentinian, encouraged appeals to the church of Rome; and asserted the dignity and prerogatives of it, as due to the apostles Peter and Paul, who had been its founders; alleging, that as Peter was the chief and sovereign among the apostles, his successors ought to be the same among other bishops.

Notwithstanding the emperors had exempted Illyricum, which was situated between Rome and Constantinople, from the jurisdiction of the former, and had subjected it to the latter, Leo laid claim to that province, and made Anas-tasius, bishop of Thessalonica, his vicar in it.

But he gained a great accession of power on occasion of the following disputes in Gaul: Hilary of Arles, and Germain of Auxerre, coming, in a journey which they made together, to a city in the province of Vienna, of which Celdonus was bishop, the people of the place accused him before them, of having married a widow, and of having condemned some persons to death when he was a magistrate. In consequence of this, these bishops assembled others in that neighbourhood, and it was agreed among them, that Celdonus should of his own accord resign his bishopric. But he appealed to the Pope, who, in a council of his bishops, in Italy, held A. D. 414, ordered him to be reinstated.

Farther, complaint being made of an irregular ordination by Hilary, Leo procured an order, from another of his synods, that he should no more exercise any authority in his own province, or even be present at any ordination; and interesting Valentinian in his favour, he procured the following law, dictated, it is supposed, by himself:

“It is certain, that the only safeguard of our empire is the favour of the supreme Deity, which is secured by the Christian faith, and true religion. Considering then, that the merit of St. Peter, who was the prince of bishops, the dignity of the city of Rome, and the authority of the sacred synod, have established the supremacy of the apostolical see, let nothing be attempted against its authority: for there only will the peace of the churches be preserved when the

universe acknowledges its governor." Then, having condemned Hilary of Arles, for having ordained some bishops, without consulting the Pope, he says, "we have decreed, by a perpetual ordinance, that neither the bishops of Gaul, nor those of the other provinces, do any thing without the authority of the venerable Pope of the eternal city; but that whatever shall be ordered by the authority of the apostolical see, shall be a law to all others; so that whoever of the bishops, on being summoned, shall neglect to appear before the tribunal of the Roman prelate, he shall be compelled to make his appearance by the governor of the province," &c.\*

By this law an end was put to the ancient liberties of the Gallican churches. From this time appeals to Rome from all the Western churches became frequent, and vicars, or legates, of the *holy see*, as it was called, were often seen beyond the Alps. But the churches in the East were never in subjection to the see of Rome. In what manner, after this great step made by Leo, the fall of the Roman empire in the West, made way for the farther aggrandisement of the bishops of Rome, may be seen in a future period.

Thus far the Eastern and Western churches acted very much in concert, so that all the decrees of the general councils are considered as equally binding upon them both. But from this time the civil affairs of the West, having little connexion with those of the East, the two churches became wholly separated.

## SECTION X.

### *Of Writers within this Period.*

CYRIL of Alexandria was nephew to Theophilus, the great persecutor of Chrysostom, as he himself was the great opposer of Nestorius. He was a very voluminous writer. Besides commentaries on many parts of Scripture, † we have of his, seventeen books on worshipping in spirit and in truth, several tracts relating to the doctrine of the Trinity, against Nestorius; three paschal homilies, ten books against Julian, one against the anthropomorphites, and sixty-one epistles.

Orosius, a presbyter of Tarraco in Spain, was sent as ambassador to inform Austin concerning the Priscillianists.

\* Le Sueur, A. D. 445. Histoire des Papes, II, pp. 225, &c. (P.)

