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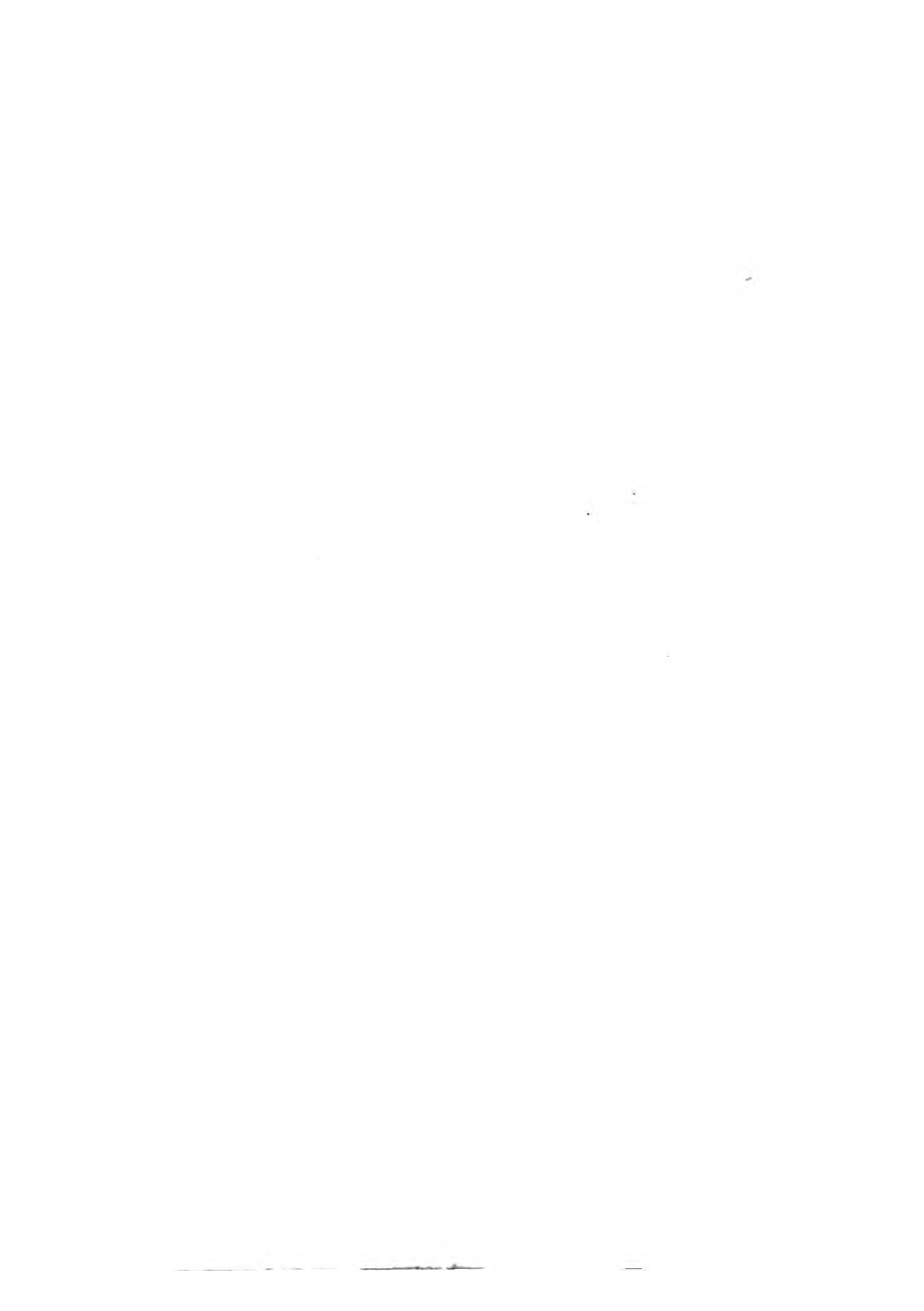
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GENERAL HISTORY

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION AND CHURCH:

FROM THE GERMAN OF

DR AUGUSTUS NEANDER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND AND IMPROVED EDITION.

BY

JOSEPH TORREY.

PROFESSOR OF MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT.

" My kingdom is not of this world." " The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven."—*Words of our Lord.*
" The Lord is that Spirit ; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."—*Words of the Apostle Paul.*
" En Jesus-Christ toutes les contradictions sont accordees."—*Pascal.*

VOLUME I.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE Translator deems it proper to state, that his labours on NEANDER began, and were prosecuted to the completion of several successive volumes or parts of the present work, many years ago, —though not before a partial translation of the same work had already appeared in England.

He has certainly no reason to regret, but rather much reason to congratulate himself, that his first translation did not find its way to the press. In 1843 Dr NEANDER sent forth a second edition of the first volume of his work, embracing the history of the Church in the first three centuries. In this new edition, the alterations are numerous and important. The great features of the original work, its method and spirit, are indeed faithfully preserved; but, in other respects, there are very decided improvements.

These important changes, occurring not here and there, but through entire pages and paragraphs, have made it necessary to translate nearly the whole of the first volume anew. The Translator has submitted to this labour with the more cheerfulness, as it enables him to present the work to the English reader in the form in which Dr NEANDER has been pleased to express his wish that it should appear.

It has been, throughout, the Translator's aim and effort to render a faithful version of the original. He has never felt himself at liberty, on any pretence whatever, to add any thing to the text, or to omit any thing from it. He has never resorted to notes for the purpose of explaining anything which could be made sufficiently clear in the place where it stands. On the extreme diffi-

culty of giving an exact rendering in English of an author's language, so exceedingly idiomatic, so thoroughly German in all his habits of thought and modes of expression as the author of this history, he need not enlarge. If allowance be made for the slight but necessary modifications which for this reason have sometimes been resorted to, the Translator believes it will be found, that as he has clearly conceived his author's meaning, so he has faithfully expressed it in some form of English that can be understood.

In conclusion, he would take this occasion to express his grateful acknowledgments to all those friends who have encouraged and assisted him in the execution of his task; and in a very particular manner to the Rev. JOSEPH TRACY, whose consent to overlook the proof-sheets before they came under the Translator's final revision, was an act of real kindness, which will not by him be very easily forgotten.

DEDICATION OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

TO F. VON SCHELLING, THE PHILOSOPHER.

As the first volume of my Church History is about to make its appearance in a better shape, I feel constrained to take this opportunity of presenting you a testimony of my sincere respect and love, and my hearty thanks for all the instruction and excitement to thought derived from what you have said, both publicly and in the intercourse of private life, and for all you have done, during your residence here, in the service of our common holy cause. When I dedicate a work of this character to a philosopher like you, I know that it is nothing foreign from *your* philosophy; for that takes history for its point of departure, and would teach us to understand it according to its inward essence. In striving to apprehend the history of the Church, not as a mere juxtaposition of outward facts, but as a development proceeding from within, and presenting an image and reflex of internal history, I trust that I am serving a spirit which may claim some relationship to your philosophy, however feeble the powers with which it may be done. In what you publicly expressed respecting the *stadia* in the development of the Christian Church, how much there was which struck in harmony with my own views! I might feel some hesitation in laying before a man of your classical attainments, such a master of form as well as of matter, a work of whose defects, when compared with the idea at its foundation, no one can be more conscious than its author. But I know, too, that fellowship of spirit and feeling will be accounted of more worth by you than all else besides.

Trusting, then, that you will accept this offering in the same spirit with which it is presented, I conclude with the sincerest wishes that a gracious God may long preserve you in health, and the full enjoyment of your powers; that he would make you wholly our own, and long keep you in the midst of us, to awaken the *ἔργω περιεφύτῳ* in the minds of our beloved German youth; to exert your powerful influence against all debasement and crippling of the intellect; to lead back those who are astray from the unnatural and the distorted to a healthful simplicity; to exhibit a pattern of right method and of true freedom in science; to testify of that which constitutes the goal and central point of all history; and—so far as it comes within the province of science—to prepare the way for that new, *Christian*, age of the world, whose dawn already greets us from afar, that, for such ends as these, He would prolong the evening of your life, and make it even more glorious than was its morning.

These are the sincere and fervent wishes of him who calls himself, with his whole heart,

Yours,

A. NEANDER.

BERLIN, July 11, 1842.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

To exhibit the history of the Church of Christ, as a living witness of the divine power of Christianity; as a school of Christian experience; a voice, sounding through the ages, of instruction, of doctrine, and of reproof, for all who are disposed to listen; this, from the earliest period, has been the leading aim of my life and studies. At the same time, I was always impressed with the magnitude of the undertaking, and with the great difficulties which must attend it, if so conducted as to answer the demands of science and of the great practical want which I have mentioned; for both of these are, in the present case, closely connected. Nothing but what can stand as truth before the scrutiny of genuine, unprejudiced science—of a science which does not see through the glass of a particular philosophical or dogmatic school,—can be profitable for instruction, doctrine, and reproof; and wherever a science relating to the things of God and their revelation and evolution among mankind has not become, by mismanagement of human perversity, an insignificant caricature, or a lifeless skeleton, it must necessarily bear these fruits. Science and life are here designed to interpenetrate each other, if life is not to be exposed to the manifold contradictions of error, and science to death and inanity.

Although I certainly felt the inward call to such an undertaking, yet the sense of its weight and its responsibility—especially at the present time, which so much needs the *historiam vitæ magistram*, as a sure compass in the storm and tumult of events—has continually deterred me from attempting to realize the favourite idea which so long floated before my mind. After several preliminary essays, on works connected with church history, I was led by various motives, personal and outward, to engage in a task which, if too long delayed, might never be accomplished.

The immediate outward occasion was, that my respected publisher invited me to prepare for the press a new edition of my work on the Emperor Julian; and, at the same time, a more full and ample treatment of the subject, which in that work had been only a fragment. But in setting about this task, I found that the book, according to the views which I then entertained, would have to take an entirely new shape, and if it came to any thing, to be wrought into a far more comprehensive whole. Thus was suggested to me the thought of publishing, in the first place, the history of the Church in the three first centuries, as the starting point of a general Church History; and the encouragement received from my publisher confirmed me in the plan.

I here enter, then, upon the execution of this work, and present to the public the first great division of the history of the Church during the three first centuries. The second division, if it please God, shall follow by the next Easter fair. The history of the Apostolic Church as a whole, is, to my own mind, of so much importance, that I could not prevail on myself to incorporate it immediately with the present history. Hence, in this work, I have simply presupposed it; and I reserve for a future opportunity the publication of it, as a separate work by itself.

May He who is the fountain of all goodness and truth attend the commencement of this work with his blessing, and grant me both the ability and the right disposition to prosecute it to the end.

To conclude, I offer my hearty thanks to all the friends who have attended this work in its transition through the press with their kind assistance; and especially to my excellent friend, one of our promising young theologians (soon afterwards removed to a better world), the theological student SINGER. To his assiduity and care, accompanied with no small labour in correcting the proofs, the appearance of this volume is greatly indebted. The indexes referring to the matter of the work, which, it is hoped, will contribute much to the reader's convenience, are also due to the industry of this valued and beloved friend.

A. NEANDER.

BERLIN, *October* 18, 1825.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

FIRST of all, I would thankfully acknowledge the Divine goodness which has enabled me—beyond any expectations I could have formed when, seventeen years ago, I commenced the publication of my Church History—to prosecute the work so far, and also to recast the first volume of it in a better shape. The first edition having been disposed of within a year, a re-impression of the text and doubling the number of copies made it possible to defer the preparation of a new edition for so long a period. For this I am indebted to the prudent arrangement of my respected publisher; for had I undertaken to prepare a new edition at any earlier period, it would hardly have been in my power to carry forward the work so far as I have. Besides, owing to the long interval which has elapsed, I had become almost a stranger to this portion of it, in its original form, and hence the defects which demanded correction, could not fail to appear to me the more glaring. Many of the corrections have been suggested by the remarks of friends and of enemies; and I trust I shall ever be glad to listen also to the latter, when the truth speaks through them.

I must still hold fast to the same fundamental position in theology, and in the contemplation of history, which I held at the outset of my undertaking. I must strenuously defend it, over against, and in opposition to, the same main tendencies which I then had to combat. On many points, history, in the meantime, has already decided. Nothing will remain hidden: principles must unfold themselves, and bring out to the light the results which lie within them. When this has been done, all the shifts are in vain, by which men would seek to reverse the decision of history, and repeat over again the old trick of deception.

When, at the commencement of my labours seventeen years ago, I dedicated my work to the friend who was about to leave me, WILHELM BÖHMER,—a young man whom I looked upon as the representative of a whole class inspired with the same disposition, who has since, as a man, maintained his standing among the learned theologians and teachers of the Church, and with whom I have ever remained bound by the same fellowship of spirit,—I affixed to it the motto of our common theology, and of this exhibition of history,—“*Pectus est, quod theologum facit.*” We need not be ashamed of this maxim; shame rather to those who were bold enough to ridicule it. They have pronounced sentence on themselves. It was the watchword of those men who called forth theology from the dead forms of scholasticism to the living spirit of God’s word. So let this be our motto still, in despite of all starveling or over-crammed *Philisters*,—of all the foolish men who wrap themselves in the conceit of their own superior science, or who allow themselves to be dazzled by such vain pretensions.

The first division of this work, in its present altered shape, will occupy two volumes. The second volume, with the Divine permission, will soon follow the present; and I hope also, the continuation of the whole work will no longer be delayed.

A. NEANDER.

BERLIN, *July* 11, 1842.

DEDICATION OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

TO MY BELOVED AND MUCH-HONOURED FRIEND,

DR HEUBNER,

SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL AT WITTENBERG,

THE THEOLOGUS NON GLORIÆ SED CRUCIS.

WHEN, last year, the noble festival was held in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of your Theological Seminary, from which, during that space of time, so rich a blessing has flowed to the churches of this country, gladly would I have borne some part or other in honour of this occasion so interesting to my heart. It was not my happiness to enjoy that privilege. I now come after the feast, with a small offering, which assures you of my sincere love and respect. There is also a jubilee festival in commemoration of our ancient friendship. It is now *more* than five and twenty years since it was my happiness to make your acquaintance, in the society of that man of God, who but a short time ago was called home from the midst of us, BARON VON KOTTWITZ, a man whose memory thousands bless,—and from that time I have looked towards you as to a point of light amid the darkness of this worldly age. You will receive this tribute of my sincere esteem with indulgent good-will. If you find a good deal here, as in other writings of mine, which does not accord with your own views of doctrine, this, I am confident, cannot disturb your kind feelings. You understand how to make subordinate differences recede and give place to the higher fellowship grounded on that one foundation, which is Christ. You are a disciple of the true spirit of love and freedom, which, so far from insisting that everything shall be cast in the same mould, maketh free.

God grant that you may be spared yet many years, as a blessing to His church, which, in these times of encroaching darkness, needs such witnesses above all things else.

With all my heart, yours,

A. NEANDER.

BERLIN, *June* 28, 1843.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND VOLUME.



THE following is that part of the first book of my Church History which contains the History of Doctrines. The active investigations which have been going on, during the few years past, in this department, gave occasion, here especially, for the correction or more ample proof of many things which I had advanced; and I am rejoiced that the opportunity has been given me for making these improvements. A tendency which aims at science and spirit by referring everything to the head, could, most assuredly, never find in me anything but an unfashionable opponent.

In conclusion, I present my hearty thanks to my friend, HERMANN ROSSEL, for the patient and skilful care which he has bestowed on the correction of this volume, and in preparing the running titles, and the indexes at the end.

The two prefaces to the second and third volumes of the first edition, I leave out for want of room. The third volume was dedicated to the beloved man with whom, as a colleague, I have since had the pleasure of being permanently connected, and was meant as a salutation of hearty love on the occasion of his then recent arrival on a visit to this city, in July 19, 1827.

The guide to Church History, which I promised some time ago, will now beyond all doubt be prepared by a very dear young friend of mine, Hr. LIC. JACOBI, who has already made himself favourably known by his essay on Pelagius, and from whom the best which could be done may be expected.

A. NEANDER.

BERLIN, *June 23, 1843.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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CONDITION OF THE WORLD, ROMAN, GREEK, AND JEWISH, AT  
THE TIME OF THE FIRST APPEARANCE AND THE COMMENCE-  
MENT OF THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

IT shall be our purpose to trace, from the small mustard-grain, through the course of the past centuries, lying open for our inspection, the growth of that mighty tree, which is destined to overshadow the earth, and under the branches of which all its people are to find a safe habitation. The history will shew how a little leaven, cast into the mass of humanity, has been gradually penetrating it. Looking back on the period of eighteen centuries, we would survey a process of development in which we ourselves are included; a process moving steadily onward, though not in a direct line, but through various windings, yet in the end furthered by whatever has attempted to arrest its course; a process having its issue in eternity, but constantly following the same laws, so that in the past, as it unfolds itself to our view, we may see the germ of the future, which is coming to meet us. But although the contemplation of history enables us to perceive the powers as they are prepared in their secret laboratories, and as they are exhibited in actual operation, yet, in order to a right understanding of all this, it is pre-supposed that we have formed some just conception of that, in its inward essence, which we would study in its manifestation and process of development. Our knowledge here falls into a necessary circle. To understand history, it is supposed that we have some understanding of that which constitutes its working principle; but it is also history which furnishes us the proper test, by which to ascertain whether its

principle has been rightly apprehended. Certainly, then, our understanding of the history of Christianity will depend on the conception we have formed to ourselves of Christianity itself.

Now, Christianity we regard not as a power that has sprung up out of the hidden depths of man's nature, but as one which descended from above, because heaven opened itself for the rescue of revolted humanity; a power which, as it is exalted above all that human nature can create out of its own resources, must impart to that nature a new life, and change it from its inmost centre. The great source of this power is the person whose life its appearance exhibits to us—Jesus of Nazareth—the Redeemer of mankind when alienated from God by sin. In the submission of faith to him, and the appropriation of the truth which he revealed, consists the essence of Christianity, and of that fellowship of the divine life resulting from it, which we designate under the name of the Church. Out of this springs the common consciousness, which unites all its members in one, however separated from one another by space or time. The continuance of all those agencies, whereby Christianity has given a new turn to the life of our race, depends on our holding fast to this, its peculiar essence, to the same that has been the spring of these agencies from the beginning. To the Kingdom of God, which derived its origin from these influences in humanity, and which must ever continue to spring up afresh from the same, may be applied the remark of an ancient historian respecting the kingdoms of the world, that they will be preserved by the same means to which they were indebted for their foundation.<sup>1</sup>

But although Christianity can be understood only as something which is above nature and reason, something communicated to them from a higher source, yet it stands in necessary connection with the essence of these powers and with their mode of development,—otherwise, indeed, it could not be fitted to elevate them to any higher stage; otherwise, it would not operate on them at all. And such a connection, considered by itself, we must presume to exist in the works of God, in the mutual and harmonious agreement of which is manifested the divine order of the universe. The connection of which we now speak consists in this; that what has by their Creator been implanted in the essence of

<sup>1</sup> Imperium facile his artibus retinetur, quibus initio partum est.

human nature and reason, what has its ground in their idea and their destination, can attain to its full realization only by means of that higher principle, as we see it actually realized in Him who is its Source, and in whom is expressed the original type and model, after which humanity has to strive. And accordingly, we see the evidence of this connection, whenever we observe how human nature and reason do, by virtue of this their original capacity, actually strive, in their historical development, towards this higher principle, which needs to be communicated to them in order to their own completion; and how, by the same capacity, they are made receptive of this principle, and conducted onward till they yield to it and become moulded by its influence. It is simply because such a connection exists; because in all cases where, through the historic preparation, the soil has been rendered suitable for its reception, Christianity enters readily into all that is human, striving to assimilate it to its own nature, and to interpenetrate it with its own power, that on a superficial view, it appears as if Christianity itself were only a product resulting from the combination of the different spiritual elements it had drawn together; and the *opinion* has found advocates, that it could *thus* be explained. So may it also become blended for a while with the impure elements, attracted by its influence, and in its manifestation assume a shape which wholly resembles them;—till at length, by its own intrinsic power, it begins a process of purification, from which it issues forth refined and ennobled, even in its outward form. But this circumstance, again, might seem to furnish some hold for the *opinion*, as if all those impure elements, which only attached themselves to Christianity in its outward manifestation, sprang from its essence; while, on the contrary, the real operation of its essence, as the process of development went on, was to separate and reject them. In the contemplation of history, as of nature, it is always in truth a very difficult thing to avoid confounding accidental symptoms with more deep-seated agencies,—to distinguish clearly the true cause from what merely works on the surface.<sup>1</sup>

If this holds good, so far as it concerns the relation of Christianity to the development of human nature generally, it will be

<sup>1</sup> We might apply here what the great historian Polybius says on another, though kindred subject: Ἀρχὴ τὸ διαφέρειν καὶ πόσον δίστασθαι αἰτίας καὶ προφάνους, iii. vi. 6.

found to apply with peculiar force to that great period, which was chosen for the appearance of the Saviour of the world; and for the diffusion among mankind, from him, as the source, of those powers from above, which formed the commencement of that new creation, whose progressive work became thenceforth the final problem and the goal of history. It is, therefore, only from its historical connection with the previous development of that portion of mankind, among whom Christianity first appeared, that its effects can be rightly understood; and such a connected view of the subject is necessary, in order to clear the way of false explanations.