† The Pentateuch, Isaiah, Minor Prophets, and John's Gospel. *Lardner*, V. p. 159

and by him he was sent to Jerome in Palestine to ask his opinion concerning the origin of souls. There he attended two councils, in which he endeavoured to expose the heresy of Pelagius. The year after, he returned to Africa with the relics of St. Stephen, and thence he went to Spain, where, in pursuance of the request of Austin, he wrote his history, consisting of seven books, the object of which is to shew, that the Romans suffered greater calamities while they were Heathens, than after the empire became Christian. He also wrote an apology against the Pelagians, on the freedom of the will, and a tract on the error of the Priscillianists and Origenists, which is prefixed to a book of Austin's against the former.\*

Theodoret was a native of Antioch, and was educated in a monastery near that city. Here he contracted an intimate friendship with Nestorius, and with John, afterwards bishop of Antioch. His masters are said to have been Theodorus, bishop of Mopsuestia, and Chrysostom. After being made deacon in the church of Antioch, he was ordained bishop of Cyrus, near the Euphrates, a district which abounded with heretics, whom he was indefatigable in converting. He boasted that he had baptized ten thousand Marcionites. We have seen the danger that Theodoret brought himself into by his attachment to Nestorius, and his opposition to Cyril, but being acquitted of heresy by Leo, bishop of Rome, he was restored to his see by Marcian. After the council of Chalcedon he applied himself to writing, and the works of few of the Fathers now extant, are more valuable than his. His commentaries on the Scriptures have more good sense in them than any thing of the kind that has come down to us of the early ages. Besides these, we have of his, five books of ecclesiastical history, as many of heretical fables, and a history of monks; twelve books against the Heathens, † particularly Julian, ten orations concerning providence, four books of dialogues on the subject of the trinity; seven other dialogues, two of them against the Anomæans, three against the Macedonians, and two against the Apollinarists; and, lastly, thirty-four epistles.

Cassian was of Scythian extraction, born at Athens. After being brought up from very early years among the monks of Bethlehem, he was made deacon by Chrysostom at Constantinople. On the expulsion of his patron he was sent

\* *Life*, IV. pp. 181—183, IX. pp. 92, 93, 94.

† See several interesting passages in which "Theodoret admirably represents the doctrine of the deity of the gospel." *Life*, V. pp. 198—201.

by him to plead his cause with Innocent, bishop of Rome. There he was made a presbyter, and upon the city being taken by the Goths, he went to Marseilles, where he founded two monasteries, one for men, and the other for women, and was a strenuous defender of the Sempipelagian doctrine. We have of his a work in twelve books of monkish institutions, seven books on the incarnation of Christ against Nestorians, and collections from the Fathers.\*

Socrates was a native of Constantinople. He learned grammar of Helladius and Ammonius, who fled from Alexandria, as has been already mentioned, and rhetoric of Troilus the sophist. For some time he applied to the bar, whence he got the appellation of *Scholasticus*. He is the author of a very valuable ecclesiastical history from the time of Constantine, to A. D. 439. This work bears the marks of great diligence and impartiality.†

Hermias Sozomen, probably a native of Palestine, studied the law at Berytus, and pleaded causes at Constantinople. He is also the author of an ecclesiastical history, of nearly the same period with that of Socrates.‡ But though his work is said to be written with more elegance, he is not generally thought to be quite so judicious. I do not think, however, that, in this respect, his history is much inferior to that of Socrates.

Leo, surnamed the Great, was one of the most considerable writers, as well as actors, of his age. He was a native of Rome, and being deacon of the church under Celestinus, he urged Cassian to write against Nestorianism. A. D. 429, he was sent to compromise a difference which had taken place between Aëtius and Albinus, the Roman generals in Gaul; and in his absence he was chosen bishop of Rome. A. D. 440, at a time when the Pelagian, Nestorian, and Eutychian controversies were warmly agitated. All these sects, as well as that of the Manichæans (many of whom fled to Rome from the persecution of the Vandals in Africa) he opposed with the greatest firmness.

A. D. 452, Leo was sent by Valentinian to meet Attila, who was upon his march to invade Italy, and he prevailed upon him to return and settle beyond the Danube. He also prevented the utter destruction of Rome, when it was taken by Genseric, A. D. 455, and while he was intent upon compromising the differences of the church in the East, he died, A. D. 461. His zeal as a christian bishop would have

\* *Lambert*, V. pp. 203—205.