This connection is hinted at by the Apostle Paul, where he says that Christ appeared *when the fulness of the time was come*. For herein, certainly, it is implied, that the precise time when he appeared had some particular relation to his appearance; that the preparatory steps, through the previous development in the history of the nations, had been directed precisely to this point, and were destined to proceed just so far, in order to admit of this appearance—the goal and central point of all. It is true, this appearance stands in an altogether peculiar relation to the religion of the Hebrews, which was designed to prepare the way for it in an altogether peculiar sense. It is connected with this religion by the common element of a divine revelation,—the supernatural and supra-rational element; by the common interest of Theism and the Theocracy; as all revealed religion, the entire development of Theism and the Theocracy, points from the beginning towards one end; which being reached, every thing must be recognised as belonging to one organic whole,—a whole wherein all the principal *momenta* served to announce beforehand, and to prepare the way for the end towards which they were tending as their last fulfilment and consummation. It is in this reference, Christ says of his relation to *this* religion, what he could not say after the same manner, of his relation to any other, that he was not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil; although it remains none the less true, that Christ stands in the relation of one who came not to destroy but to fulfil, to all the truth at bottom in all religions, to the purely human element wherever it may be found. But still we must not confine ourselves here to the connection of the appearance of Christianity with Judaism alone. Judaism

itself, as the revealed religion of Theism, can be understood in its true significance, only as contrasted with the Nature-religion of Paganism. Whilst on the one hand, the seed of divine truth out of which Christianity sprang, was communicated to reason by divine revelation; so on the other hand, reason unfolding itself from beneath, must seek, especially among that great historical people, the Greeks, how far it could singly, and by its own power, advance in the knowledge of divine things. To this, the Apostle Paul alludes, when he says, "God hath determined for all nations the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, —how long they should continue, and how far they should extend their sway,—that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him." And so, too, when he says of the times immediately preceding the revelation of the Gospel, that the world, by its own wisdom, sought to know God in his wisdom, but could not know him. As it had been entrusted to the Hebrews to preserve and transmit the heaven-derived element of the Theistic religion, so it was ordained that among the Greeks, all seeds of *human culture* should unfold themselves in beautiful harmony, to a complete and perfect whole; and then Christianity, taking up the opposition between the divine and the human, was to unite both in one, and shew how it was necessary that both should co-operate to prepare for the appearance of itself and for the unfolding of what it contains. Origen had no hesitation in admitting, what Celsus the great antagonist of Christianity maintained, when he ascribed to the Greeks a peculiar adaptation of talents and fitness of position, which qualified them for applying human culture to the development and elaboration of those elements of divine knowledge they had received from other quarters, namely from the East.<sup>1</sup>

Besides, among Pagans, the transient flashes of a deeply-seated consciousness of God,—the sporadic revelations of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being, and who has not left himself without witness among any people,—are too clear to be mistaken;—the *testimonia animæ naturaliter christianæ*, as it is expressed by an ancient father, which pointed to Christianity.

<sup>1</sup> "Ὅτι κρῖναι καὶ βελαιώσασθαι καὶ ἀσκῆσαι πρὸς ἀρετὴν τὰ ὑπὸ βαρβάρων ἰσχυρίντα ἀμείνονίς ἴσιν Ἕλληνας. Origen, acquiescing in this opinion, says it serves precisely for the vindication of Christianity. c. Cels. i. 2.

And while it was necessary that the influence of Judaism should penetrate into the heathen world, in order to prepare the way and open a point of communication for Christianity, so was it needful also, that the stern and repulsive stiffness of Judaism should be softened and expanded by the elements of Hellenic culture, in order to become recipient for what was new in the presentations of the Gospel. The three great historical nations had to contribute, each in its own peculiar way, to prepare the soil for the planting of Christianity,—the Jews on the side of the religious element; the Greeks on the side of science and art; the Romans, as masters of the world, on the side of the political element. When the fulness of the time was arrived, and Christ appeared, —when the goal of history had thus been reached,—then it was, that through him, and by the power of the spirit that proceeded from him,—the might of Christianity,—all the threads, hitherto separated, of human development, were to be brought together and interwoven in one web.

Now, how it was, that the different courses of development under revealed, and in natural religion,—under Judaism on the one hand, and Greek or Roman institutions on the other,—co-operated to prepare the way for Christianity, it is our present purpose more particularly to consider; and we will first cast a glance at the religious state of the pagan world among the Greeks and Romans.

#### STATE OF THE PAGAN WORLD AMONG THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.

If, in the ancient world, a dark fatality *seemed to reveal itself* in the rise and fall of nations, an irresistible cycle to which all human greatness was forced to submit, in this impression we may recognise the consciousness of a necessary law of development at that stage of the world. All national greatness depends on the tone of public feeling and manners; and this again on the power of religion in the life of the people. But the popular religions of antiquity answered only for a *certain stage* of culture. When the nations, in the course of their progress, had passed beyond this, the necessary consequence was a dis severing of the spirit from the religious traditions. In the case of the more quiet and equable development of the Oriental mind,—so tenacious of the

old,—the opposition between the mythic religion of the people, and the secret, *theosophic* doctrines of a priestly cast, who gave direction to the popular conscience, might exist for centuries without change. But among the more excitable nations of the West, intellectual culture, as soon as it attained to a certain degree of independence, must necessarily fall into collision with the mythic religion, handed down from the infancy of the people. The more widely diffused cultivation became, the more extensive grew this schism. Religion was deprived of its power, and the defection from this led at the same time to the depravation of morals. Thus the culture which had no religious and moral ground of support, capable of withstanding every shock, and indestructible under all changes,—as soon as it was rent from its connection with the inner life that alone gives the vigour of health to all human concerns,—could only degenerate into false civilization and corruption. There was as yet *no salt* to preserve the life of humanity from decomposing, or to restore it back again when passing to decomposition.

As it was the Grecian mind,—freed in its development from the influence of tradition,—to which philosophy and every independent science under its form, owe their existence; so too, it was among the Greeks that the mighty schism first presented itself, between the human mind striving after its freedom, and the popular religion. As early as the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ, the arbitrary and heartless dialectic of the Sophists was directed against the might of holy tradition and morals. Plato already represents Socrates discoursing against this rage for enlightenment, which he characterises as a “boorish wisdom,”<sup>1</sup> that put itself to the thankless task of tracing back all mythical tales to some natural fact, neglecting meanwhile, what is most important and nearest to man, the knowledge of himself. And in the times immediately succeeding, appeared a certain Eue-merus, from the school of Cyrene, who fancied that he had compassed the long-sought object, and resolved the whole doctrine concerning the gods, into a history of nature.

Among the Romans, religion was more closely interwoven,

<sup>1</sup> Ἀγροίκῃ τινὶ σοφίᾳ χρώμενος, is what he says of one of those enlighteners who were for explaining every thing into the natural and trivial. Phædrus, p. 285, Plat. ed. Bipont, vol. x.



than in the other ancient states, with politics. One gave life to the other. Here, more than elsewhere, the whole civil and domestic life was based on religious customs, which, by their connection with modesty of manners, presented a striking contrast with the more æsthetic than moral element of the Grecian mythology,—a system which did not shrink from even entering into union with immorality.<sup>1</sup> The great historian Polybius has given a picture of Roman life, as it was a century and a half before Christ, while it yet retained its ancient simplicity. Judging by those maxims of the understanding which, as a statesman, he was in the habit of applying to the affairs of the world, he believed that the trait of character for which the Roman people had been commonly reproached, the excessive superstition inwrought with their public and private life, was, in truth, the firmest pillar of the Roman state.<sup>2</sup> Contemplating religion in this outward way, he saw in it only a means, employed by the wisdom of law-givers, for training and leading the multitude. It was his opinion, that were it even possible to form a state of wise men, such a procedure would, perhaps, be found unnecessary. But as a counterpoise to the power which unruly passions and desires exercised over the excitable multitude, there was need of such means, in order to hold them in check by the dread of the invisible, and by terrifying fictions.<sup>3</sup> From this power of religious faith he accounted for the integrity and trustworthiness of the Roman magistrates, with whom an oath was a pledge of fidelity, to be relied on with far more confidence than any number of other securities in the Grecian states. But while he praised the ancients, who, not without good reasons, had introduced among the multitude these opinions concerning the gods and the things of the lower world, he felt constrained to censure those of his own contemporaries, who were most unreasonably and inconsiderately seeking to destroy these convictions.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A difference between the Roman and Grecian religions, particularly noticed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek writer of the Augustan age. See the well-known and remarkable passage in *Archæol. Roman.* l. ii. c. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Καί μοι δοκεῖ τὸ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις ὀνειδιζόμενον, τοῦτο συνέχειν τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα, λίγω δὲ τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν. *L. vi. c. 56.*

<sup>3</sup> Δίπτεται, τοῖς ἀδήλοισ φόβοις καὶ τῇ σσιαύτῃ τραγωδίᾳ τὰ πλήθη συνέχειν.

<sup>4</sup> Διότι οἱ παλαιοὶ δοκοῦσι μοι τὰς περὶ θεῶν ἰστορίας καὶ τὰς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν ἕδου διαλήψεις οὐκ εἰκῆ καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν εἰς τὰ πλήθη παρσισαγαγῖν· πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον οἱ νῦν εἰκῆ καὶ ἀλόγως ἐκβάλλειν αὐτά.

It would necessarily be the case, at the point occupied by the ancient world, that in proportion as scientific culture came to be more generally diffused among the people, this opposition noticed by Polybius between the subjective conviction of individuals and the public state-religion, would become more strongly marked. There were no means of creating a fellowship of religious interest on truthful grounds, between the cultivated class and the people. The wiser sort endeavoured to sustain the popular religion; either because, like Polybius, they merely recognised in it a necessary means to political ends; or because, like philosophers of more depth, they regarded it as not barely the work of human caprice, but as belonging to a higher necessity; as resting on a basis of truth, which could be brought near the consciousness of the multitude only under this human form; as the fragments of a tradition, transmitting the knowledge of divine things possessed in the earliest times, wherein all that was true, and that claimed to be acknowledged as such also by the wise, ought to be distinguished from the imperfect form.<sup>1</sup> With Polybius agrees Strabo the geographer, who wrote in the age of Augustus Cæsar. "The multitude of women," he observes, "and the entire mass of the common people, cannot be led to piety by the doctrines of philosophy; for this purpose superstition also is necessary, which must call in the aid of myths and tales of wonder." Having adduced some examples from the Grecian mythology, he adds, "such things the founders of states employed as bugbears to awe childish people." These myths, as it seemed to him, were required not only for children, but no less for the ignorant and uneducated, who are no better than children; and so too for those whose education is imperfect, for in their case, too, reason

<sup>1</sup> So Aristotle, who says: "It has been handed down, in a mythical form, from the earliest times to posterity, that there are gods, and that the divine (the Deity) compasses entire nature. All besides this has been added, after the mythical style, for the purpose of persuading the multitude, and for the interest of the laws and the advantage of the state. Thus men have given to the gods human forms, and have even represented them under the figure of other beings, in the train of which fictions followed many more of the like sort. But if we separate from all this the original principle, and consider it alone, namely, that the first essences are gods, we shall find that this has been divinely said; and since it is probable that philosophy and the arts have been several times, so far as that is possible, found and lost, such doctrines may have been preserved to our times, as the remains of ancient wisdom." *Metaphys.* x. 8.

has not as yet acquired strength enough to throw off the habits they have brought with them from the years of childhood.<sup>1</sup>

In the latter times of the Roman republic, when the ancient simplicity of manners was fast disappearing before the advance of culture, this opposition, which had for a long time existed among the Greeks, between the religion of thinking men and the state-religion, or the popular faith, began to prevail more generally in proportion to the influence of the Grecian philosophy. Thus the learned Roman antiquarian Varro, who lived about the time of our Saviour's birth, distinguished three kinds of theology, the poetic or mythical, the civil, and the natural; the last being the one which belongs to the whole world, and in which the wise are agreed. The *theologia civilis*, in its relation to truth, seemed to him to lie half-way between mythology and philosophical religion.<sup>2</sup> Seneca said, in his tract "against superstition," "the whole of that vulgar crowd of gods, which for ages past a Protean superstition has been accumulating, we shall worship in *this* sense, viz. that we ever remember the worship we pay them is due rather to good manners than to their own worth. All such rites the sage will observe, because they are commanded by the laws, not because they are pleasing to the gods." So Cotta, whom Cicero introduces as the Academician, in the third book of his work, "De natura Deorum," knows how to distinguish, in his own person, the two different positions of the pontifex and the philosopher. But not every one had the wisdom which could hold these two positions distinctly apart, and keep them from destroying, where they had nothing better to substitute in place of what they destroyed. The inner disunion was at length no longer to be concealed even from those who were *no philosophers*. When, with the increase of luxury, a superficial cultivation came to be more widely spread among the Romans, and the ancient simplicity of manners gradually disappeared; when the old civic virtue, and the old constitution and freedom sank away, and were succeeded by every species of moral depravation and by servitude,

<sup>1</sup> In Strabo Geograph. l. i. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> His words are: "Prima theologia maxime accommodata est ad theatrum, secunda ad mundum, tertia ad urbem. Ea, quæ scribunt poëtæ, minus esse, quam ut populi sequi debeant, quæ autem philosophi, *plus* quam ut ea vulgum scrutari expediat. Ea, quæ facilius intra parietes in schola, quam extra in foro ferre possunt aures. Augustin. de civitate Dei, l. vi. c. 5, et seq.

then was the tie also broken whereby the old religion of the state had been thus far preserved in the life of the people. Those among the philosophical systems of the Greeks which most completely harmonized with a worldly, thoughtless spirit, destitute of all susceptibility for the godlike; those which made pleasure man's highest end, or which led to doubt of all objective truth, Epicureanism, as represented, for example, by a Lucretius, and scepticism, found currency on all sides; and although the systems themselves were seldom studied, yet the great mass of half-educated men became familiar with their results. Individuals appeared who, like Lucian, pointed the shafts of their wit against the existing religions, and the superstitions of the people. In the religious systems of the several nations that had been brought in contact with one another by the Roman empire, as well as in the doctrines of the philosophical schools, men saw nothing but the strife of opinions, without any criterion of truth. Pilate's question, "what is truth?" conveying a sneer at all enthusiasm about such a matter, represented the prevailing tone of mind of many a noble Roman.

They who, without any deep sense of religious need, were yet unable to make up their minds to a total denial of religion, endeavoured to content themselves with that dead abstraction, which is usually left behind as something to retire to from the living forms of religion, when these are on the point of expiring; a certain species of Deism, a way of thinking that does not indeed absolutely deny the existence of a Deity, but yet places him at the utmost possible distance, in the back-ground of his works. An idle deity is all that is wanted; not one everywhere active, whose agency pervades the whole life of things. He who, to satisfy his religious wants, requires anything beyond this meagre abstraction; he who would know anything more respecting man's relation to a higher world, appears already, to men of this way of thinking, a fanatic or a fool. The inquiries that suggest themselves under the feeling of a more profound religious need, are to such minds unintelligible, for they are strangers to the feeling itself. In the notions entertained by the many concerning the anger of the gods, and the punishments of the lower world, they see nothing but superstition, without recognising in them a fundamental truth, namely, the undeniable need which

leads men into various delusions only when misunderstood. But, by minds of this stamp, the whole is ridiculed alike as mere dreams and fancies of limited man, who transfers all his own passions over to his gods. As a representative of this class, we may take that satirical castigator of manners in the age of the Antonines, Lucian, who characterizes himself as the hater of lies, cheats, and charlatanry.<sup>1</sup> And Justin Martyr observes of the philosophers in his time, "that the greater part of them bestow no thought on the questions, whether there is one God, or whether there are many gods, whether there is a providence or no providence; as if knowledge of these matters were of no importance to our wellbeing." "They rather seek," says he, "to convince us also, that the divinity extends his care to the great whole, and to the several kinds, but not to me and to you, not to men as individuals. Hence it is useless to pray to him, for everything occurs according to the unchangeable laws of an endless cycle."<sup>2</sup>

From the wreck of religion many sought to rescue the faith in one divine primal essence, which they found it difficult, however, to distinguish from the world; and the simple spiritual worship of this appeared to them the original truth, lying at the foundation of the whole fabric of superstition in the popular religions. It was Varro's opinion, that the only thing true in religion was the idea of a rational soul of the world, by which all things are moved and governed.<sup>3</sup> He traces the origin of superstition and unbelief to the introduction of idols, which he contends were unknown to the earliest religion of the Romans.<sup>4</sup> "If images had not been introduced," says he, "the gods would have been worshipped in a more chaste and simple manner:"<sup>5</sup> and he appeals, futhermore, to the example of the Jews. So Strabo informs us what he himself considered to be the original truth in religion, where he describes Moses as a religious reformer, who established

<sup>1</sup> Μισαλαζών εἰμι καὶ μισογόνος καὶ μισοψευδῆς καὶ μισότυφος καὶ μισῶ πᾶν τὸ ποιουτῶδες εἶδος τῶν μιανῶν ἀνθρώπων· πάντι δὲ πολλοὶ εἰσιν. Which, to be sure, he could say, with perfect justice, of his own time. See the dialogue entitled *ἄλιεύς*.

<sup>2</sup> Dial. c. Tryph. Jud. at the beginning, f. 218, Ed. Colon. 1686.

<sup>3</sup> Anima motu ac ratione mundum gubernans.

<sup>4</sup> Qui primi simulacra deorum populis posuerunt, eos civitatibus suis et metum demississe et errorem addidisse.