† *Ibid.* pp. 38, 339.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 339, 349.

been deserving of the highest commendation, if it had not been accompanied with an equal desire to extend the authority of his see, and had he not, on all occasions, behaved with a haughtiness unbecoming the proper episcopal character.

His writings consist of *sermons* and *epistles*, the former on very various subjects, and the latter on many of the important events of his time. The subjects of them all may be seen in Du Pin.\*

Eudocia, the widow of Theodosius the younger, was the author of the *Greek Cantos*.†

\* Vol. IV, pp. 81, &c. (P.) *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* IV, pp. 83, 84.

† Du Pin, VI, p. 498. (P.) This was probably the translation, into Hexameter verse, of the first eight books of Scripture, which is attributed to this Empress by Photius. There has been also ascribed to her, though doubtfully, a *Cento* of verses, collected from *Homer*, and comprising the life of Christ, like the *Virgilus Evangelizans*, in later times.

Eudocia was the daughter of Leontius, an Athenian philosopher, by whose instructions, in learning and the sciences, she became an accomplished philosopher, grammarian and rhetorician. Her father considering these cultivated talents, joined to her personal beauty, as an ample fortune, divided his property among his sons. Eudocia however, claimed from *them* her portion. On their refusal, finding herself destitute, she went to Constantinople to lay her complaints before *Pulcherna*, who was struck with the charms of her person and understanding, and brought about her marriage with Theodosius. The brothers of Eudocia, from apprehensions of her vengeance, now concealed themselves, but she generously invited them to Constantinople, and procured their advancement to the first dignities of the empire.

The court of Eudocia was the constant resort of the learned. Her attention to one of these, named Paulinus, whom she had distinguished for his superior attainments, served to excite the jealousy of Theodosius. He put to death the unfortunate scholar, dismissed all the officers of Eudocia's court, and reduced her to a private condition. The Empress retired into Palestine, where she embraced the opinions of *Eutyches*. At length, persuaded by the letters of *Saint Symeon Stylites*, and the arguments of the Abbot *Anthemius*, she returned to the faith of the Church, and passed the remainder of her life at Jerusalem in piety and literary occupations. She died in 466, having solemnly attested, in the article of death, her innocence of the crimes which her husband had imputed to her. The writings of Eudocia were numerous, both while on the throne and after she descended from it. See *Eudocia, ou Eudocia*, in *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* II, pp. 360, 361. See also *supra*, pp. 347, 349. The only *royal* female, in modern times, who had the least pretensions to be compared with *Eudocia*, as devoted alike to science and literature, was *Sophia Charlotte*, sister of George I. and Queen of Prussia. See the references, Vol. III, p. 337, Note \*

## ADDITION.

As I have given much at large the evidence of the primitive Christian church having been Unitarian, in my *History of Early Opinions concerning Christ*. I did not intend, in this work, to do any thing more than refer to *that* for the proof of every thing relating to that subject; but having quoted a few passages from the early Christian writers, as my authorities for some of the articles, it may not be amiss to add a few in support of what is advanced, p. 162, of its having been acknowledged by the early Trinitarian writers, that the doctrines of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ were not taught with clearness and effect before the publication of John's gospel; and a very few will suffice for my present purpose. Those to whom they may not give satisfaction will find what cannot fail to give it in the large work from which these are extracted.