<sup>5</sup> Castius Dii observarentur; see Augustin. de civ. Dei, l. v. c. 31.

the simple spiritual worship of a Supreme Being, in opposition to the idol and image worship of all other nations; "and this one Supreme Essence," says he, "is what embraces us all, water and land, what we call the heavens, the world, the nature of things. This Highest Being should be worshipped without any visible image, in sacred groves. In such retreats the devout should lay themselves down to sleep, and expect signs from God in dreams." But this simple nature-worship, Strabo supposes, became afterwards, as well among the Jews as everywhere else, corrupted by superstition and thirst for power.<sup>1</sup> We should mention here, also, that eclectic philosopher of the Cynic tribe, Demonax, of the isle of Cyprus, who, at the beginning of the second century, resided in Athens, where he lived near to the age of a hundred years, universally respected for his simple life, full of kindness and charity to all. He was the representative of a sober, practical bent of mind, striving after nothing beyond the purely human, which, while it discarded whatever savoured of superstition and fanaticism, checked all inquiry also about superterrestrial things. He made no offerings, because the gods needed none. He had no desire to be initiated into the mysteries, for he thought, "if they were bad, they ought to be divulged to keep men away from them; and if they were good, they should be communicated to all, from love to mankind." When a show of gladiators was about to be exhibited in Athens, he presented himself before the assembled people, and told them they should pass no such decree, until they had first removed away the altar of pity (*ἑλεος*.) That equanimity which renders man independent of outward things and truly free, which makes him fear nothing and hope for nothing, he considered the loftiest attainment. When asked whether he thought the soul to be immortal, his answer was, "Yes; but in the sense in which all things are immortal."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, l. xvi. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See the account of his life by Lucian. This remarkable bent of Demonax, so exclusively practical, moral, and *rationalistic*, so decided in its renunciation of all higher knowledge, so ready to spurn, as fanaticism, all speculative or religious interest about any other world besides or above the present, is illustrated by several other of his sentences, preserved in the collection of Johannes Stobaeus. Thus, when asked if the world was animated, or of a spherical shape, he replied, "You busy yourselves impertinently about the nature of the world, but of the disorder in your own nature you do not

The elder Pliny, while absorbed in the contemplation of nature, is lost in admiration of an immeasurable creative spirit, beyond all human comprehension, manifesting himself in his works. But his admiration of this exalted spirit of the universe, serves only to awaken, in tenfold strength, the depressing sense of the narrowness and vanity of man's existence. He saw nothing to fill up the chasm betwixt feeble man and that unknown, all-transcending spirit. Polytheism appeared to him an invention of human weakness. Since men were incapable of grasping and retaining the whole conception of perfect being, they separated it into many parts. They formed for themselves divers ideals as objects of worship; each making himself a god, suited to his own peculiar wants. "All religion is the offspring of necessity, weakness, and fear. *What God is,—if in truth he be anything distinct from the world,—it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know. But it is a foolish delusion, which has sprung from human weakness and human pride, to imagine that such an infinite spirit would concern himself with the petty affairs of men.*<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to say, whether it might not be better for men to be wholly without religion, than to have one of this kind, which is a reproach to its object. The vanity of man, and his insatiable longing after existence, have led him also to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures; since the other creatures have no wants transcending the bounds of their nature. Man is full of desires and wants, that reach to infinity, and can never be satisfied. His nature is a lie,—uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among these so great evils, the best thing God has bestowed on man, is the power to take his own life." Sadness, mixed with a cold resignation, is the prevailing tone that runs through Pliny's remarkable work. It was in the same

think." The play on the words is not translatable into English. *Ἔμεις περὶ μὲν τοῦ κόσμου πολυπραγμανοῦμεν, περὶ δὲ τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀκοσμίας οὐ φροντίζομεν.* Stobæi Eclogæ, l. ii. c. i. 11, ed. Heeren, P. ii. p. 10. Two other sentences are contained in the Anthology of Stobæus on the *γνώθι σεαυτόν* and on *ὑπεροψία*, and in Orelli's Collection of the Gnomographi græci.

<sup>1</sup> Plin. hist. nat. l. ii. c. 4, et seq.; l. vii. c. 1. Irridendum vero, agere curam rerum humanarum illud, quidquid est summum. Anne tam tristi atque multiplici ministerio non pollui credamus dubitemusve?

temper he proceeded to encounter the flames of Vesuvius, for the purpose of exploring their effects.

But, as the history of this and of every age witnesses, there is a religious need clinging to man's nature, and not to be denied; a need of recognising something above nature, and of fellowship with the same, which only asserts itself with the more force the longer it is repressed. The predominance of that worldly bent of mind, which will acknowledge nothing above nature, does but call forth, in the end, a stronger reaction of the longing after the supernatural; the dominion of an all-denying unbelief excites a more intense desire to be able to believe. And the experience itself, which follows in the train of unbelief, contributes to bring about this result. The times in which unbelief has prevailed, are, as history teaches, uniformly times of earthly calamity; for the moral depravation which accompanies unbelief, necessarily destroys also the foundation of all earthly prosperity. Thus the time of the diffusion of unbelief in the Roman state, was also the time which saw the destruction of civil liberty, and the time of public suffering, under the rule of merciless despots. And the outward distress awakened a sense of the inward; men were led to regard their estrangement from the gods and from heaven, as a principal cause of the public decay and misery. Many felt themselves constrained to compare these times of public misfortune with the flourishing period of the Roman republic, and believed this melancholy change ought to be ascribed particularly to the decline of the *relegio Romana*, once so scrupulously observed. In the gods, now cast off or neglected, they saw the authors and protectors of the Roman empire. They observed the mutual strife of the philosophical systems, which, promising truth, did but multiply uncertainty and doubt. All this excited in them the longing after some external authority, which might serve as a stay for religious conviction; and they resorted back to the religion of their more fortunate ancestors, who, under the influence of that religion, found themselves so happy in the freedom from all doubt. That old religion appeared to them, like the days of the past, in a transfigured light. Such was the tone of feeling which set in to oppose, first the prevailing infidelity, afterwards Christianity.

Thus the pagan Cæcilius, in the *apologetic* dialogue of Minu-



cius Felix, first describes the strife and uncertainty in the systems of human philosophy; shews what small reliance can be placed on human things generally; and points to the doubts in a providence, which suggest themselves when we observe the misfortunes of the virtuous, and the prosperity of the wicked. He then goes on to say: "How much nobler and better is it, then, to receive just what our fathers have taught us, as a sufficient guide to truth? To worship the gods which we have been instructed by our fathers to reverence, even before we *could* have any true knowledge of them? To allow ourselves, in regard to the divinities, no license of private judgment, but to believe our ancestors, who, in the infancy of mankind, near the birth of the world, were even considered worthy of having the gods for their friends or for their kings?"

The need of some union with heaven, from which men felt they were estranged, the dissatisfaction with a cold, melancholy present, procured a more ready belief for those accounts, in the mythical legends of a golden age, wherein gods and men lived in intimate fellowship together. Ardent spirits looked back to those times with a sort of earnest craving,—a craving after the past, that pointed to the future. Thus Pausanias<sup>1</sup> endeavours to defend old mythical traditions against the infidelity of his contemporaries; accounting for the latter, partly from the fact, that the true had been rendered suspicious by being mixed in with the false, and in part from the fact, that men had grown accustomed to apply a standard, suiting the present times only, to that more glorious period of wonders. Of those former days he says: "The men who lived then, were, on account of their uprightness and piety, admitted as guests and even table-companions of the gods; for their good actions the gods openly bestowed honours on them, and for their bad, openly manifested displeasure. It was then, also, that men themselves became gods, and continue to enjoy this honour." But of his own time he says: "At the present day, when wickedness has reached its highest pitch, and extended itself through all the country and in every town, such an incident no longer occurs, as that of a man becoming a god, except merely in name, and through flattery to power (the apotheosis of the emperors); and the anger of the

<sup>1</sup> In his description of Greece. See *Arcadica*, or l. viii. c. ii. § 2.

gods awaits transgressors at a remote period, and after they are gone from this world." Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who, a few years before the birth of Christ, wrote on the old Roman history, relates the story of a vestal virgin, whose innocence, after she had been falsely accused, was miraculously brought to light. Upon this he remarks: "The followers of atheistic philosophies, —if philosophies they may be called, which scoff at all appearances of the gods, that are said to have occurred among the Greeks or Barbarians,—would make themselves quite merry with these accounts, attributing them to human exaggeration, as if no one of the gods ever concerned himself about a man, whoever he might be; but he who is not disposed to deny altogether the care of the gods for men, but believes they regard the good with complacency and the bad with displeasure, will look upon these appearances as not incredible."<sup>1</sup>

The *artificial* faith in an old religion that had outlived itself, must, on this very account, become fanatical, be united with passion in place of natural conviction. Hence the violence by which the continually waning course of Paganism was sought to be maintained against the onward advance of Christianity. Although the Romans, accustomed to hold firm to their old traditional forms, and national peculiarities, were singularly averse to foreign modes of worship, yet this fundamental trait in the old Roman character had, with many, already become obliterated. The ancient religion of Rome had lost its power over their minds, and they were inclined, therefore, to seek a prop for their religious faith in foreign modes of worship. Ceremonies that wore an air of enigma and mystery; strange-sounding magical formulas in some barbarous tongue; whereby, as Plutarch remarks, the national dignity of devoutness was put to the blush,<sup>2</sup> found readiest admittance. Men were looking, as usual, for some peculiar supernatural power in that which they did not understand, and which was incapable of being understood.

Hence, the *artificial* faith was pressed more closely to assume the shape of superstition. Unbelief, against which an undeniable

<sup>1</sup> Antiq. Roman. ii. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ἀτόποις ὀνόμασι καὶ ῥήμασι βαρβαρικοῖς κατασχύνειν καὶ παρανομῶν τὸ θεῶν καὶ πατέρων ἀξίωμα τῆς εὐσεβείας. De superst. c. 33.

need of man's nature asserted its force, called forth superstition,—since these two distempered conditions of the spiritual life are but opposite symptoms of the same fundamental evil, and one of them, therefore, passes easily over to the other. It is the worldly tone of the inner life, which either suppresses religious feeling entirely, and then turns to unbelief; or, mixing itself up with that feeling, gives to it an interpretation of its own, and thus turns to superstition. The desperation of unbelief surrenders the troubled conscience a prey to superstition; and the irrationality of superstition makes religion suspected by the thoughtful mind. Such an opposition we find presenting itself, whenever we contemplate this period under various forms. A man who was not in the habit, like Lucian, of ridiculing the absurd extravagances of superstition, but who was made sad in contemplating such cases of the denial or misapprehension of the Godlike,—the wise and devout Plutarch,—in a beautiful work of his, where he describes this opposition, as it existed in his own time,<sup>1</sup> presents us a picture from the life, of such caricatures of religion. “Every little evil is magnified to the superstitious man, by the scaring spectres of his anxiety.”<sup>2</sup> He looks on himself as a man whom the gods hate and pursue with their anger. A far worse lot is before him; he dares employ no means for averting or curing the evil, lest he be found fighting against the gods. The physician, the consoling friend, are driven away. Leave me,—says the wretched man,—me, the impious, the accursed, hated of the gods, to suffer my punishment. He sits out of doors, wrapped in sackcloth or in filthy rags; ever and anon he rolls himself, naked, in the dirt, confessing aloud this and that sin,—and the nature of these sins is truly characteristic!—“he has eaten or drunk something wrong,”<sup>3</sup>—he has gone some way or other, which was not allowed him by the divinity. The festivals in honour of the gods give no pleasure to the superstitious,<sup>4</sup> but fill him rather with fear and affright. He proves the saying of Pythagoras false in his own case,—that we are happiest when we approach the gods,—for it is just then he is most wretched. Temples and altars are places of refuge for the persecuted; but where all others find deliver-

<sup>1</sup> The tract *Περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας καὶ ἀθιότητος*.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. Coloss. ii. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. 9.

ance from their fears, there the superstitious man fears and trembles most. Asleep<sup>1</sup> or awake, he is haunted alike by the spectres of his anxiety. Awake, he makes no use of his reason; and asleep he finds no deliverance from what disturbs him. His reason always slumbers: his fears are always awake. Nowhere can he find an escape from his imaginary terrors." The contradictions involved in superstition are thus described: "These men fear the gods, and fly to them for succour. They flatter them, and insult them. They pray to them, and complain of them."<sup>2</sup> The offensive phrases and gesticulations, the forms of self-abasement,—so repulsive to the antique feeling of freedom,—into which the slavish spirit of superstition fell, were peculiarly revolting to the Greek and Roman sense of propriety.

In the work above cited, Plutarch thus judges respecting the mutual relation of superstition and unbelief:<sup>3</sup> "The infidel has no belief in the gods; the superstitious man would fain disbelieve, but believes against his will, for he fears to do otherwise. Yet as Tantalus wearies himself to escape the stone that hangs over him, so the superstitious man would gladly rid himself of the fear which is no trifling burden to him; and he is inclined to praise the unbeliever's state of mind as freedom. But now the unbeliever has nothing of superstition in him; while, on the other hand, the superstitious man is an unbeliever by inclination, but only too weak to think of the gods as he would be glad to do.<sup>4</sup> The unbeliever contributes nothing at all towards producing superstition; but the superstitious have, from the beginning, given existence to unbelief, and furnish it, when it exists already, an apparent ground of justification."<sup>5</sup>

Manifestly, Plutarch has taken here but a very partial view of the religious phenomena of his times,—a natural mistake for one living in the midst of those phenomena, and who is biased in his judgment by immediate impressions. It seems evident, from

<sup>1</sup> Cap. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. 11.

<sup>4</sup> In like manner, Plutarch says, in another place, that by the prevailing false notions of the gods, the weaker and more simple natures were led into a superstition without bounds; the more acute and bolder spirits, into unbelief; the different turn which is taken in the natural course of their development, by the *ἀσθενέσι καὶ ἀκάκοις*, on the one hand, and the *δυνατοῖσι καὶ θεασυτοῖσι*, on the other. De Iside et Osiride, c. 71.

<sup>5</sup> Cap. 12.

what has been already said, that the same cause which produces superstition, lies also at the root of unbelief; and that unbelief, therefore, may easily change into superstition, as well as superstition into unbelief. Indeed, it was precisely the latter which, in this period of history, had called forth the former. Plutarch, moreover, has looked at these opposite tendencies, in a way too general and abstract; he did not observe and take into his account, those manifold gradations and transitions, which he might have discerned in his own times, in the mutual relation of unbelief and superstition to each other. If there was a superstition, at that time, leagued with immorality, having its root in unbelief,—but an unbelief restrained by fear,—yet we find, too, in the case of some who were really striving after moral worth, various modifications of superstition, grounded at bottom in the need,—though not understood, and even misunderstood,—of believing; the need of atonement, from the deep-felt disunion in their nature. It was only necessary that, to such need, the satisfaction, unconsciously sought, should be furnished, in order to lead it from superstition to faith. This was the point of religious development, through which many were brought to embrace Christianity, as the remedy for their evil.

And while Plutarch, in the work above cited, biased as he manifestly was, by the impression received from the revolting exhibitions of superstition, was really inclined to prefer unbelief to superstition; yet where he has occasion to attack an unbelief that denies every thing, he owns there is one kind of superstition which he would prefer to unbelief. He says, for example, of Epicureanism, which boasted of having delivered men from the shadowy fears of superstition, “It is better to have a feeling of reverence mixed with fear, together with faith in the gods, than for the purpose of avoiding that feeling, to leave one’s self neither hope nor joy, neither confidence in prosperity, nor recourse to a divine being in adversity.”<sup>1</sup>

That profound sense of disunion, of disruption, which gave birth to manifold kinds of superstition, revealed itself in those forms

<sup>1</sup> Βίβλιον γὰρ, ἐνυπάρχειν τι καὶ συγκεκριᾶσθαι τῇ περὶ Θεῶν δόξῃ κοινὸν αἰδοῦς καὶ φόβου πάθος, ἢ που τοῦτο φεύγοντας μήτ' ἐλπίδα, μήτε χάραν ἑαυτοῖς, μήτε θάρσος ἀγαθῶν παρόντων, μήτε τινὰ δυστυχοῦσιν ἀποστροφὴν πρὸς τὸ Θεῶν ἀπολείπεισθαι. In the tract: Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum, c. 20.

of mental disease, which so widely prevailed, where the sufferers believed themselves to consist of two or more hostile natures,—to be possessed or persecuted by evil spirits. It was through this ground-tone of the spiritual life, that the system of dualism, which came from the East, found means of introducing itself; and hence its extraordinary influence in this age.

If we now glance at those philosophical tendencies among the Greeks, which, in this period, found most general acceptance with men of earnest minds, two systems of philosophy will offer themselves particularly to our notice, the *Stoic* and the *Platonic*.

To begin with the *Stoic*: the old Roman character felt itself peculiarly attracted by the moral heroism flowing from the principles of this philosophy. To the noble pride of the Roman, who would not survive his country's liberty, and in the self-sufficing consciousness of his disposition, bade defiance to the corruption of the times, the doctrines of the stoic school were peculiarly welcome. In the freedom and independence of the sage, placing himself above the power of fate, by his self-feeling of an unconquerable mind, he found a compensation for the loss of civil liberty. Between a disposition like Cato's and Stoicism, there existed a natural relationship. The wise man felt conscious of an entire equality, in moral loftiness, with Jupiter himself; and of standing below him in no respect.<sup>1</sup> He was master of his own life, and might take it whenever he found he could live no longer in a manner worthy of himself. On this principle, many noble Romans acted; not only when they wished to withdraw themselves from the ignominy of despotism, but also when disease cramped their powers and rendered existence no longer supportable.<sup>2</sup> Thus many a strong soul found, in this philosophy, the expression for

<sup>1</sup> See the words of Chrysippus: "Ὅσπερ τῷ Διὶ προσήκει σεμνύνεσθαι ἰσ' αὐτῷ τε καὶ τῷ βίῳ καὶ μέγα φρονεῖν καὶ εἰ δεῖ οὕτως εἶπαι, ὑψαυχεῖν καὶ κομᾶν καὶ μεγαληγορεῖν, ἀξίων βιοῦνσι μεγαληγορίας· οὕτω τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς πᾶσι ταῦτα προσήκει, κατ' οὐδὲν προσχομίμενοι ὑπὸ Διός." Plutarch. de Stoicorum repugnantiis, c. 13.

<sup>2</sup> For examples, cons. Pliny's Letters, i. 12, 22; iii. 7; vi. 24. The old man of sixty-seven, lying under an incurable disease, dismissed his physician, who was for compelling him to take nourishment against his will, with the word *κίρικα*. Whereupon Pliny remarks: Quæ vox, quantum admirationis in animo meo, tantum desiderii reliquit. The following words of Pliny serve to give distinct form and expression to the principle of the age, that left the decision of life and death to the *autonomy* of reason. Deliberare et causas mortis expendere utque suaserit ratio, vitæ mortisque consilium suscipere vel ponere, ingentis est animi.

that which he carried in his own bosom ; and to many it imparted a moral enthusiasm, which enabled them to rise superior to the degeneracy of their contemporaries. But there were many who did nothing more than make an idle parade of the lofty maxims of the ancient philosophers, with whose statues or busts they embellished their halls, while their lives, abandoned to every vice, presented the strongest contrast with these examples.<sup>1</sup>

In respect to the relation of Stoicism to the religious interest, its aim was to bring the popular religion, allegorically explained, into union with a thoroughly pantheistic view of the world.<sup>2</sup> The Jupiter of Stoicism was not a being who governs all things with paternal love, and for whom each individual has a distinct end to fulfil. He was not one who can reconcile the good of the whole with the good of the individual ; but he was a being who devours his own children ; the All-Spirit from which all individual existence has flowed, and into which, after certain periods, it is again resolved. The gods themselves were subject to the universal law of this eternal cycle, to which *every* individual existence must finally be sacrificed.<sup>3</sup> The law, or word of Zeus, providence, fate,<sup>4</sup> all signify in this system the same thing ;—that unchangeable law of the universe, of an immanent necessity of reason, which all must obey. Evil itself is necessary, according to this law, to exhibit the harmony of the world, since without it there could be no good.<sup>5</sup> The wise man calmly looks on the game, and surrenders with cheerfulness his individual existence to the claims of the whole,—to which every individual, as a part, ought to be subservient. The wise man has precisely the same divine life with Zeus, from whom his own has flowed. Calmly submissive, he restores it back, when the fated hour arrives, to its original source.

<sup>1</sup> Qui Curios simulant Bacchanalia vivunt,  
Indocti primum : quanquam plena omnia gypso  
Chrysippi invenies.—Juvenal. Satira ii.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian quotes, in the way of banter, the motto of the stoic pantheism : 'Ως και ο Θεός ουκ εν ουρανῳ εστιν, ἀλλὰ διὰ πάντων πεφοίτηκεν, οἷον ξύλων, και λίθων και ζώων, ἄχρη και πῶν ἀτιμοτάτων. Hermotim. § 81.

<sup>3</sup> As Chrysippus says in his work—Περὶ προνοίας,—Τὸν Δία αὔξεισθαι, μέχρις ἂν εἰς αὐτὸν ἅπαντα καταναλώσῃ. Plutarch. de Stoicorum repugnantiis, c. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Διός λόγος, προνοία, ἱμαρμίνη.

<sup>5</sup> Thus Chrysippus says : Γίνεται και αὐτὴ (ἡ κακία) πως κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγον και, ἐν' οὕτως εἶπω, ουκ ἀχρηστως γίνεται πρὸς τὰ ἕλα, οὔτε γὰρ τ' ἀγαθὰ ἔν. Plutarch. de Stoicor. repugnantiis, c. 35.

A cold resignation,—wholly at variance with man's natural feelings, and altogether different from the childlike submission of the Christian, which leaves every purely human feeling inviolate, submission, not to an iron necessity, that decrees annihilation, but to eternal love, which restores back what has been offered to it, transfigured and glorified. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius says of this Stoic principle: "The man of disciplined mind reverently bids Nature, who bestows all things and resumes them again to herself, 'Give what thou wilt, and take what thou wilt.'" He says this, not in a haughty spirit and in defiance of Nature, but in the spirit of cheerful obedience to her.<sup>1</sup> His Stoicism, moreover, was tempered and refined by a certain childlike devoutness, a certain gentleness and unpretending simplicity of character. But with what grounds of comfort does he strive to still the craving, implanted in man's nature, after an imperishable personal existence? We will hear what he says himself. "Two things we should consider; first, that from all eternity, things are repeated over after the same manner, and that it matters not whether one beholds the same thing again in one hundred or two hundred years, or in infinite time; next, that he who lives longest, and he who dies soonest, lose just alike, for each loses only that which he has, the present moment;" (II. 14.) "Ever keep in mind, that whatever happens and shall happen, has already been,—it is merely the same show repeated!" (10, 27.) "An action terminating at the allotted moment, suffers no evil, in that it has terminated; and he that did it suffers no evil in that he has done acting. So, also, the whole, consisting of the aggregate sum of actions, which is life, suffers no evil, when it terminates at the allotted time, in that it has terminated; and he who, at the allotted time, has brought up the whole chain to the end, has lost nothing;" (12, 23.) He asks (12, 5), "How happens it, that the gods, who have ordered all things well and with love to men, seem to overlook this one thing alone, that many very good men, who, by pious works and offerings, have stood on terms of intimate communion with the deity, having once died, return no more to existence, but perish entirely?" He answers thus: "Although this is so, yet be assured, that if it ought to have been otherwise the gods would have so ordered it. For had it been right, it would

<sup>1</sup> Monolog. 10, 14.



also have been possible; and had it been in harmony with nature, then nature would have allowed it. That it is not so, if it is not so, should satisfy us that it ought not to be so."

As Stoicism, by repressing a want inseparable from the essence of man's nature, tended, on the one hand, to awaken the longing after a revelation, capable of satisfying this want; so, on the other hand, by unfolding in man the consciousness of his relationship to the divine,—the truth lying at the bottom of pantheism,<sup>1</sup>—by the idea, although pantheistically apprehended, of one original divine Being, and of the spirituality of his worship, as confined to no particular place, which idea it opposed to the polytheistic religion of the people,<sup>2</sup>—it prepared the way for Christianity.

Yet a far greater, more deep reaching, and more universal influence on the religious life of man's spirit than it was ever in the power of Stoicism to exert, was destined to proceed from the *Platonic* philosophy. It dates its beginning from that man, who appears to us as the forerunner of a higher development of humanity, as the greatest man of the ancient world,—one in whom the spirit of that world, going beyond itself, strove after a more glorious future,—from *Socrates*, whose whole appearance seems invested in a mystery and riddle, corresponding to his prophetic character. As it was his great calling, when the first strong reaction of reason, become altogether worldly, was turned against religious and moral belief, to witness in the struggle with this worldly tendency and heartless dialectic caprice, which suppressed all higher interests; to witness of the reality of that in which alone the spirit can find its true life, and to awaken in men wholly immersed in earthly things, that aspiration after the god-

<sup>1</sup> Thus, for instance, Paul, in his discourse at Athens, appeals to that testimony of such a consciousness in the verse of Aratus; and much of a similar import is to be found in the hymn of Cleanthes, and in other outpourings of the Stoic muse. Compare the well-known passage in Seneca, Non sunt ad cælum elevandæ manus nec exorandus ædituus, ut nos ad aures simulacri, quasi magis exaudiri possimus, admittat, prope est a te Deus, tecum est, intus est. Ita dico sacer intra nos spiritus sedet. Ep. 41 ad Lucil.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the passage from Seneca and the words of Zeno: "We should build no temple to the gods; for a temple is of little worth, and nothing holy—a work of architects and common labourers is not worth much." Ἱερὰ θεῶν μὴ οἰκοδομεῖν· Ἱερὸν γὰρ μὴ πολλοῦ ἄξιον καὶ ἄγιον οὐκ ἔστιν· οἰκοδόμων δ' ἔργον καὶ βαναύσων οὐδὲν ἔστι πολλοῦ ἄξιον. Hence Plutarch reproaches the Stoics with self-contradiction, in participating in the religious rites of the temple. Plut. de Stoicorum repugnantijs, c. 6.

like, which might lead them to Christ ; so through his great disciple Plato, who, in his philosophy, produced with a truly original and creative mind, the image of Socrates, although not in the whole loftiness and simplicity of the man himself,—the influence of Socrates has been often experienced, after the same manner, in those great crises of man's history, destined by the dissolution of the old to prepare the way for a new creation ; and as one who lived in a crisis of this sort has said,<sup>1</sup> the Platonic Socrates came like a John the Baptist before the revelation of Christ. This was pre-eminently true, so far as it relates to the first appearance of Christ, the great epoch in the history of the world.

The Platonic philosophy did not merely lead men, like the Stoic, to the conscious sense of a divine indwelling life, and of an immanent reason in the world, answering to the idea of the Stoic Zeus ; but it led men to regard the divine as supra-mundane, as an unchangeable existence, transcending that which merely *becomes* ; a supreme Spirit, exalted above the world, if not as an unconditionally *free Creator*, yet as the *architect* of the universe. It awakened, also, the consciousness of the supernatural and divine, which in man is the efflux from this supreme Spirit, and of a kindred nature ; so that man is thus enabled to rise and have fellowship with it, and cognition of it. It did not, like the Stoic philosophy, followed out to its legitimate consequences, represent the divine in man, as a self-subsistent element, an efflux from the divine source, which, as long as the form of personal appearance lasted, could maintain an existence by itself ; so that Zeus appeared to the wise man simply as the ideal of wisdom he was to strive after ; but it contemplated the divine in man as a ray which conducted back to the primal light itself ; merely as something to receive—a capacity—which, separated from communion with the original source, from which alone it *can* receive, is powerless.

Compared with the principle of ethical *self-sufficiency*—with that elevation of the feeling of self, peculiar to the ancient world, and which appears to have reached its highest point in Stoicism—the Platonic system, in perfect harmony with the connection of ideas above expressed, was distinguished by a striving towards

<sup>1</sup> Marsiglio Ficino.

what is most directly opposed to that principle, namely, towards the Christian idea of humility. The word *ταπεινός* which, at the point of view generally taken by the ancient world, was employed, for the most part, in a bad sense, as indicating a slavish self-debasement,<sup>1</sup> is to be met with in Plato and the Platonists, as the designation of a pious, virtuous temper.<sup>2</sup>

This philosophy would have us recognise in man's personality, not a mere transitory appearance, but something destined to higher unfoldings. The life of the individual it regarded, not as an aimless sport in the periodical changes of the universe, but as a stage of purifying discipline and preparation for a higher state of existence. It did not require *the suppression* of any purely human want, but taught that the satisfaction of it was to be sought after and waited for. It pointed to a higher stage of being, where the soul, disencumbered of its dross, would attain to the unclouded vision of truth.

It was in no sense, certainly, the general drift and purpose of Plato, to set up an abstract religion of reason, in opposition to the existing forms of worship; but he took his stand rather in opposition to that exclusive enlightenment of the understanding, which merely analyzes and destroys, and which was peculiar to the Sophists. His religious speculations rested on a basis altogether historical. He connected himself with the actual phenomena of the religious life, and with the traditions lying before him; as we see in his remarks on the doctrine of the gods and on divination. He sought to embody in his speculations the truth which lay at the bottom here, and to separate it from all admixture of superstition. And, in like manner, this general drift of a positive philosophy that sought to understand history,<sup>3</sup> passed over from the original Platonism to the derivative Pla-

<sup>1</sup> Even in Aristotle we find the *ταπεινόν* united with the *ἀνδραποδῶδες*. Ethic. Eudem. iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> To denote the disposition of submissiveness to the divine law of order in the universe, the word *ταπεινόν* is used in connection with *κεκοσμημένον*, and opposed to the impious spirit of self-exaltation. De legibus, iv. vol. viii. ed. Bipont, p. 185; and Plutarch (de sera numinis vindicta, c. iii.) says of the humiliation of the wicked brought about by punishment: ἡ κακία μάλιστα ἀν γίνετο σύνουσι καὶ ταπεινὴ καὶ κατὰ φύσιν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.

<sup>3</sup> To avail myself of an expression, which Schelling, in the new shaping of his philosophy, has made classical,—*positive* philosophy, as opposed to the mere logical science of reason, *negative* philosophy.

tonism of this age ; and in this latter form, to speak generally, in spite of all the foreign additions, the tendency of the *original* Platonism may be clearly traced. It still continues to be its aim, under every new modification, to explore in all directions the marks of a connection between the visible and invisible worlds, between the divine and the human in history, and to discover, in the great variety of religious traditions<sup>1</sup> and modes of worship, different forms of one revelation of the divine.

In opposition to unbelief, which appealed to the strife between different religions as evidence against the truth of any, an apologetic tendency, which flowed from Platonism, pointed out the higher unity lying at the root of this manifoldness ; and the coincidence of ideas, in the different forms of revelation, was made available here, as *evidence for* the truth. Thus the effort to arrive at an understanding of history, to come at some comprehensive view, reconciling the oppositions of historical development, gave birth to a peculiar, religious, and philosophical eclecticism—as such phenomena are usually found marking the conclusion of any great series of historical evolutions. Arrived at the limits of such a series, we feel constrained to look over once more the whole, which now lies unfolded as one in all its parts ; just as the traveller, near the end of his journey, gladly pauses to survey the road he has left behind him.

By distinguishing form from essence, the spiritual from the sensual, the idea from the symbol which served for its representation, it was deemed possible to find the just medium between the extremes of superstition and unbelief, and to arrive at a right understanding of the different forms of religion. The devout and profoundly meditative Plutarch, who wrote near the close of the first century, may be considered the representative of this direction of mind to religious speculation, which was now fully developed. In regard to the relation of different religions to one another, he thus expresses himself:<sup>2</sup> “ As sun and moon, sky, earth and sea, are common to all, while they have different names among different nations ; so, likewise, though there is but *one* system of the world which is supreme, and one governing provi-

<sup>1</sup> Συνάγειν ιστορίαν, οἷον ἕλην φιλοσοφίας θεολογίαν τίλος ἰχθύος. De defectu oraculorum, c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See de Iside et Osiride.

dence, whose ministering powers are set over *all* men, yet there have been given to these, by the laws of different nations, different names and modes of worship; and the holy symbols which these nations used, were, in some cases, more obscure, in others clearer; but in all cases alike failed of being perfectly safe guides in the contemplation of the divine. For some, wholly mistaking their import, fell into superstition; while others, in avoiding the quagmire of superstition, plunged unawares into the opposite gulf of infidelity." The reverential regard for a higher necessity in the religious institutions of mankind, the recognition of a province elevated above human caprice, is shewn by Plutarch, in the following remark, where he confronts the stoics with the phrase from an Orphic hymn, which was often on their lips, as a motto of their pantheism.<sup>1</sup> "As Zeus is the beginning and centre of all,—every thing has sprung from Zeus, men should first correct and improve their ideas of the gods, if any thing impure or wrong has found its way into them. But, if this is beyond their power, they should then leave every one to that mode in which he finds himself placed by the laws and religious traditions of his country." He cites here, in evidence of a higher necessity, lying at the foundation of these institutions, the words of Sophocles, witnessing of an innate and eternal law in the heart of humanity: (Antig. 467.) "The divine—religion—is something imperishable; but its forms are subject to decay. God bestows many good things on men, but nothing imperishable; for, as Socrates says, even what has reference to the gods is subject to death."<sup>2</sup>

Plutarch is filled with sadness, in thinking of those who take part in the public worship only from respect to the multitude, while they look upon the whole thing as a mere farce. "They hypocritically mimic the forms of prayer and adoration, out of fear of the many; repeat words that contradict their philosophical convictions; and, when they offer, see in the priest only the slaughtering cook."<sup>3</sup> He rebukes those who, following the fashion of Eudemus, in attempting to explain everything in the doctrine of the gods after a natural way, wage war with the reli-

<sup>1</sup> Ζεὺς ἀρχὴ, Ζεὺς μίσησα, Δίος δ' ἐκ πάντα τίτυκται. Adv. Stoic. c. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Πολλὰ καλὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ δίδοντος ἀνθρώποις, ἀθάνατον δὲ μηδὲν ὥστε θνήσκειν καὶ τὰ Θεῶν, Θεοὺς δὲ οὐ κατὰ τὸν Σοφοκλῆα. De defectu oraculorum, c. 9.

<sup>3</sup> See Plutarch's tract: Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum, c. 22.

gious convictions of so many nations and races of men, in that they are seeking to draw down the names of heaven to earth, and to banish nearly all the religious belief that had been implanted in men from their birth.<sup>1</sup> He sees men wandering between these two extremes; either confounding the symbol with what it was designed to represent, and thus giving rise to superstition; as, for instance, when the names of the gods were transferred to their images, and thus led the multitude to believe that these images were the gods themselves, and when, in Egypt, the animals consecrated to the gods became confounded with the latter;<sup>2</sup> or else running into the opposite views, which were occasioned by these errors, and resulted in infidelity.

If the manner in which Plutarch explains and contemplates the opposition between superstition and unbelief, shews, when applied to the phenomena of his time, an inadequate and partial view of the subject, this must be attributed to that fundamental view, belonging to the essence of the Platonic philosophy, according to which, everything is referred back to the intellectual element—to knowledge in religion—and the deeper practical ground of religious conviction, and of the religious life—their connection with the moral bent of the affections—is overlooked. Hence he considers the main source of both superstition and unbelief to be intellectual error—in the former of a positive, in the latter of a negative kind; only, in the case of superstition, there is, moreover, a movement of feeling, which arises out of those erroneous notions of the gods, whence they become only objects of fear.<sup>3</sup> But he does not seem to have found that a πάθος lies at the ground of many shapes of unbelief, as well as of superstition; and both disorders of the spiritual life have their proper seat in the direction of the moral affections, in the disposition; that the πάθος is, therefore, usually the original, the intellectual error the derivative and symptomatic cause, of the evil. Thus Plutarch ascribes it merely to a false notion of the gods, that they are represented by the superstitious as angry, and threatening punishment; but he is not prepared to understand such a stage of reli-

<sup>1</sup> De Iside et Osiride, c. 23.

<sup>2</sup> L. c. c. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Ἡ μὲν ἀθείτης λόγος ἰστέ διψευσμένος· ἡ δὲ δεισιδαιμονία πάθος ἐκλόγου ψευδοῦς ἰγγιγισμένον. c. 2.

gious development well enough to perceive, that there is a bottom truth, by virtue of which the gods can be represented *only in this relation* to the religious consciousness of one who feels himself estranged from God. Hence he erred also, in supposing that nothing more was necessary for the recovery of the superstitious man, than to lead him, simply by the intellectual operation, *to the knowledge* of the gods, and of the fact that good only, and nothing that is evil, proceeds from them;—not perceiving, that the representation of the gods above alluded to, might itself be nothing else than a reflex of the superstitious man's own state of mind, and therefore to be got rid of only by an immediate operation on the nature of the man himself. This error, again, stood in some connection with another circumstance; namely, that although he defended, against the Stoics, the Platonic doctrine of punishments,<sup>1</sup> as a necessary means of reformation, and of purifying and deterring men from evil, and wrote a treatise expressly to vindicate the divine justice in punishing the wicked,<sup>2</sup> yet to that conception of God's holiness, and to that apprehension of sin, grounded in and intimately connected with it, which belong to the Theism of the Old Testament, he was too much a stranger. Hence the Old Testament idea of God, as the Holy one, considered from his own Platonic position, must be unintelligible to him; and he might easily seem to himself to miss in Judaism the right notion of God's goodness.<sup>3</sup>

It was the purpose, then, of this apologetic and reforming philosophy of religion, to counteract unbelief, as well as superstition, by setting forth the ideal matter contained in the old religions. From this position, and with this object in view, Plutarch says, in his exhortatory discourse to a priestess of Isis:<sup>4</sup> "As it is not his long beard and mantle that makes the philosopher, so is it

<sup>1</sup> Against Chrysippus, for instance, who puts this doctrine on a level with the stories with which old women frighten the children: Τὸν περὶ τῶν ὑπὸ Θεοῦ κολάσεων λόγον, ὡς οὐδὲν διαφέροντα τῆς Ἀκκοῦς καὶ τῆς Ἀλφειτοῦς, δι' ἃν τὰ παιδάρια τοῦ κακοσχολεῖν αἱ γυναῖκες ἀνίσχουσιν. De Stoicorum repugnantibus, c. 15.

<sup>2</sup> His work on the Delay of Divine Punishments.

<sup>3</sup> De Stoicorum repugnantibus, c. 38, where he refers to the example of the Jews, to prove that the conception of the gods as *χρηστοί* was by no means to be found every where. And here we may remark, that we would not deny the Jews themselves were partly in fault for the diffusion of such representations of their religion.

<sup>4</sup> Ὅσα δεικνύμενα καὶ δρώμενα περὶ τοὺς Θεοὺς τούτους, ὅταν νόμῳ παραλάβῃ, λόγῳ ζητῶν καὶ φιλοσοφῶν περὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀληθείας. c. 3.

neither linen robe nor shorn head that makes the priest of Isis. But the true priest of Isis is he who first receives the rites and customs pertaining to these gods from the laws, and then examines into their grounds, and philosophizes on the truth they contain." With some profoundness of meaning, Plutarch compares the old myths—considered as representations of ideas, arising from a refraction of the divine light in a foreign substance, a reappearance of it, broken by the intervention of some heterogeneous medium,—to the rainbow in relation to the sun's light.<sup>1</sup>

We find here the first beginnings of an attempt to reconcile the natural and supernatural in religion; to reconcile the position of the rationalist with that of the supranaturalist, the scientific interest with the religious;—tendencies and ideas, which, outstepping already the position maintained by the old Nature-religion, came forward to meet the Theism of revelation; and it was by the latter, first, that any such reconciliation could be brought about, and a true understanding of the religious development of humanity made possible.

Plutarch distinguishes two different stages or positions of knowledge: that which goes immediately to the *divine* casualty, and that which dwells on the natural causes, serving as instruments to the former. "The ancients," he says, "directed their attention simply to the divine in phenomena, as God is the beginning and centre of all, and from him all things proceed; and they overlooked natural causes. The moderns turned themselves wholly away from that divine ground of things, and supposed every thing could be explained from natural causes. Both these views are, however, partial and defective; and the right understanding of the matter requires that both should be combined."<sup>2</sup> In attempting to shew how a natural phenomenon may be a sign of the future, he says, "Divination and Physics may both be right; one serving to point out the causes which have brought about the phenomenon; the other, the higher end it is intended to sub-

<sup>1</sup> Καθάπερ οἱ μαθηματικοὶ τὴν ἴριν ἔμφασις εἶναι τοῦ ἡλίου λέγουσι ποικιλομένην τῇ πρὸς τὸ νῆφος ἀναχωρήσει τῆς ὀψείας, οὕτως ὁ μῦθος λόγου τινὸς ἔμφασις ἐστὶν ἀνακλώντος ἐπ' ἄλλα τὴν διάνοιαν. De Iside et Osiride, c. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Ὅθεν ἀμφοτέρους ὁ λόγος ἰνδὴς τοῦ προσήκοντός ἐστι, τοῖς μὲν τὸ δι' οὐ καὶ ὑφ' οὐ, τοῖς δὲ τὸ ἐξ ὧν καὶ δι' ὧν ἀγνοοῦσιν ἢ παραλείπουσιν. De defectu oraculorum, c. 47.



serve.”<sup>1</sup> “They who suppose the significancy of signs is made naught by the discovery of natural causes, forget that their argument against the signs of the gods would also apply to those invented by human art; since in the latter case too, one thing is made by human contrivance to serve as the sign of something else; as, for example, lights to serve as beacons, sun-dials to indicate time, and the like.”