“John alone,” says Origen, “introduced the knowledge of the eternity of Christ to the minds of the Fathers.”\*

Eusebius says, “John began the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, that being reserved for him, as the most worthy.”†

Chrysostom writes the most copiously on this subject; but I shall content myself with a very few passages from him. He says, “John alone taught the eternal and super-celestial wisdom.‡ John first lighted up the lamp of Theology, and all the most distant churches, running to it, lighted up their lamps, and returned rejoicing, saying, *In the beginning was the logos.*”§ He represents all the preceding writers of the New Testament as “children, who heard, but did not understand things, and who were busy about childish sports. But John,” he says, “taught what the angels themselves did not know before he declared it.”|| Of the three first evangelists, he says, “they all treated of the fleshly dispensation, and silently, by the miracles of Christ, indicated his dignity. The dignity of the logos of God was hid, the arrows against the heretics were concealed, and the fortification to defend the right faith was not raised. John therefore, the son of thunder, being the last, advanced to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ.”¶

\* Opera, II. p. 428. (P.)

† Johau. I. Op. VI. p. 253. (P.)

‡ Opera, VIII. p. 2. (P.)

§ Hist. I. iii. C. xxiv. p. 117. (P.)

¶ Ibid. p. 604. (P.)

¶ De Sigillis, Op. VI. p. 173. (P.)

## NOTICE

I cannot forbear, at the close of this part of the Ecclesiastical History, to record the munificence which assisted, or rather, enabled the author to publish the first edition of it. In a letter to Mr. Lindsey, dated Birmingham, October 8, 1789, Dr. Priestley writes,

“At my return, I found a letter from Mr. Tayleur, with a bill of £150. for the expenses of my Ecclesiastical History. I told him I apprehended it would be considerably too much, and that I should consult with you, and did not doubt we should dispose of the overplus to his satisfaction. How unboundedly generous Mr. Tayleur is! I may well afford to give my books when they are paid for before hand.”—*Mem. of Lindsey*, p. 526. See also Vol. IV, p. 313.

J. T. R.

*Clapton, Aug. 31, 1815.*



THE SUCCESSION OF ROMAN EMPERORS AND OF BISHOPS

132	<i>of Rome</i>	<i>of Jerusalem</i>	<i>of Antioch</i>	<i>of Alexandria</i>
		Judas		
		133 Marc		133 Eumenas
137	137 Marc			
140	140 Marc		142 Heros II	143 Marc II
				153 Cleodion
161	161 Marcus Aurelius		168 Theophilus	167 Agrippinus
181	181 Commodus		184 Maximin	179 Julari
			190 Scorpion	189 Demetrius
193	193 Pertinax			
194	194 Severus		211 Asclepiades	
211	211 Caracalla			
217	217 Macrinus		220 Philetus	
218	218 Elagabalus			
			228 Zebuan	231 Heracles
222	222 Alexander			
235	235 Maximin		237 Babylas	
236	236 Gordian			
244	244 Philip			
247	247 Maximin			