This distinction of the natural from the divine, in the co-operation of both, was employed, in a noticeable manner, by Plutarch, for the purpose of so defending the divinity of the oracles, as to avoid, at the same time, superstitious representations. While some were of the opinion that the god himself dwelt in the prophetess at the Delphic shrine, employed her as his blind instrument, speaking through her mouth, and suggesting every word she uttered; by others these representations were seized upon for the purpose of turning the whole into jest, and making the doctrine of such a divine influence on the human soul, and every idea of inspiration, ridiculous.<sup>2</sup> They laughed at the bad verses of the Pythoness, and inquired why it was that the oracles, once given in poetry, should now be uttered in the form of prose. But Plutarch sought to unite the recognition of the divine casualty with that of the human individuality which served it as an organ; and by distinguishing in the oracles the divine and the human, to find in this case, also, the just medium between superstition and unbelief. “We are not to believe,” says he, “that the god made the verses; but, after he has communicated the moving impulse, each of the prophetesses is moved in a way that corresponds to her own peculiar nature.”<sup>3</sup> For let us suppose the oracles were not to be spoken, but recorded in writing, we should not, I imagine, ascribe to the god the strokes of the letters, and find fault

<sup>1</sup> Ἐκάλυε δ' οὐδὲν καὶ τὸν φυσικὸν ἐπιτυγχάνειν καὶ τὸν μάντιν, τοῦ μὲν τὴν αἰτίαν, τοῦ δὲ τὸ τέλος καλῶς ἐκλαμβάνοντος· ὑπέκειτο γὰρ τῷ μὲν ἐκ τίνων γέγονε καὶ πῶς πίφουκε θιωρῆσαι, τῷ δὲ πρὸς τί γέγονε καὶ πῶς πίφουκε θιωρῆσαι. Pericles, c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> The sarcasm in Lucian's dialogue, *Zῆς ἐλεγχομένοις*, may serve as an example. “What the poets say, when possessed by the Muses, is true. But when forsaken by the goddesses, and left to sing for themselves, they are out, and contradict what they had said before; and one must excuse them if they perceive not the truth as men, when the agency has vanished which hitherto dwelt in them, and by which they invented.”

<sup>3</sup> Ἐκείνου τὴν ἀχὴν τῆς κινήσεως ἐνδιδόντος, ὡς ἐκάστη πίφουκε κινῆσθαι τῶν προφητιδῶν. De Pythiæ oraculis, c. 7.

with him because the writing was not so beautiful as that of the imperial edicts. Not the language, nor the tone, nor the expression, nor the measure of the verse, proceeds from the god;—all this comes from the woman. He simply communicates the intuitions, and kindles up a light in the soul with regard to the future.”<sup>1</sup> “As the body uses many organs, and the soul uses both the body and its parts as organs, so the soul has now become the organ of the god. But the adaptation of an organ consists in its answering, with its own natural activity, the purpose of him that employs it as a means to represent the work of his ideas. This, however, it cannot represent pure and unadulterated, as the work exists in its author; but much foreign matter becomes necessarily mixed up with it.”<sup>2</sup> “If it is impossible,” he says afterwards, “to force lifeless things, which remain constant to themselves, so as to be used in a way that contradicts their natural character—so that a lyre, for instance, can be played as a flute, or a trumpet as a harp; if the artistic use of each particular instrument consists precisely in this, that it be used conformably with its peculiar character—then it is really impossible to say how a being, possessed of a soul endowed with free will and reason, could be used otherwise than according to the character, power, or nature which dwelt in him before.” So, according to this view, the difference of the several individualities of character, and of the several modes of culture, will continue to appear in the manner in which the inspiring agency of the divine casualty exhibits itself through each. The peculiar appearances in such states of enthusiasm (*ἐνθουσιασμός*) he explains as arising from the conflict of the two tendencies,—the movement imparted from without, and that belonging to the proper nature of the individual, just as when to a body, falling by the law of gravitation to the earth, a curvilinear motion is communicated at the same time.

By this speculative mode of apprehending the popular religion, men would be led, moreover, to reduce Polytheism to some higher unity, lying at its root. The recognition of an original unity being a thing absolutely necessary for reason, Polytheism either proceeded out of that unity or must be reduced back to it; it

<sup>1</sup> Ἐπινοῖς μόνως τὰς φαντασίας παρίστανει καὶ φῶς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ποιεῖ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον.

<sup>2</sup> De Pythiæ oraculis, c. 21.

continually felt itself impelled to derive the multitude of gods from one original essence. Now, by the speculative mode of apprehension, the consciousness of this unity could not fail to be developed and rendered still more distinct, and the relation of the manifold to unity clearly presented. Thus Plato had already sought to bring back Polytheism to some such higher unity, had derived all existence "from the Creator and Father of the Universe, who is hard to find, and whom, when found, it is impossible to make known to all."<sup>1</sup> So now, too, this new philosophy of religion rose to the idea of one simple original essence, exalted above all plurality and all becoming; the only true *Being*; unchangeable, eternal;<sup>2</sup> from whom all existence, and first of all, at the summit of existence, the world of gods, nearest related to himself, in its manifold gradations, has emanated. In these gods, that unfolded perfection, which in the Supreme essence was more included and hidden, becomes known; they exhibit, in different forms, the image of that Supreme essence, to which no one can rise, except by the loftiest flight of contemplation, after it has rid itself from all that pertains to sense—from all manifoldness. They are the mediators between man, scattered and dissipated by manifoldness, and the Supreme Unity. A distinction was next made of the *purely* spiritual, invisible deities, and those in nearer contact with the world of sense, by whom the life radiating from the Supreme essence is diffused down to the world of sense, and the divine ideas, so far as that is possible, *actualized* in it—the manifest gods;<sup>3</sup> the gods in the process of becoming; the *Θεοὶ γεννητοί* in contradistinction from the *ᾧν*; the spirits that, according to Plato, animate the worlds. Thus it was contrived to hold fast the position of the old Nature-religion, which lived and moved in the intuition of nature, and to bring it into union with the recognition of a supreme original essence, and of an invisible spiritual world, to which man's spirit strove to rise from the sensuous things that had hitherto chained it. Accordingly, two different stages in religion now presented themselves; that of the multitude, with minds dissipated and scattered in the manifold, who

<sup>1</sup> In *Timæus*.

<sup>2</sup> *Εἷς ᾧν ἐνὶ τῷ νῦν τὸ ἀσί πειπλήρωκε καὶ μόνον ἴσται τὸ κκετὰ τοῦττιν ὄντως ᾧν.* Plutarch. *de si* apud Delphos, c. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Θεοὶ φανεροί* as contradistinguished from the *ἀφανείς*.

can have intercourse only with those mediatorial deities approaching nearest to them; and that of the spiritual men, living in contemplation, who rise above all that is sensuous, and soar upwards to the supreme original essence. Hence, again, arose two different stages, or positions, in respect to the divine worship; the purely spiritual position, which corresponds to the relation with the original essence, exalted above all contact with the sensible world; and that of sensuous worship, which is adapted to the relation with those gods who are connected more nearly with the world of sense. From this point of view, it is said, in the work on "Offerings," cited under the name of Apollonius of Tyana: "We shall render the most appropriate worship to the deity, when to that God whom we called the first, who is one, and separated from all, after whom we must recognise the others,—when to him we present no offerings whatever; kindle to him no fire, dedicate to him no sensible thing; for he needs nothing, even of what could be given him by natures more exalted than ours. There is no plant the earth produces, no animal the air nourishes, no thing that, in relation to him, would not be impure. In relation to him, we must use only the higher word,—that, I mean, which is not expressed by the mouth,—the silent, inner word of the spirit." Even prayer, expressed in words, he would say, is beneath the dignity of that original essence, so exalted above all that is of sense; "and from the most glorious of all beings, we must seek for blessings by that which is most glorious in ourselves. But this is the spirit, which needs no organ."<sup>1</sup> This highest position of spiritual worship, in reference to the Supreme essence, was set up as a rival of Christianity, and as a means of dispensing with it.

We must not, however, transfer over to this Supreme essence of the new Platonic philosophy of religion, the Christian conception of God, as Creator and Governor of the world. The fundamental position of the ancient world—deification of nature in life, separation of the divine and human in science—appears, also, in this final shaping of philosophic thought—with which that position ended—again prominent and distinct. It belonged, no doubt,

<sup>1</sup> In Eusebii Præparat. evangel. l. iv. c. 13, and Porphyry de abstinentia carnis, l. ii. § 34, who cites these words of Apollonius of Tyana, and busies himself with explaining and applying them.

to the lofty dignity of that Supreme essence, that wrapt in its transcendent perfection, it could enter into no contact with the sensible world; whence also it followed, that the only worship worthy of it is the contemplation of the spirit raised above all that is sensible; and this is, therefore, set over against practical life, as a subordinate position. This conception of spiritual worship is, accordingly, quite as distinct from the Christian as the conception of the Supreme essence itself is. At the extreme point and summit of its speculation, this philosophy of religion proceeded still further in refining on the conception of the Supreme essence. In Plato is to be distinguished what he says concerning the idea of the absolute—the good in itself, exalted above all being<sup>1</sup>—and what he says of the Supreme Spirit, the Father of the Universe.<sup>2</sup> But the new Platonists substituted that idea of the absolute in place of the Supreme essence itself—as the first simple, which precedes all existence; of which nothing determinate can be predicated; to which no consciousness, no self-contemplation can be ascribed; inasmuch as this would immediately imply a duality, a distinction of subject and object. This highest of all can be known only by the intellectual intuition of the spirit, transcending itself, declaring itself free from its own limits.<sup>3</sup> With this barely logical direction, whereby it was possible to arrive at the conception of such an absolute, the *ὄν*, there united itself a certain mysticism, which, by a certain transcendent state of feeling, could communicate to this abstraction a reality for the soul. Such an absorption of the spirit in that super-existence (*τὸ ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*), even to entire union with it, or such a revelation of the same to the spirit raised above itself, was considered as the highest end to be reached by the spiritual life. Porphyry relates that this was experienced by him once, in his sixty-eighth year; and by his teacher, Plotinus, four times.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Republic.

<sup>2</sup> In the Timæus and Philebus.

<sup>3</sup> As Plotinus says: *Τῆς γνώσεως διὰ νοῦ τῶν ἄλλων γιγνομένης καὶ τῷ νῷ νοῦν γιγνώσκειν δυναμένων, ὑπερβελήκως ταῦτο τὴν τοῦ νοῦ φύσιν, τίνι ἂν ἀλίσκετο ἢ ἐπιεολῆ ἀθρόα.* Anecdota græca ed. Villosion. Venet. 1781. T. ii. p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> Thus Porphyry relates of him in the account of his life: *Ἐφάνη ἐκείνος ὁ Θεὸς ὁ μήτε μορφὴν μήτε τινα ἰδίαν ἔχων, ὑπὲρ δὲ νοῦν, καὶ πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν ἰδευμένος· ᾧ δὲ καὶ ἐγὼ ἄπαξ λίγω πλησιάσαι καὶ ἐνωθῆναι; and of Plotinus he says, it was his highest aim ἐνωθῆναι καὶ περιλάττει τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεῷ; and four times, during his abode with Porphyry, he had attained to this, ἐνεργεῖα ἀρρήτων καὶ οὐ δυνάμει.*

By virtue of the gradations in the evolution of the chain of existence, from that transcendent original ground down to the world of sense, and by virtue of a symbolic interpretation connected with this doctrine, it was made possible to appropriate everything that belonged to the existing *cultus*, spiritualized after this manner. Thus, *e. g.* the rhetorician Dio Chrysostom, who wrote in the time of Trajan, makes Phidias speak in defence of images of the gods, in the following language: "It cannot be said, that it would be better for men simply to lift their eyes to the heavenly bodies, and that there were no images at all. All these the man of reason worships, and believes that he beholds from afar the blessed gods. But love to the gods makes every one wish to be able to honour them near at hand, so that he may approach and touch them, offer to them with implicit faith, and crown them." Thus, he says, "it lies in the essence of human nature, to endeavour to make present before our senses the absent objects of our love. Hence the barbarians, who had no art, were obliged to transfer their worship to other, certainly far less appropriate objects;—to mountains, trees, and stones."<sup>1</sup> Similar arguments are employed by Porphyry, in justification of image-worship.<sup>2</sup> "By images addressed to sense, the ancients represented God and his powers—by the visible they typified the invisible for those that learned to read in these figures, as in books, a writing that treated of the gods. We are not to wonder, if the ignorant consider the images only as wood or stone; for just so, they who are ignorant of writing see nothing in monuments but stone, nothing in tablets but wood, and in books but a tissue of papyrus."

We see that this spiritualizing apprehension of the old polytheistic religion had gone on to form itself—independent of the influence of Christianity, as a mean of conciliation between superstition and unbelief—out of the spirit of the Platonic philosophy, so far as this extended its influence into the religious consciousness. For when Plutarch wrote, in whom we find this direction of mind already fully developed, Christianity certainly had as yet produced no influence on the spiritual atmosphere at large. But a new zeal on behalf of the old religion, in which men were striv-

<sup>1</sup> See Dio Chrysostom's remarkable discourse on the knowledge of the gods. Orat. xii. ed. Reiske. ii. vol. i. p. 405, et seq.

<sup>2</sup> In Eusebii Præparat. evangel. l. iii. c. 7.

ing with all their might to keep the breath of life, was to be awakened by this philosophy of religion, now that the ancient rites were threatened with destruction by Christianity, from a new positive religious interest; and so there arose out of these already existing ideas, a new polemical and apologetic direction, having for its end to preserve erect the rotten fabric of Paganism. Yet artificial and violent expedients cannot help any cause long; and by this effort, often too artificial, the untenable character of the religion men were labouring to uphold was badly concealed. These philosophical refiners of religion were themselves preparing for after times, by this means, many a weapon against the popular religion, of which the Christians well knew how to avail themselves. Already Plutarch employed the doctrine concerning demons, as intermediate beings between gods and men, for the purpose of defending the traditions of the popular religion, and rescuing the dignity of the gods—transferring from the latter many things to these middle beings, who, he maintained, had been confounded with the others.<sup>1</sup> According to Plutarch's doctrine, these demons, half related to the gods, half to men, serve as the means of intercourse between both.<sup>2</sup> But he supposed that also among these demons there was a graduated subordination, according as the divine or the sensuous element<sup>3</sup> predominated in them. Where the latter was the case, it gave rise to malicious demons, with violent desires and passions; and to conciliate these, and avert their destructive influences, was the design of many of the noisy and rude forms of cultus. Such were the ones which had given occasion to human sacrifices. With this idea Porphyry fell in, representing these demons as impure beings, related to matter, from which these Platonists derived all evil. These take delight in bloody offerings, by which their sensuous desires are gratified; they prompt to all evil impulses; they seek to draw men from the worship of the gods by pretending to be such themselves, and to give spread to unworthy opinions concerning the gods, and concerning the Supreme God himself. Their delusive arts have been successful from of old.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch. de defectu oraculorum, c. 12, et seq.

<sup>2</sup> What seemed incompatible with the exalted dignity of the gods, was transferred to them, *ταῦτα λειτουργοῖς θεῶν ἀνατιθέντες, ὡς πρὸς ὑπηρέταις καὶ γραμματέσι.*

<sup>3</sup> The *παθητικόν* and *ἄλογον*.

Hence those unworthy and indecent notions and stories of the gods, which are diffused among the multitude, and have received countenance even from poets and philosophers.<sup>1</sup> It is easy to see how well such explanations would serve the purpose of the Christians in their attacks on the popular religion; and we can perceive how the same representations, passing from one side to the other, and modified in different forms, might be seized upon, sometimes for the defence, sometimes for the assault, of Paganism.

It was impossible, however, that religious knowledge and religious life should make progress among the people by these explanations, to them so unintelligible. The people remained fixed to the externals of their worship; they clung firmly to that old superstition which it was attempted to reanimate, without troubling themselves about these more spiritual views. Hence Dionysius of Halicarnassus could say,<sup>2</sup> “that but few take any part in this philosophical view of religion. But the many, who are destitute of philosophical culture, are accustomed to understand those mythical stories in the worst possible way; and one of two things is the case: either the gods are despised for taking an interest in such pitiable affairs, or else men abandon themselves to the worst abuses, because they find the same among the gods.”

Again, inseparable from that stage of progress at which the ancient world stood, there was, together with a lingering zeal—not freed, however, from the shackles of egoism—for civil liberty, a certain aristocratic spirit. This, as we have seen already, made itself felt in religion. The higher religious position, which necessarily supposed philosophical culture, could not be transferred to the multitude; *they* seemed as if excluded from the higher life, capable of religion only in the form of superstition. The great body of tradesmen and mechanics were considered as unsusceptible of the higher life, which alone answered to man's true dignity,<sup>3</sup>—as abandoned to common life.<sup>4</sup> Platonism itself was entangled in this aristocratic spirit of Antiquity, and opposed the stage of science, whence alone it was possible to soar to pure

<sup>1</sup> In Eusebii Præparat. evangel. l. iv. c. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Archæol. l. ii. c. 20, near the end.

<sup>3</sup> Βίος βάναντος.

<sup>4</sup> Οὐ γὰρ οἶόντ' ἐπιτηδεύσαι τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς ζῶντα βίον βάναντον ἢ θητικόν. Aristotelis Polit. l. iii. c. 5.



truth in religion, to that of opinion (*δόξα*) among the multitude (*οἱ πολλοί*), where the true must ever be mixed up with the false. And, in like manner, it was remote also from the aim of this new philosophy of religion, to elevate the people to any higher stage of religious development; for which, indeed, it was destitute of the means. Plotinus distinguishes two different stages, that of the noble-minded (the *σπουδαῖοι*) and that of the gross multitude (the *πολλοί*.) None but the former attain to the Highest; the others remain behind, conversant with the merely human (the opposite to the Divine.) And at this stage of common life, again, are to be distinguished those who, in some sort, take an interest and part in virtue, and the wretched mass, as the day-labourers,—the better class of whom, however, must busy themselves with providing for the daily wants of life; the rest abandon themselves to all that is vile.<sup>1</sup> It was not till the word that went forth from the carpenter's shop had been published abroad by fishermen and tent-makers, that these aristocratic notions of the ancient world could be overthrown.

As it is usually found to happen with particular intellectual tendencies at epochs of transition, that while aiming to hold fast the old, they have been already forced to pass beyond it, and so must themselves lead over to the new, which they would hinder in its development; so it happened with this philosophy of religion, in its relation to the position of the old world on the one hand, and to Christianity on the other. While the new Platonism was for holding and defending the former of these, it yet contributed itself to excite deeper religious wants, which sought satisfaction in something better; to set afloat religious ideas, in which there dwelt a power unknown to those who expressed them, and which must serve to prepare for Christianity a way of introducing itself into the culture of the times. There was called forth, by the influence of this particular direction of mind on religious life, a longing which tended to a different end. But by this undefined longing, accompanied with no clear consciousness of its import, ardent spirits were also exposed to many dangerous

<sup>1</sup> Ὡς διττὸς ὁ ἐνθάδε βίος, ὁ μὲν τοῖς σπουδαίοις, ὁ δὲ τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῖς μὲν σπουδαίοις πρὸς τὸ ἀκρότατον καὶ τὸ ἄνω, τοῖς δὲ ἀνθρωπιωτέροις, διττός αὖ ὢν, ὁ μὲν μεμνημένος ἀρετῆς μετίσχει ἀγαθοῦ τινοῦ, ὁ δὲ φαῦλος ὄχλος οἷον χειροτέχνες τῶν πρὸς ἀνάγκην τοῖς ἰταμιστίαις. *Ennead. ii. l. x. c. 9.*

delusions before they could find the satisfying object. This state of feeling drew out fanatics, and procured for them a hearing.