THE SUCCESSION OF ROMAN EMPERORS AND OF BISHOPS

*of Constantinople*

*of Alexandria,*

*of Antioch,*

*Bishops of Rome, of Jerusalem,*

*Emperors*

244 Philip

249 Decius

251 Gallus

254 Emilian, Valerian, Gallienus

268 Claudius

270 Aurelian

275 Florian

276 Probus

282 Caracalla

284 Lucius Verus

306 Constantine

249 Alexander

252 Mazabenus

253 Lucius

255 Stephen

257 Sixtus

259 Dionysius

260 Eusebius

260 Eusebius

269 Dominus

271 Timon

281 Cyril

296 Marcellinus

304 Marcellus

309 Eusebius

311 Melchior

312 S. Peter

248 Dionysius

250 Fabius

253 Demetrius

260 Paulus Samosata

264 Maximus

283 Theonas

300 Peter

302 Tyranus

309 Metrophanes

311 Achillas

312 Alexander

313 Alexander

THE SUCCESSION OF ROMAN EMPERORS AND OF BISHOPS

<i>Emperors</i>	<i>Bishops of Rome, of Jerusalem,</i>	<i>of Antioch,</i>	<i>of Alexandria,</i>	<i>of Constantinople</i>
315 Jovian		315 Vitalis		
363 Julian		319 Philogonus		
364 Valentinian, Valens		323 Eustathius	326 Athanasius	
367 Gratian		329 Paulinus		
	331 Maximus III	330 Eudalias		336 Paulus
		332 Euphronius		341 Macedonius
	336 Maxentius, Fulvius			
337 Constantius, Constantine, Constantine		345 Stephen		
	351 Cyriacus	348 Leontius		351 Eusebius
				360 Eudoxius
	352 Licinius	357 Eudoxius		
				370 Evagrius
	357 Damian		375 Peter II.	
		381 Flavianus	381 Timotheus	380 Gregory
	385 Simeon		385 Theophilus	381 Nectarius
		389 Evagrius		
	386 John II.	392 Flavianus		
				397 Chrysostom
375 Valentinian II				
379 Theodosius				
355 Arcadius, Honorius				

THE SUCCESSION OF ROMAN EMPERORS AND OF BISHOPS.

<i>Emperors.</i>	<i>Bishops of Rome, of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Alexandria, of Constantinople</i>
408 Theodosius II.	404 Arsacius 405 Athanasius
424 Valentinian III. W.	412 Cyril
	416 Praxas
	417 Sozimus
	418 Boniface
	423 Celestius
	426 Sisinnius
	428 Nestorius
	431 Maximian
	434 Proclus
	436 Domnus
	437 John
	444 Dioscorus
450 Marcian	451 Maximus
455 Maximus W.	452 Proterus
457 Leo	456 Basil
	458 Anastasius
	458 Arcadius
	459 Martyrius
461 Severus W.	457 Timotheus Æthiops
467 Anthemius W.	460 Timotheus Salofaciolus
	458 Genadius













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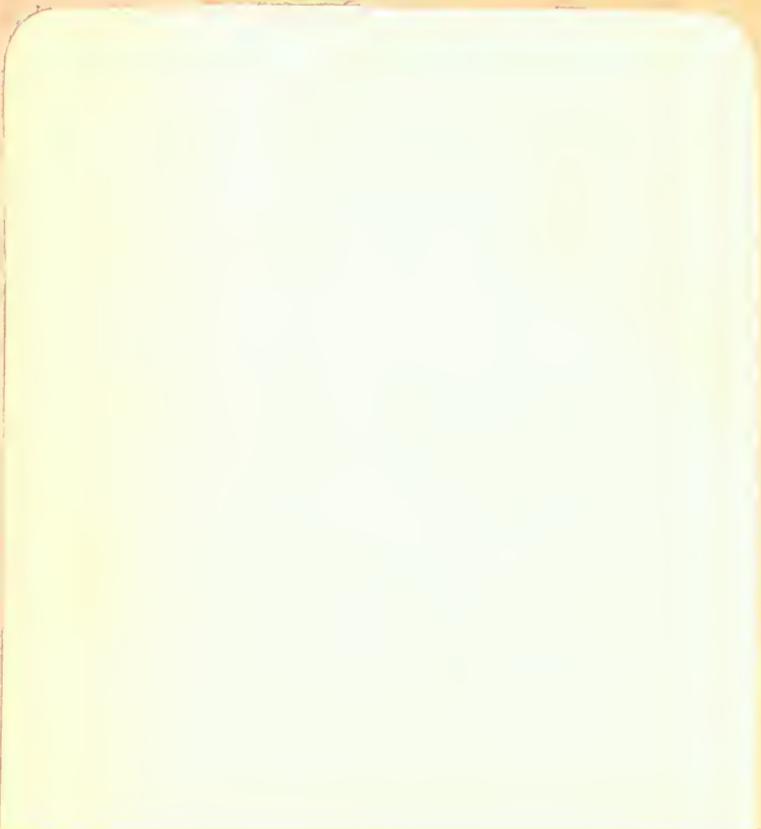
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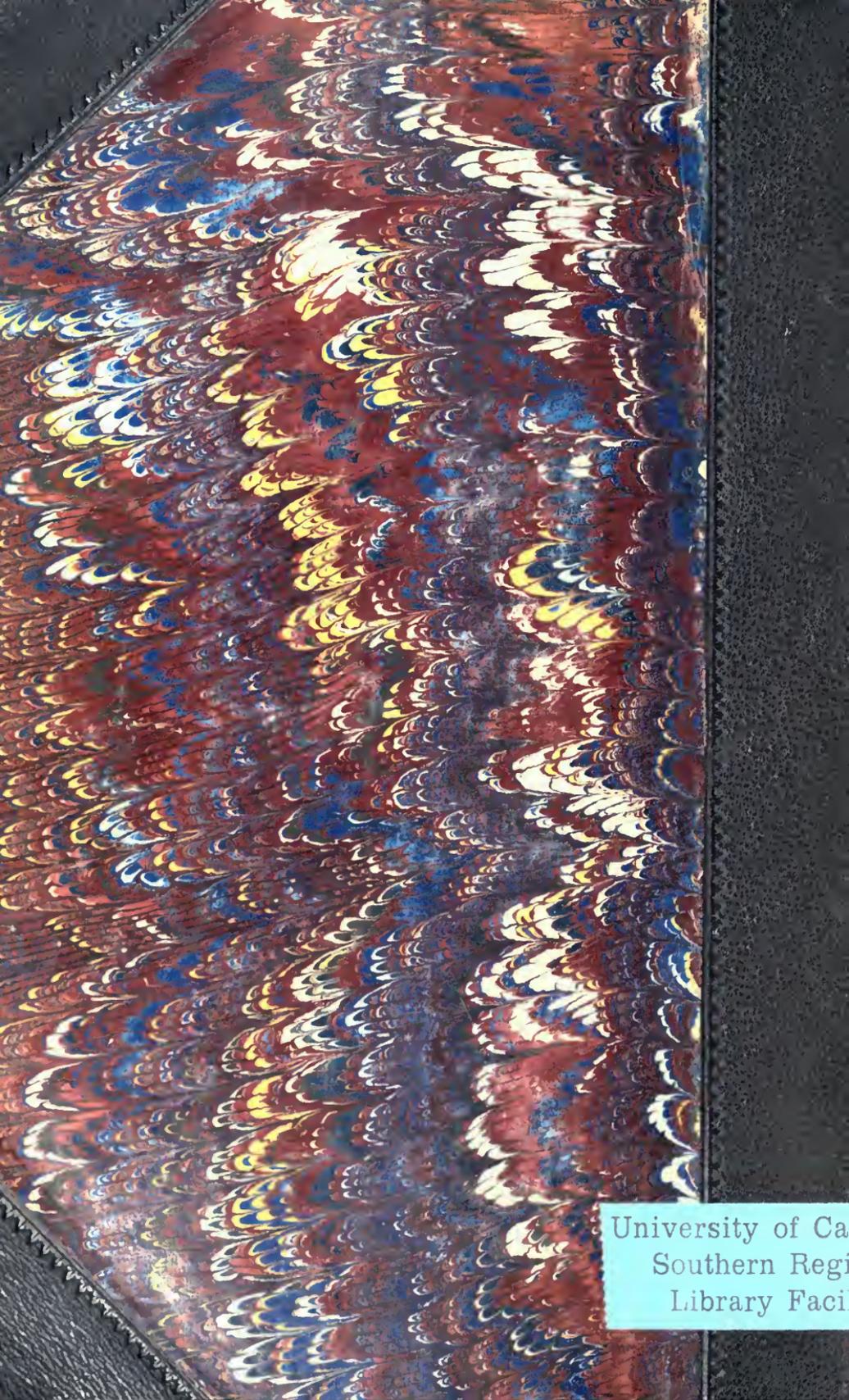
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