There were roving about at that time in the Roman empire, which united together the East and the West, numbers who boasted of divine revelations and supernatural powers, men in whom, as usually happens in such times of religious ferment, the *self-deception* of fanaticism was mixed with more or less of *intentional* fraud. For an example, we may mention that Alexander of Abonoteichus, in Pontus, whose life Lucian has written in his usual satiric manner, and who, all the way from Pontus to Rome, found believers in his pretended arts of magician and soothsayer, and was revered and consulted as a prophet, even by men of the first standing. Doubtless, to the better class belonged Apollonius of Tyana, famous in the age of the apostles. It is impossible, however, to form any certain judgment of his character, so imperfect are our means of information. Those who, like Philostratus (at the close of the second century), attempted, with their marvellous stories, to represent him as a hero of the old popular religion, have done most to injure his reputation with posterity. He travelled about, seeking to reanimate religious faith; but by giving nourishment to a prurient curiosity about matters that should remain hidden from man, he also promoted fanaticism. He spoke against a superstition which, in leading men to suppose that offerings and sacrifices could purchase impunity for crime, served as a prop for superstition: he explained that, without a good moral disposition, no kind of outward worship can be pleasing to the gods. He spoke against the cruel gladiatorial shows; for when the Athenians, who were celebrating such games, invited him to their public assembly, he replied, that he could not tread on a spot stained by the shedding of so much human blood, and wondered the gods did not forsake their Acropolis. When the person who presided over the Eleusinian mysteries declined to allow the privilege of initiation to Apollonius of Tyana, it is difficult to tell whether the Hierophant meant honestly, and regarded Apollonius as a magician, who dealt in unlawful arts, or whether he was not rather jealous of the great influence, unfavourable to the priesthood, which Apollonius exercised over the people; for this is said to have been so great, that already many thought it a greater privilege to have

the society of Apollonius than to be initiated into the mysteries. The words with which he is said to have concluded all his prayers, and in which he summed up every particular request, are characteristic of the man: "give me, ye gods, what I deserve."<sup>1</sup> These words do not imply directly a spirit of self-exaltation; he intended simply to express by them the conviction that prayer can avail nothing unless in connection with a virtuous life; that the good man only can expect blessings from the gods. At the same time, he is said to have remarked himself, that if he belonged to the good, God would give him more than he asked, therefore more than he desired. Still we cannot fail to perceive, in this language, a position in the judgment of one's self, quite opposed to that of Christianity.

If a letter consoling a father for the death of his son, which has been ascribed to Apollonius, is genuine, it gives an insight into his pantheistic tendency. At all events, we may recognise here, as we may in so many other appearances of this age, the pantheistic element, into which, as the unity lying at its root, the dissolving system of Polytheism was now passing.<sup>2</sup> In this letter the doctrine is advanced, that birth and death are such only in appearance; that which separates itself from the *one* substance, the *one* divine essence, and is caught up by matter, seems to be born; that which delivers itself again from the bonds of matter, and reunites with the one divine essence, seems to die. There is an interchange between becoming visible and invisible.<sup>3</sup> In all there is, properly speaking, but the One essence, which alone does and suffers, by becoming all things to all; the eternal God, to whom men do wrong when they deprive him of what should be attributed to him, by transferring it upon other names and persons.<sup>4</sup> "How can we grieve for one, when by change of form, not of essence, instead of a man he becomes a god?"<sup>5</sup> So

<sup>1</sup> Δοίητί μοι τὰ ὀφειλόμμενα. Philostrat. l. iv. f. 200. ed. Morell. Paris, 1608,—c. 40, f. 181. ed. Olear.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 58 among those published by Olearius in the Works of Philostratus.

<sup>3</sup> Θάνατος οὐδὲς οὐδενὸς ἢ μόνον ἰμφάσει, καθάπερ οὐδὲ γένεσις οὐδενὸς ἢ μόνον ἰμφάσει· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔξ οὐσίας τραπὲν εἰς φύσιν ἴδοξε γένεσις· τὸ δὲ ἐκ φύσεως εἰς οὐσίαν κατὰ ταῦτα θάνατος.

<sup>4</sup> Τὴν πρώτην οὐσίαν, ἣ δὴ μόνη ποιῆται καὶ πάσχει, πᾶσι γινομένη πάντα, θεὸς αἰδῖος, ὀνόμασι δὲ καὶ προσώποις ἀφαιρουμένη τὸ ἴδιον, ἀδικουμένη τι.

<sup>5</sup> Τρόπου μεταβάσει καὶ οὐχὶ φύσεως.

Plotinus, when dying, is said to have remarked, that he should endeavour to convey back the divine in man to the divine in the universe.<sup>1</sup>

On every side was evinced the need of a revelation from heaven, such as would give inquiring minds that assurance of peace which they were unable to find in the jarring systems of the old philosophy, and in the artificial life of the re-awakened old religion. That zealous champion of the latter, Porphyry, alludes himself to the deep-felt necessity; which he proposed to supply, leaning on the authority of divine responses, by his *Collection of Ancient Oracles*. On this point he says,<sup>2</sup> “The utility of such a collection will best be understood by those who have felt the painful craving after truth, and have sometimes wished it might be their lot to witness some appearance of the gods, so as to be relieved from their doubts by information not to be disputed.”

The life of such a person, from his youth up, harrassed with doubts, unsettled by the strife of opposite opinions, ardently longing after the truth, and conducted at length, through this protracted period of unsatisfied craving, to Christianity, is delineated by the author of a sort of romance (partly philosophical and in part religious), who belonged to the second or third century. This work is called *The Clementines*, and though a fiction, is clearly a fiction drawn from real life; and we may safely avail ourselves of it, as presenting a true and characteristic sketch, which might doubtless apply to many an inquiring spirit belonging to those times.

Clemens, a noble Roman, who lived about the time of the first diffusion of the Gospel, gives the following account of himself:—  
“I was, from my early youth, exercised with doubts, which had found entrance into my soul, I hardly know how. Will my existence terminate with death, and will no one hereafter be mindful of me, when infinite time sinks all human things in forgetfulness? It will be as well as if I had not been born! When was the world created, and what existed before the world was? If it

<sup>1</sup> Πειρᾶσθαι τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν Θεῖον ἀνάγειν πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῷ παντὶ Θεῖον. Porphyr. vit. Plotin. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας in Euseb. Præparat. l. iv. c. 7, near the end: “Ἦν δ’ ἔχει ὠφίλιαν ἢ συναγωγὴν μάλιστα εἶσονται ὅσοι περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὠδιναντες ἠύξαντό ποτε τῆς ἐκ Θεῶν ἐπιφανείας τυχόντες ἀνάπαυσιν λαβεῖν, τῆς ἀπορίας διὰ τὴν τῶν λιγόντων ἀξιοπιστον διδασκαλίαν.

has existed always, it will continue to exist always. If it had a beginning, it will likewise have an end. And after the end of the world, what will there be then? if not perhaps the silence of death! or, it may be, something of which no conception at present can be formed. Incessantly haunted," he goes on to say, "by such thoughts as these, which came, I know not whence, I was sorely troubled, so that I grew pale and emaciated; and, what was most terrible, whenever I strove to banish away this anxiety as foolish, I only experienced the renewal of my sufferings in an aggravated degree, which occasioned me great distress. I was not aware that I had in these thoughts a friendly companion, guiding me on towards eternal life, as I afterwards learned by experience, and thanked the great Disposer of all for granting me such guidance, since it was by these thoughts, so distressing at first, that I was impelled to seek till I found that which I needed. And when I had attained to this, then I pitied, as miserable men, those whom in my former ignorance I was in danger of considering most happy. As such thoughts, then, dwelt in me from my childhood, I resorted to the schools of the philosophers, hoping to find some certain foundation on which I could repose; and I saw nothing but building up and tearing down of theories, nothing but endless dispute and contradiction: sometimes, for example, the demonstration triumphed of the soul's immortality, then again that of its mortality. When the former prevailed, I rejoiced; when the latter, I was depressed. Thus was I driven to and fro by the different representations, and forced to conclude, that things appear not as they are in themselves, but as they happen to be presented on this or that side. I was made dizzy than ever, and from the bottom of my heart sighed for deliverance." As he could come to no fixed and certain conviction by means of reason, Clemens now resolved to seek relief in another way—to visit Egypt, the land of mysteries and apparitions, and hunt up a magician, who could summon a spirit for him from the other world. The appearance of such a spirit would give him intuitive evidence of the soul's immortality. No arguments would afterwards be able to shake his belief in what had been thus made certain to him by the evidence of his senses. But the advice of a sensible philosopher dissuaded him from this project, and from seeking the truth by forbidden arts,

to which he could not resort and ever hope again to obtain peace of conscience. In this state of mind, full of doubts, unsettled, inquiring, distressed and agitated, he came in contact with the Gospel, preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power—and his case may illustrate that of many others.

If, now, we take a general survey of the religious state of the Pagan world, as it has thus been exhibited, we cannot fail to observe many and various oppositions to, and points of possible union with, Christianity; oppositions capable also of becoming points of union, and points of union capable also of becoming oppositions. Opposed at one and the same time against Christianity stood the powers of infidelity and of superstition. *The force of infidelity*—the sole supremacy of the understanding, denying everything above nature, the wisdom of the *nil admirari*—set itself to oppose Christianity, as it did everything else that called in requisition man's religious nature. By such as had taken this direction, Christianity was put in the same category with all appearances of fanaticism and superstition; but *there was also an infidelity*, at the root of which lay that need of believing, which could no longer be satisfied by anything that the present state of the ancient world, in religion and philosophy, could afford; just as we have seen it represented in the case of the above-mentioned Clemens; and such unbelief could be overcome by the force of divine truth in the Gospel: the unbelief itself became here a preparatory *momentum* to the reception of Christianity. On the other hand, the dominion of a superstition clinging to sense opposed the entrance of a religion which proclaimed the worship of God in spirit and in truth; and this superstition was in close alliance with the old religion, which had now been elevated to a new sway over the spirit. But that sway was something unnatural,—it was a last effort of expiring life: and at the root of a great proportion of the superstition lay, as we have seen, a need, seeking for its satisfaction, which could be found only in Christianity;—the need of redemption—of a healing of the deep-felt schism within—of reconciliation with the unknown God, after whom the conscious or unconscious need was seeking. By means of an unconscious, undefined craving of this sort, many no doubt fell victims to various deceptive arts; and it was necessary that the power exercised by such arts over the minds of men should be overcome by Christian-

ity, before it could pave its way to their hearts; but there also dwelt in the Gospel a power to lay bare and expose all deceptive arts, and to penetrate through every delusive show, to the inmost recesses of man's being.

Platonism prepared the way for Christianity, by spiritualizing the religious modes of thinking; by bringing back polytheism to a certain unity of the consciousness of God; by awakening many ideas closely allied to Christianity; as, for example, the idea of a redemption, in the sense of deliverance from the *ἄλγη*—the blind power of nature opposed to the divine;<sup>1</sup> of elevation to a stage of divine life removed beyond the influence of natural powers.<sup>2</sup> But that which is best suited to form a preparatory position, is capable also of being most easily turned into one of fierce hostility, where an interest is felt in maintaining the old position against the higher one which has presented itself; and in this Platonism we still discern the spirit of the old world, though pregnant already with foreign elements. The new Platonism could not bring itself to acquiesce, particularly, in that *humility of knowledge* and that *renunciation of self* which Christianity required. It could not be induced to sacrifice its philosophical, aristocratic notions, to a religion which would make the higher life a common possession for all mankind. The religious eclecticism of this direction of the spirit could do no otherwise than resist the exclusive and sole supremacy of the religion that suffered no other at its side, but would subject all to itself. Yet this philosophy of religion found it impossible to prevent the ideas and wants it had awakened from leading beyond itself, and to Christianity. Platonism, it is true, revived the faith in a superterrestrial nature and destination of the spirit; but the manner in which the doctrine of the soul's immortality, reduced to the ideas of an eternity of the spirit, and of the soul's pre-existence, became united here with the transmigration of souls, failed to satisfy the universal religious wants of mankind. If, according to this doc-

<sup>1</sup> Of attraction and repulsion, of every description of *γοητεία*, the *ἀγοητεύσον*.

<sup>2</sup> We may mention here also the idea of an *αἰώνιος Ζωή*, which God possesses. Plutarch. de Iside et Osiride, c. 1. The idea of a kingdom of God, depending on the condition that the divine element in man gains the supremacy;—in the language of Psammon, an Egyptian priest in the time of Alexander the Great: "Ὅτι πάντες ἄνθρωποι βασιλεύονται ὑπὸ Θεοῦ· τὸ γὰρ ἄρχον ἐν ἑκάστῳ καὶ κρατοῦν, Θεὸν ἴστιν. In the Life of Alexander, c. 27, near the end.

trine, even those souls—which applied, however, in the end, only to such as had attained by philosophy to the intuition of truth—if even those souls which, when freed from the bonds of their earthly existence, could rise to a life wholly above sense, wholly divine, must yet, after a certain time, yield again to the force of destiny, and plunge once more into the circle of an earthly life; this was not an expectation answering to the desires of the human spirit. And it may be conceived what power the proclamation of eternal life, in the Christian sense, must have exercised over a want thus excited, and yet left unsatisfied.<sup>1</sup>

There could not fail to arise, then, out of this school itself, an opposition of views: on the one side, were those who held this position in hostility to Christianity; on the other, those to whom it proved a point of transition to Christianity. But then these latter, again, were exposed to a peculiar danger. Their earlier prejudices might react in such a way as to pervert their mode of apprehending and of shaping Christian truth. In this way, much foreign matter, drawn from their previous opinions, might unconsciously be conveyed over with them to Christianity.

#### RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE.

In the midst of the nations addicted to the deification of nature in the form of Polytheism or of Pantheism, we see a people among whom the faith in one Almighty God, the absolutely free Creator and Governor of the world, was propagated not as an esoteric doctrine of the priests, but as a common possession for all, as the central point of life for a whole people and state. And necessarily connected with the faith in a holy God, was the recognition of a holy law as the rule of life, was the consciousness of the opposition between holiness and sin—a consciousness which, at the esthetic position held by Nature-religion, though it occasionally flashed out in single gleams, yet could not be evolved with the same strength, clearness, and constancy. This relation of the Hebrew people to other nations suffices of itself to defeat every attempt which might be made to explain the origin of the

<sup>1</sup> We have an illustration of it in Justin Martyr's account of his own religious history, at the beginning of his dialogue with Trypho, where he relates how he was led from Platonism to embrace Christianity.



religion of this people in the same manner as that of other religions. It is a fact bearing witness of the revelation of a living God, to whom the religion owed its existence and its progressive development, and of the peculiar course of training, whereby this nation was formed to be the organ for preserving and propagating this revelation. A Philo might, with good reason, say of this people, that to them was entrusted the prophetic office for all mankind ; for it was *their* destination, in opposition to the nations sunk in the worship of nature, to bear witness of the living God. The revelations and leadings of the Divine hand vouchsafed to them were designed for the whole human race, over which, from the foundation here laid, the kingdom of God was to be extended. Theism and the Theocracy must be embodied in an outward shape, as pertaining exclusively to a distinct people, in order that from the envelope of this national form might issue forth the kingdom of God, embracing all mankind. Yet as the idea of the Theocracy cannot, by forms and rules from without, be realized in the life of a single people, and generally not in the rude stock of human nature, unennobled and persisting in its estrangement from God, there could not fail to exist here a disproportion between the revealed idea and its outward manifestation ; and in this very circumstance was grounded the prophecy of a future conciliation. The idea must strive beyond the form of appearance, which as yet does not answer to it, towards a development more conformable to its essence and fulness ; and it contains in itself the prophecy of such a development. If history in general partakes, by its own nature, more nearly of the prophetic character in proportion as there dwells in it a pervading reference to the great moments of history, to that which has significance as bearing on the progress of mankind as a race ; then the religion and history of this people must be filled, in a pre-eminent degree, with prophetic elements. The destinies of this nation were so guided as ever to call forth more strongly the consciousness of that breach, that inward disunion, of which we have spoken above, and the longing after deliverance from it. This deliverance is one and the same with the restoration of the fallen Theocracy ; with which belongs also the participation of all nations in the worship of the living God. The appearance of him by whom this was to be accomplished, of him who is the true

theocratic King, forms therefore the central point of the prophetic element, which, although unfolded by particular prophecies with special clearness and distinctness of vision, yet here is not merely some accessory individual thing added from without, but had been grounded by an inherent necessity in the whole organism of this religion and national history. The idea of the Messiah is the culminating point of this religion, to which all the diffused rays of the divine in it converge.

While the religious belief of the Greeks and Romans suffered a violent shock in the revolutions which these nations experienced, the indwelling power in the theistic faith is clearly manifested, when we see it preserving itself unshaken amid all the political storms that agitated the Hebrew people. Nay, the oppressions suffered under the dominion of foreign nations served but to render this faith more firm, although the right understanding of its import did not keep up at an equal pace. But as everything that develops itself in human nature is exposed to the corruptions lying within it, revealed religion could not escape the same. Even Christianity, the absolute religion of mankind, could not be exempted from this necessity; only it possessed the power of coming forth ennobled from the conflict with these corruptions, taking advantage of them to free itself from the admixture of foreign elements. This power did not reside in Judaism; as it was not designed to endure for all times as a religion in this form, but to give place, by the dissolution of this form, for that higher creation which was foretold by it. If this form, instead of making way for that higher development, would maintain its own existence for a still longer term, it must, in surviving itself, merely drag itself along as a thing effete. And here, too, it will be seen again, that what is designed as a preparatory stage, when it attempts to assert its own independence, not understanding itself according to its spirit and idea in relation to the historical development, may turn round into opposition with that higher stage, for which it was its very purpose to prepare.

What has just been said is to be applied to the direction of the religious spirit which governed the great mass of the Jewish people. With them the theocratic consciousness, misapprehended according to the notions of their fleshly minds, served but to foster a national pride, of which it had become the foundation. Men.

fastened on the letter—the letter, understood according to the contracted views of minds turned only on the world; and clung by the sensible form and envelope, without being able to perceive the spirit they revealed, and the ideas they contained, because there was no congenial recipient spirit to meet the divine truth as it was offered. The sentence was here verified, pronounced by our Lord himself, “He who has, to him shall be given; and he who hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.”

By the consciousness of the declining condition of the Theocracy, it is true, that the yearning after the promised epoch of its glorious restoration, and by the feeling of distress under the yoke of foreign and domestic tyrants, the longing after the Deliverer, after the appearance of Him from whom that glorious restoration was to come, the Messiah, had been aroused to greater activity. But the same grovelling sense which led to a misapprehension of the nature of the Theocracy generally, could not fail to lead also to a misapprehension of this idea, which forms the central point and mark towards which the whole Theocracy was aiming. From that worldly sense which was attached to the idea of the Theocracy, and that worldly turn of the religious spirit generally, could only result a secularizing also of the idea of the Messiah. As the great mass of the people were bowed down by the sense of outward much more than of inward wretchedness, disgrace, and bondage, it was chiefly a deliverer from the former whom they expected and yearned after, in the Messiah. The inclination to the supernatural took here an altogether worldly shape; the supernatural, as it pictured itself to the imagination of the worldly heart, was but a fantastic imitation of the natural magnified to the monstrous. Thus the deluded Jews, destitute of a sense for the spiritual apprehension of divine things, expected a Messiah who would employ the miraculous power, with which he was divinely armed, in the service of their earthly lusts; who would free them from civil bondage, execute a severe retribution on the enemies of the Theocratic people, and make them masters of the world in a universal empire, whose glory it was their special delight to set forth in the fantastic images suggested by their sensuous desires.

There was a great want of such leaders and teachers of the

people as could have instructed them respecting the nature of their religion and of the Theocracy, and undeceived them of their erroneous fancies. Most of their guides were blind leaders of the blind, men who only confirmed the people in their perverse inclinations, and in the errors thence resulting. Great mischief had been occasioned particularly by a fanatical zealot, Judas of Gamala, or the Galilæan, who, about the year 11 after the birth of Christ, took upon himself to oppose the census or registration decreed by Augustus Cæsar. A people that had incurred the forfeiture of their liberty as a just punishment for their sins, and would continually incur it more and more, such a people he called upon to throw off, at once, the yoke of Roman bondage. He stimulated those who, in disposition, were widely removed from serving God as their Lord, to recognise him as their only Lord, by suffering no vestige to remain of the dominion of a stranger over the people that belonged to God alone. While others were for awaiting the deliverance to be wrought by the power of God, through the Messiah, he, on the contrary, required that they should first lay hands to the work themselves. "God," said he, "will help those only who do their own;" but by this he meant nothing else than the resistance of mere arbitrary will to a power placed by God's appointment over a people that had not understood their calling, that had been unfaithful to it, and who, by virtue of their disposition, were no longer capable of freedom.<sup>1</sup> From this exciting cause proceeded that wild fanaticism of the Zealots, formed out of an impure combination of political and worldly-religious elements; a combination which, in all times, has introduced the most fatal mischiefs among nations; as was illustrated, indeed, by the history of this people down to the period of their total extinction as a state. When John the Baptist, after his call from God to become a preacher of repentance, caused a divine voice to be heard in the wilderness of the degenerate people, sought to bring them to the consciousness that it was by the disposition of the heart the way must be prepared for the regeneration of the Theocracy, and directed the longing wishes of his contemporaries away from the earthly to the divine; yet notwithstanding the great effect which he produced by the commanding power of his words, he found little

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Archæol. l. xviii. c. 1, ¶le B. J. l. ii. c. 8, § 1.

sympathy with that which was the true aim and spirit of his preaching, and at last fell the victim of a league struck between worldly and spiritual tyranny; a martyr to that truth which, with a denunciatory zeal that regarded no consequences, he held up against all the wickedness of his age. The death of John foreshadowed the fate which was to terminate the earthly course of one greater than himself, to bear witness of, and prepare the way for whom, was his divine vocation.

Incomprehensible, therefore, to men given up to such blindness, was what the Son of God told them of the *true* freedom, which he had been sent from heaven to bestow on those who sighed under the bondage of sin. As with their earthly sense they knew not the Father, so also they could not discern in Jesus the Son; because they had no ear for the voice of the Father, witnessing of him, in the wants of the human heart. The same temper which made them disregard the warning prophetic words of John the Baptist, rendered them deaf also to the warning-call of the greatest among all the prophets; and as he had foretold them, they became, even to their ruin, through the influence of the same disposition, a prey to the artful designs of every *false* prophet who knew how to flatter the wishes which such a disposition inspired. When the temple of Jerusalem was already in flames, one of those false prophets could persuade crowds of the people that God was about to shew them the way of deliverance by a miraculous sign,—such a sign as they had often demanded of him who would have shewn them the *true* way to *true* deliverance, and who did refer them to the *true* signs of God in history,—and thousands of deluded men fell victims to the flames or to the Roman sword. Josephus, who was no Christian, but who contemplated with less prejudice than others the fate of his nation, of which he was an eye-witness, closes his recital of this event with the following remarkable words:—"The unhappy people would suffer themselves, at that time, only to be cheated by impostors who were bold enough to lie in the name of God. But to the manifest prodigies that portended the approaching destruction they paid no regard; they had no faith in them:—like men wholly infatuated, and as if they had neither eyes nor soul, they heeded not what God was announcing."

Among the Jewish theologians in Palestine, we find the three

different main directions, which are commonly observed to make their appearance in opposition to each other, on the decay of the forms of a positive religion. First, the traditional tendency which mixes up with the original religion many foreign elements, aiming to combine all these into an artificially constituted whole; which holds tenaciously to form and letter, without the living spirit; and substitutes, in the place of the real essence of the religion, an effete orthodoxy and a dead ceremonial. Thus is there called forth in the next place, the reaction of a reforming tendency; but a reaction which, if it has proceeded rather from the intelligential than from the religious element, if the sense of negation rather than the positive religious interest predominates, easily swerves from the just moderation in polemics, and runs into the extreme of expunging, together with the foreign elements, much that is genuine and good. But the unsatisfied want which both these tendencies leave in men of more profound and warmer feelings, usually impels the latter to another reaction,—the reaction of a predominantly subjective tendency, of predominant feeling and intuition by the feelings, which, as opposed to the tendencies above described, is designated by the name of mysticism. These three main directions of the religious spirit, which often recur under different forms, we recognise, in the present case, in the three classes called the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

The Pharisees<sup>1</sup> stood at the summit of legal Judaism. They fenced round the Mosaic law with a multitude of so-called “hedges,” whereby its precepts were to be guarded against every possible infringement. Thus it came about, that under this pretext many new statutes were added by them, particularly to the ritual portion of the law. These they contrived, by an arbitrary method of interpretation,—a method which in part tortured the letter and in part was allegorical,—to find in the Pentateuch; appealing at the same time to an oral tradition, as furnishing both the key to right exposition, and the authority for their doc-

<sup>1</sup> The name is derived from “parash,” פָּרַשׁ; either in the sense “to expound,” whence “poresh,” פָּרֹשׁ, the ἐξηγητὴς τοῦ νομοῦ κατ’ ἐξοχὴν, a title claimed by the Pharisees, according to Josephus; or in the sense, “to set apart,” parush, פָּרֹשׁ, which, indeed, sounds nearer like the Greek φαρισαῖος, one separated from the profane multitude, the פָּרֹשׁ הַקָּדוֹשׁ, one who would be regarded as holy.

trines. They were venerated by the people as the holy men, and stood at the head of the hierarchy. An asceticism, alien to the original Hebrew spirit, but easily capable of entering into union with the legal sectarianism at its most extravagant pitch, was wrought by them into a system. We find among them a great deal that is similar to the *consiliis evangelicis*, and to the rules of Monachism in the later church. On painful ceremonial observances they often laid greater stress than on good morals. To a rigid austerity in the avoidance of every even seeming transgression of ritual precepts, they united an easy sophistical casuistry which knew how to excuse many a violation of the moral law. Besides those who made it their particular business to interpret the law and its supplemental traditions, there were among them those, also, who knew how to introduce into the Old Testament, by allegorical interpretation, a peculiar Theosophy; and this they propagated in their schools; a system which, starting from the development of certain ideas really contained in the old Testament in the germ, had grown out of the fusion of these with elements derived from the Zoroastrian or Parsic system of religion; and at a later period, after the time of Gamaliel, with such also as had been derived from Platonism. Thus to a ritual and legal tradition came to be added a speculative and theosophic one.<sup>1</sup>

It would be as wrong, certainly, to confound these Pharisees together in one class, as to pursue the same course with the later monks. We must distinguish among them the several gradations of honestly meant though misguided zeal, till it diverges to mock-holiness and hypocrisy thirsting for power. Although the egoistic interest of an hierarchial caste was the governing principle with many, yet there were some for whom the legal way, with all its efforts and conflicts, possessed perfect truth; some who had been led, by their course of life, to pass through the same painful experiences of which Paul, the former Pharisee, bears witness in the seventh of his epistle to the Romans. But one thing was wanting to them: the humility with which those who feel the poverty of their own spirit, go forth to meet the divine grace.

The Sadducees were for restoring the original Mosaic religion

<sup>1</sup> In what is here said, I have taken into view the well-grounded objections which Dr Schneckenburger, in the seventh Dissertation of his Introduction to the New Testament, has made against the manner in which the subject was presented by me before.

in its purity, and expunging everything that had been added by Pharisaic traditions. But as they did not follow out the thread of *historical progress which marked the development* of the divine revelations, but arbitrarily cut it short, so they could not understand the *original Theism* in the Jewish religion. That direction of mind which shews hostility to the progressive development of the religious consciousness, required by what was already contained or implied in the original, cannot fail to misunderstand the original itself,—cannot fail to seize it on a single side and to mutilate it. The Sadducees were too deficient in the more profound sense of religion and of the religious need, to be able to distinguish the genuine from the spurious in the Pharisaic theology.

Directly at variance as were the two systems of Phariseeism and Sadduceeism, still they had something in common. This was the one-sided legal principle which they both maintained. And indeed by the Sadducees this principle was seized and held after a manner still more exclusively one-sided than by the other sect; since with them *all* religious interest was confined *to this point*; and since they misinterpreted or denied every thing else that belonged to the more fully developed faith of the Old Testament. Moreover, the essential character of the law in its spirit, as distinguished from its national and temporal form, in its strictness and dignity, was recognised by them still less than by the Pharisees. While the Pharisees attributed the highest value to ritual and ascetic works of holiness with the Sadducees—as, perhaps, the name they gave themselves may denote—uprightness in the relations of civil society passed for the whole. Starting from this principle, there was nothing in their view of morality which presented a point of contact for the feeling of *religious* need, which most readily emerges from *the depth* of the moral life. Add to this that they ascribed divine authority, an authority binding on religious conviction, only to the Pentateuch.<sup>1</sup> The observance of

<sup>1</sup> Ready as I am to acknowledge the weight of the arguments brought by Winer (in his *Biblische Realwörterbuch*) against the statement here made, yet I cannot be induced to abandon it. Very true, it does not admit of being proved from the passages of Josephus, that the Sadducees denied the authority of all other books of the canon. It is only evident from those passages, that they were opponents of tradition, and were for deriving the substance of the legal precepts to be observed from the letter of the law alone, without allowing validity, in this regard, to any other source of knowledge. But neither can it by any means be proved from them, that they judged respecting the canon precisely as did the Pharisees. Although Josephus (c. Apion. c. 8), taking his posi-



the law, understood after *their own* way, was for them the only thing fixed and certain; in respect to all other things, they were inclined to doubt and disputation.<sup>1</sup>

As the belief in the spirit's destination for an eternal existence beyond this earth found no reciprocity in this, their one-sided intellectual direction of mind, holding converse only with the worldly, they expressly denied the doctrines of the resurrection and of the immortality of the spirit, because no such doctrines could be proved from the letter of the Pentateuch alone. These doctrines they reckoned also among the foreign additions that had been made to the original doctrines of Moses, from which additions they were wishing to purify Judaism. To such a direction of mind, it is *ever* peculiar to declare all doctrines surreptitious, which do not lie, expressed in so many words, in the religious records still

tion on the ground of Jewish orthodoxy, might thus describe the canon as of universal validity; yet it by no means follows, that that heterodox sect, which departed in so many other things from what was elsewhere considered as important for the religious interest—that this sect might not also differ from the same in their judgment concerning the canon. If the Sadducees, notwithstanding their denial of doctrines so important to the general religious interest as those of personal immortality and of the resurrection, could yet attain to the most considerable offices of the state, how was an opinion concerning the canon, which certainly had no such vital connection with practical life, to offer any obstacle to this promotion? Josephus says of them, that when they were called to administer public affairs, they did not venture to act according to their own principles, but were constrained to yield to what was required by the Pharisees; since otherwise they must fall by the popular rage which would be excited against them. Ὅσπότε γὰρ ἐπ' ἀρχῆς παρίλθοιν, ἀκουσίως μὲν καὶ κατ' ἀνάγκην, προσχωροῦσι δ' οὐ οἷς ὁ φαρισαῖος λίγει, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἄλλως ἀνεκτοῦς γενέσθαι τοῖς πλῆθειν. Archæol. i. xviii. c. 1. § 4. These words refer immediately, without doubt, to church principles of administration; yet I cannot avoid the inference from analogy, that the Sadducees would have acted in precisely the same way in regard to other things, not less important in their relation to the common religious interest; such, for instance, as their denial of immortality; that is, would have made no public demonstration of their real convictions, although it must necessarily have been the case, that, with such difference of opinions, violent contentions would sometimes arise in the Sanhedrim. See Acts xxiii. 9. So now, there may have been a distinction of an exoteric and esoteric position in their judgment concerning the canon; and while manifesting a certain respect for the whole canon, they may have, notwithstanding this, ascribed a decisive authority, in matters of faith, to the Pentateuch alone. Indeed, it cannot well be conceived, how they could reconcile the acknowledgment of an equal authority belonging to all the books of the Old Testament, with their denial of immortality and of the resurrection.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus describes the sceptical tendency of the Sadducees in Archæol. i. xviii. c. 1, § 4: Φυλακῆς δὲ οὐδαμῶν τιμῶν μεταποιήσεις αὐτοῖς ἢ τῶν νόμων. Πρὸς γὰρ τοὺς διδασκάλους σοφίας ἦν μετίαισιν, ἀμφιλογεῖν ἀρετὴν ἀριθμοῦσιν.

recognised as authoritative; although these doctrines may be contained there in the spirit, including within itself the germ of a future development. But it is more difficult to conceive how the Sadducees found it possible to reconcile their denial of a world of spirits and of the existence of angels<sup>1</sup>—to which denial they were impelled by the same direction of mind—with their principle of recognising everything as religious doctrine which could be shewn to lie, in so many words, in the Pentateuch. It is easy to see here, how they were seeking for their own opinions, which had originated, and were grounded in a state of mind wholly peculiar to themselves, a point of union and support in the authority which they recognised only just so far as the case admitted. Most probably, in explaining the angelic appearances (the Angelophaniai), they departed from their principle of literal interpretation, and considered them merely as visions by which God revealed himself to the Fathers.<sup>2</sup>

Although it cannot be proved, from the notices of Josephus, that they denied a special Providence, yet it is clear, that in strict conformity with their tendency to negation, they made God, as far as possible, an idle spectator of the affairs of the world, taking much less share in the concerns of men than the Theocratic principle required. Their direction of mind must have impelled them ever nearer to a Deism which abolished all revelation, and consequently, also, the essence of the Jewish religion itself, though at the outset they had simply in view the restoration of that religion to its primitive simplicity. The principle of their spiritual bent must have led them further than they intended themselves to go. In perfect harmony with this mode of thinking was also the

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxiii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> As we are to infer from Origen's words, if we compare them with a passage in Justin Martyr (Dialog. c. Tryph. Jud. f. 358, ed. Colon), where he speaks of a party among the Jewish theologians that denied the personal existence of angels, and explained all appearances of them as merely transient forms of the manifestation of a divine power, which God caused to go out from himself and then withdrew. Origen, in the words alluded to, ascribes to the Sadducees, *δόξας περὶ ἀγγέλων, ὡς οὐχ ὑπαρχόντων, ἀλλὰ προσωπολογουμένων τῶν περὶ αὐτῶν ἀναγιγραμμένων καὶ μηδὲν ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἱστορίαν ἀληθῆς ἰχόντων*. It may admit of some question, whether Origen was following here some historical accounts, or merely allowing himself to conclude, from the necessary connection of ideas in his own mode of thinking, that if they did not ascribe literal truth to the narratives of the angelic appearances, they must then have explained them allegorically. The comparison of his statement, however, with that of Justin Martyr, renders the former the more probable.

severe, cold, heartless disposition, which Josephus ascribes to the Sadducees. According to his account, they were, for the most part, persons of wealth, who led a life of ease, and, satisfied with earthly enjoyments, would open their minds to no higher aspirations.<sup>1</sup>

3 It remains that we should speak of the Essenes or Essæans, whose relation to the two parties just described has already been exhibited in a general manner. About two centuries before the birth of Christ, there arose, in the quiet country lying on the west side of the Dead Sea, a society of piously-disposed men, who, in these solitudes, sought a refuge from reigning corruptions, from the storms and conflicts of the world, and the strifes of parties; precisely as the monastic system sprung up at a later period. Thus they are described by the elder Pliny, who felt constrained to express a sort of respect for their independence and their contentment within themselves:—"On the western border of that lake," says he, "dwell the Essenes, at a sufficient distance from the shore to avoid its pestilent effluvia—a race entirely by themselves, and, beyond every other in the world, deserving of wonder; men living in communion with nature; without wives, without money. Every day their number is replenished by a new troop of settlers, since they are much visited by those whom the reverses of fortune have driven, tired of the world, to their modes of living. Thus happens, what might seem incredible, that a community in which no one is born, yet continues to subsist through the lapse of centuries. So fruitful for them is disgust of life in others."<sup>2</sup> From this first seat of the Essenes, colonies of them had been formed in other parts of Palestine; in remote and

<sup>1</sup> Although Josephus was himself a Pharisee, yet we have no reason to suspect what he says of the Sadducees; for he constantly shews himself impartial in his judgments; he, moreover, frequently exposes, without reserve, the bad traits of the Pharisees, and we have no cause, therefore, to charge him here with malicious feelings, injurious to the truth. Certainly we cannot infer from the character of the doctrines of the later Careans, who were temperate opponents of the Pharisaic traditions, what must have been the character of the Sadducean doctrines. The general question still remains unsettled, whether the latter doctrines had any outward connection whatever with the former, although the heresy-hunting spirit of their adversaries would naturally be glad of the chance to confound them with these.

<sup>2</sup> *Ab occidente litora Esseni fugiunt, usque qua nocent. Gens sola et in toto orbe præter cæteras mira, sine ulla femina, omni venere abdicata, sine pecunia, socia palmarum. In diem ex æquo convenarum turba renascitur, large frequentantibus, quos vita fessos ad mores eorum fortunæ fluctus agitat. Natur. hist. l. v. c. 15.*

solitary districts of the country, which must have answered best to their original design, but also in the midst of villages and towns. A transplantation of this sort would naturally lead to many deviations from the original strictness of their principles, to many alterations of their discipline. Although there was one class of Essenes who, as we may gather from the accounts of Josephus, were willing to act as magistrates; yet it is evident that these, residing amidst civil society, could not observe all those rules which bound, with the force of law, such as lived secluded from human intercourse. As is wont to happen in similar communities, there must, in this case, have naturally sprung up many orders of the sect, various forms of relation to, and modes of connection with, the original society. Indeed, the historian Josephus expressly distinguishes four different orders, of which the Essenes were composed.<sup>1</sup> Many contradictory statements, which occur in the several accounts of this sect, admit thus of being most easily reconciled.<sup>2</sup>

If we may always distinguish, among mystic sects, the more practical and the more speculatively inclined, we must reckon the Essenes with the former class, without overlooking in them, however, at the same time, a certain speculative and Theosophic element. This, their peculiar mystic turn, might have sprung, in the first place, independently of external influences, out of the deeper religious sense of the Old Testament, a spiritualization of the letter, proceeding from the temper of mind which gave birth to the allegoric interpretation. Such mysticism has made its appearance, after much the same manner, among people of the most diverse character,—among the Hindoos, the Persians, and Christian nations. It would lead certainly to the greatest mistakes, if, from the resemblance of such religious phenomena, whose rela-

<sup>1</sup> Josephus cites *μοίρας τέσσαρας* of Essenes, B. J. l. ii. c. 8, § 10, which several grades, it is true, would, according to his testimony, have reference simply to the length of time spent in this community; but from the marks which are given we may doubtless infer, that there were other modes of classification among them besides that which bore reference to the circumstance just mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> As, for instance, while Pliny makes them reside only on the border of the Dead Sea, Josephus (de B. J. l. ii. c. 8, § 4), says that there were many of them dwelling in every town; Philo (quod omnis probus liber, § 12), that they lived *χωμηθὲν, τὰς πόλεις εκπροσόμενοι*; and the same writer, in a fragment of his defence of the Jews, preserved by Eusebius Cæsar (Præparat. Evangel. l. vii. c. 8), that they lived in many towns and villages of Judea, in populous districts.

tionship can be traced to their common ground of origin in the essence of the human mind itself, we should be ready to infer their outward derivation one from the other. How much that is alike may not be found in comparing the phenomena of Brahmaism and of Buddhism with those of the sect of Beghards in the middle ages, where the impossibility of any such derivation is apparent to every body? We are ready to admit, however, that the Essenean mysticism, although it did not spring originally from any outward cause of excitement, yet, having once made its appearance, received into itself many foreign elements. But should the question now arise, whence did these elements come? we find our thoughts reverting far more naturally to old Oriental, to Parsic, Chaldaic elements—many ideas from that source having been propagated, since the time of the exile, among the Jews—than to elements of Alexandrian Platonism, according to the usual supposition at the present time; for it is difficult to conceive how the latter could already have exerted so powerful and wide-extended an influence in Palestine, at the period when this sect arose. The peculiar asceticism of the Essenes by no means warrants us to infer that they must have been acquainted with the Platonic doctrine of the  $\epsilon\lambda\eta$ , since that asceticism may be explained as well from the influence of the Oriental spirit; while this doctrine itself, without the addition of the Oriental spirit, would have led to no such peculiar bent. We should also duly weigh, that Josephus and Philo, writers to whom we are indebted for our most important information respecting this sect, have both, though the latter still more than the former, clothed the opinions of the Essenes in a garb peculiarly Grecian, which we may rightly consider as not originally belonging to them. We must, therefore, be cautious of attributing too much importance to many things they advance, which have been derived *simply from that source*; especially as, in modern times, the Essenean doctrines have given occasion to very arbitrary combinations and modes of representing historical facts.

Besides the diversities above mentioned, which must have been introduced gradually among the Essenes, as they began to relax from their primitive eremetical severity and submit to the intercourse of civil life, we may notice another remarkable difference among them. In strict accordance with the Oriental element of

their original ascetic turn, was the life of celibacy—a thing alien to the spirit of the primitive Hebraism, by which a fruitful marriage was reckoned among the greatest blessings and ornaments. Hence we see already among the Essenes that reaction of the original Hebrew spirit against the foreign ascetic element—which is analogous to something we shall hereafter have more frequent occasion to notice in the history of sects. There was a party of the Essenes which differed from the others, in tolerating the institution of marriage.<sup>1</sup>

It accorded with the character of this sect to unite the contemplative life with the practical ; but in accommodation to the diversities already mentioned, the extent to which this was done must also have been various. The practical bent of the Essenes would naturally incline them to a life of industry. Such a life was probably intended, as in the case of the later monks, to answer a twofold purpose ; to occupy the senses, so as to prevent any disturbance from that quarter of the higher activity of the mind ; and to furnish themselves with the means, while independently providing for their own subsistence, of contributing at the same time to the necessities of others. The occupations of peace were those about which they employed themselves ; differing according to their different habits of life, according as they dwelt in communion with nature, or joined in the intercourse of civil society ; agriculture, the breeding of bees and of cattle, mechanical handiworks. They had sought to explore the powers of nature, and apply them to the healing of diseases. Connected with their secret doctrines there was also a traditional knowledge relating to this subject. They were in possession of old writings which treated of such matters. Health of body and of soul they were in the habit of connecting together, as well as the cure of both. Their science of nature and their art of medicine seem to have had a religious *Theosophic* character.<sup>2</sup> As they strove to explore the secret powers of nature, so were there also to be found among them such as claimed for themselves, and endeavoured to cultivate, a gift of prophecy. A particular method of

<sup>1</sup> See Joseph. B. J. l. ii. c. 8, § 13.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. B. J. l. ii. c. 8, § 6: Σπουδάζουσιν ἐκτόπως περὶ τὰ τῶν παλαιῶν συγγράμματα, μάλιστα τὰ πρὸς ὠφίλιαν ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἐκλίγοντες. \*Ἐνθιν αὐτοῖς πρὸς θεραπείαν παθῶν ῥίζαι τι ἀλιξητήριοι καὶ λιθῶν ἰδιότητες ἀνερευνῶνται.

ascetic preparation, by which one might become qualified for searching into the future, was taught among their secret traditions.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose they employed sacred writings; whether they were the Scriptures of the Old Testament, from the words of which they sought, by various interpretations, to unravel the secrets of futurity, just as the Bible was used for similar purposes in later periods; or whether they were those other writings belonging to the sect, in which their secret doctrines were unfolded. All this bears the impress of the old Oriental spirit, certainly not of the elements of Grecian culture.

By their consciousness of the equality of the higher dignity in man's nature, of the oneness of the divine image in all, to which the Old Testament of itself might have led them,<sup>2</sup> they rose above the narrow limits within which the development of the human species was confined by the prejudices of antiquity. They considered all men as rational beings, destined to the enjoyment of personal freedom; they rejected slavery, and suffered no slave to exist in their community,—in every kind of service mutually helping one another. As it was their idea to restore back the community founded originally by the Almighty in nature, and thereby to reconcile those differences which civil society had introduced among men, accordingly the distinctions of poverty and of wealth were also done away among them. There was a common treasury, formed by throwing together the property of the individuals who entered into the society, and by the earnings of each one's labour, out of which the necessities of all were provided for,—a community of goods which, however, did not preclude the right of private property, and which was probably modified by the diversities already described.

There can be no doubt that this sect, by exciting a more ear-

<sup>1</sup> Διαφόροις ἀγνίαις ἰμπαίδοτριβοῦμενοι. See Joseph. B. J. l. ii. c. 8, § 12.

<sup>2</sup> This view naturally resulted both from the development of the Old Testament idea respecting the image of God, and from the recognition of the origin of mankind from a single pair; as, on the contrary, slavery found its justification in the prevailing mode of thinking among Pagans; their misapprehension of the higher nature common to the species, and their assumption of an original difference of races, in virtue of which, some, by their reason, were destined and suited to rule over others, and these latter, with their bodily powers, to serve them as tools. Thus Aristotle, in his work on Politics, l. i. c. 2, says: Τὸ μὲν δυνάμενον τῇ διανοίᾳ προσηῶν ἄρχον φύσει καὶ δεσπόζον φύσει. Τὸ δὲ δυνάμενον τῷ σώματι ταῦτα ποιεῖν ἀρχόμενον καὶ φύσει δούλον.

nest and lively spirit of devotion, by arousing the sense of the godlike within the little circles over which their influence extended, produced those wholesome fruits which have always sprung out of practical mysticism, wherever the religious life has become stiffened into mechanical forms. It was owing to their inoffensive mode of life, commanding universal respect, that they were enabled to preserve and extend themselves without molestation, amidst all the strifes of party, and all the revolutions to which Palestine was subjected, down to the extinction of the Jewish state.

They were particularly distinguished, in that corrupt age, among the Jews, on account of their industry, charitableness, and hospitality—on account of their fidelity, so different from the seditious spirit of the Jews, in rendering obedience to magistrates as the powers ordained of God, and on account of their strict veracity. Every yea and nay was to possess, in their society, the validity of an oath; for every oath, said they, presupposes already a mutual distrust, which ought not to find place in a community of honest men. In one case only might an oath be administered among them, and that was in confirming those who, after a novitiate of three years, were received among the number of the initiated.

Although now, under the view just presented, we cannot fail to recognise in this sect a sound practical bent, yet we should doubtless be under a mistake if, led by the one-sided representations of the Alexandrian Jew, Philo,<sup>1</sup> we imagined the Essenes might be taken as an example of the purest practical mystics, at an equal remove from all Theosophic and speculative fancies,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his writings, above cited. Although Josephus, too, as we have already observed, has given nothing that can be called an objective description of this sect, notwithstanding that when a youth of sixteen, he compared the different Jewish sects together, in order to choose between them, and endeavoured, along with the rest, to make himself acquainted with the sect of the Essenes, though he hardly went beyond the period of a novitiate among them, and perhaps, in regard to their esoteric doctrines, was no better informed than Philo; yet he *might* obtain a more accurate knowledge of the sect than the Alexandrian Jew; and his account, savouring as it does with a smack of the Grecian taste, yet wears a more historical character than that of Philo, which was evidently written with the distinct purpose in view, of holding up the Essenes to the Greeks as a pattern of practical wise men. Indeed, the latter writer was scarcely capable of looking at anything otherwise than in the light of his Alexandrian Platonism. He must involuntarily find again his own ideas wherever any point of union enables him to introduce them.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot at all agree with those who seize upon the words of Philo, in his book, quod



and from all superstition and slavery to ceremonies. The fact, which has already been stated, of their affectation of the prophetic gift, is of itself inconsistent with this view of the matter; and their whole secret lore can hardly be imagined to have consisted simply of ethical elements, but we are here forced to the supposition of a peculiar *Theosophy* and Pneumatology. Why else should they have made so great a mystery of it? This supposition gathers strength, when we are informed that the candidates for admission into the sect, among other obligations, took an oath that they would reveal to no one the *names of the angels* which were to be communicated to them. It is confirmed again by the cautious secrecy with which they kept the ancient books of the sect. Even Philo himself makes it probable, when he says that they busied themselves with a φιλοσοφία διὰ συμβόλων, a philosophy resting on the allegoric interpretation of the Bible; since every mode of the allegoric interpretation of Scripture is accompanied, side by side, with a certain speculative system. There is nothing to warrant us in supposing that it was the ideas of the Alexandrian Theology which constituted the basis of their scheme. There seems to have been grounded in this *Theosophy* of theirs a certain veneration of the sun, which we have to explain from the intermingling of Parsic rather than of Platonic doctrines. It was a daily custom with them to turn their faces devoutly towards the rising of the sun, and chaunt together certain ancient hymns, handed down in their sect, which were addressed to that luminary, purporting that his beams should fall upon nothing impure.<sup>1</sup> To this may be added their doctrine concerning the soul's pre-existence. Descended from some heavenly region, it had become imprisoned in this corporeal world, and after having led a life worthy of its celestial origin, it would be liberated again, and rise to a heavenly existence befitting its nature. This also, which was the fundamental doctrine of their asceticism, may be traced just as well to old Oriental tradition

omnis probus liber, § 12, where he says, that of the three parts of philosophy, the Essenes accepted only Ethics, for the purpose of sketching out, after this hint, the main features of the Essenean system. It is impossible not to see, that in these words, the matter is set forth in an altogether subjective point of view; and, besides, what Philo here asserts is contradicted by the more precise and accurate testimony of Josephus.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. de B. J. l. ii. c. 8, § 8 et 9.

as to the Alexandrian Platonism. The original birth-place of this doctrine is, in truth, the East, from which quarter it at first found its way into Greece.

If we may trust the words of Josephus,<sup>1</sup> they did indeed send gifts to the temple, and thus expressed their reverence for the original establishment; discharging in this manner the common duty of all Jews, as it was their principle to fulfil every obligation that bound them; yet they did not visit the temple themselves,<sup>2</sup> perhaps because they looked upon it as polluted by the vicious customs of the Jews. They thought that the holy rites could be performed in a worthier and more acceptable manner within the precincts of their own thoroughly pure and holy community. In like manner, also, they performed their sacrificial offerings, for the presentation of which, within the pale of their own society, they believed themselves best prepared by their ascetic lustrations. The authority of Moses, standing so high with them, there is not the least reason for supposing they would wholly set aside the sacrificial worship appointed by him; unless it were true, perhaps, that they looked upon the original Mosaic religion as having been corrupted by later editions, and among these additions reckoned also the sacrificial worship, as we find asserted in the Clementines; which, however, so far as it regards the Essenes at least, admits not the shadow of a proof. Now it is singular, it must be admitted, how, as Jews, they could entertain the opinion, that they might be allowed to offer sacrifices away from Jerusalem. But caprice in the treatment of whatever belongs to the positive in religion forms, indeed, one of the characteristic marks of such mystic sects. And it might well accord with the spirit of such a sect, that in proportion as they looked upon the sacrificial worship, instituted by Moses, as a holy service, they should be so much the less disposed to take any part in its celebration, amidst all the wickedness in the desecrated temple at Jerusalem; and should maintain that only among the really sanctified, the members of their own sect, was the true spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Archæol. l. xviii. § 4: *Εἰς δὲ τὸ ἱερόν ἀναθήματα τι στέλλοντες θυσίας οὐκ ἰπιτελοῦσι διαφορῶς ἀγνιῶν, ἃς νομίζουσιν, καὶ δι' αὐτὸ ἐργόμενοι τοῦ κοινοῦ τεμενίσματος, ἰφ' αὐτῶν τὰς θυσίας ἰπιτελοῦσι.*

<sup>2</sup> For the word *ἐργόμενοι* cannot possibly be taken in any other sense than that of the middle voice.

temple, where sacrifices could be offered with the proper consecration.<sup>1</sup>

With such mystical sects, it not unfrequently happens, that in connection with a bent of mind turned wholly inward, is found a disposition to set value upon certain external religious rites, which seems quite incongruous, two opposite elements being thus brought in contact—spiritual religion and slavery to forms. So it was with the Essenes. In a painfully superstitious observance of the Sabbath day of rest, according to the letter, not the spirit, of the law, they went even beyond the Jews; with this difference, however, that the custom in their case sprung out of an honest piety, while the Pharisaic casuistry knew how to accommodate the interpretation of the law, so as to suit the interest of the passing moment. They not only carefully avoided, like other Jews, all contact with uncircumcised persons, but, being separated, within their own body, into four different grades, they who had attained to the highest, dreaded the pollution of a touch from the member of an inferior grade; and they had recourse to ablutions, whenever an accident of this sort occurred. In general, they attached greater importance than other Jews to purification, by bathing in

<sup>1</sup> Even from Philo's language in the tract: *Quod omnis probus liber*, § 12, it is impossible to extract that meaning which some have wished to find in it, viz. that the Essenes gave a spiritual interpretation to the whole sacrificial worship, and rejected outward sacrifices entirely. Ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα θεραπεύεται Θεοῦ γεγονόσιν, οὐ ζῶα καταθύοντες, ἀλλ' ἱεροσπειρίαις τὰς ἑαυτῶν διανοίας κατασκευάζειν ἀξιῶντες. Philo is starting here from the doctrine of the Alexandrian theology, that the true worship of God is the purely spiritual, consisting in the consecration of the life of the spirit to God. This idea he represents as having been realized by the Essenes, whom he describes as Therapeutæ, in the true sense of the word. Simply for the sake of contrast, he mentions animal sacrifices, which were usually held to constitute the main part of the service; and in so doing he by no means affirms that the Essenes had entirely rejected the sacrificial worship. Not the negative but the positive is here the essential point. Had it been his intention to say that the Essenes rejected the sacrificial worship of Moses, he must have expressed this in a quite different tone. In *this* connection, Philo could have said the same thing of himself, and of every other Jew, possessed, according to his opinion, of a truly spiritual mind. By attaining to the knowledge that the true sacrifice is the spiritual sacrifice of one's self, one is not led, certainly, according to his doctrine, to set aside the outward sacrificial worship. In this case, therefore, there is not the least opposition betwixt Philo and Josephus, but he is speaking of an entirely different thing. In the passage cited from Josephus, we cannot, for the purpose of reconciling a contradiction that does not exist, understand "sacrifice" in the *second* instance differently from that in the *first*, as referring to bloodless sacrifices,—the symbolical offerings of the gifts of nature. In this case, Josephus would have expressed the opposition after a different manner.

cold water, as a means of holiness. To their ascetic notions, the oriental and healthful practice of anointing with oil seemed an unholy thing; so that any one who had happened in any way to become thus defiled, felt obliged carefully to cleanse himself. They scrupulously avoided all food save such as had been prepared within their own sect. They would die rather than partake of any other. All this, then, should satisfy us, that while we grant a due respect to the religious spirit of this people, we ought not to be so far misled as to consider them the representatives of a simple and unalloyed practical mysticism.

Essentially different from the form of culture which prevailed in Palestine was the shape and direction taken by the Jewish mind, on that spot where, through a period of three centuries, it had been unfolding itself under circumstances and relations wholly peculiar,—amidst those elements of Hellenic culture, that, transplanted into the old seats of an altogether different civilization, had on this foreign soil gained the supremacy,—in the Grecian colony of Alexandria in Egypt. From an intermingling of Hellenic and Jewish mind, proceeded forth here one of the most influential of appearances, which had an important bearing, particularly on the process of the development of Christianity *in human thought*. We see here how that great historical event, which, more than three hundred years before the birth of Christ, shattered the nations of the East, should serve to prepare the way for such a process. The world-subduing arms of Alexander, as afterwards the weapons of Rome, were to subserve the highest aim of man's history, by uniting and bringing within the influence of each other parts hitherto separated, so that the minds of men might be prepared to grapple with Christianity, receive it into their thought, and work upon it with self-activity. Plutarch looked upon it as the great mission of Alexander, to transplant Grecian culture into distant countries,<sup>1</sup> and to conciliate and fuse into one, Greeks and barbarians. He says of him, not without reason, that he was sent of God for this purpose;<sup>2</sup> though he did not divine, that this end itself was to be only subsidiary to, and the means of, a higher,—to make the united peoples of the East

<sup>1</sup> Τὰ βαρβαρικά τοῖς ἑλληνικοῖς κινᾶσαι, καὶ τὴν ἑλλάδα σπείρειν. See Plutarch's I. orat. de Alex. virtute s. fortuna, § 10.

<sup>2</sup> Κοινὸς ἦεν θεῖον ἔργον αἰετοῦ καὶ διαλλακτοῦ τῶν ἔθνων νομιζων. I. c. c. 6.

and West more accessible for the new creation that was to proceed from Christianity, and in the combination of the elements of Oriental and Hellenic culture, to prepare for Christianity a material in which it might develop itself. If we look away from that ultimate purpose, if we do not fix our eye upon the higher quickening spirit, destined to convey into that combination, holding within itself the germ of corruption, the principle of a new life, we may, in such a case, indeed ask the question, whether that union was really a gain to either party, whether, at least, the gain was not everywhere accompanied with an equal loss, since the fresh life of the national spirit must, in such circumstances, be constantly repressed by the forcibly obtruded influence of the foreign element. It required something higher than *any* element of human culture to introduce into that combination a new living principle of development, and to unite peculiarities the most diverse, without prejudice to their original essence, into a whole, in which each part should be mutually a complement to the other. The true living fellowship between the East and the West, in which both the great peculiar principles that belong together for a complete exhibition of the type of humanity should be united, could first come only from Christianity. But as preparatory to this step, the influence which, for a period of three centuries, went forth from Alexandria, that centre of the intercourse of the world, was of great importance.

In the course of these centuries, the peculiar asperity and stiffness of the Jewish character must have been considerably tempered by intercourse with the Greeks,<sup>1</sup> and by the transforming influence of the Hellenic culture, which here preponderated. The ulterior effect might proceed to shape itself in two different ways. Either the religious element, which most strongly marked the Jewish peculiarity, might yield, under the overpowering influence of the foreign national spirit, and of the foreign culture, and the Jews would suffer themselves to be misled, in ridicule of their old religious records, now become unintelligible to them, to assort with the Greeks among whom they dwelt, or, true to the religion of their fathers in the main, they might be forced to seek a conciliating mean betwixt this and the elements of Hellenic culture,

<sup>1</sup> Philo reckons the number of Jews residing in Alexandria and the countries adjacent, at "a hundred myriads." Orat. in Flaccum, § 6.

which exercised an involuntary power over their minds, and which they were moreover induced to make their own, in subserviency to an apologetic interest.

We doubtless find some indications that the former of these effects was not wholly wanting: as, for instance, when that zealous champion of Judaism, the Alexandrian Philo, places in contrast with Moses, who, while in favour at the Egyptian courts, still remains faithful to his people, those renegades<sup>1</sup> "that trample on the laws in which they were born and bred, upturn those customs of their country which were liable to no just censure, and in their predilection for the new, become utterly forgetful of the old." In another passage,<sup>2</sup> he rebukes those "who are impatient of the religious institutions of their country; who are ever on the alert for matter of censure and complaint against the laws of religion; who thoughtlessly urge these and the like objections in excuse of their ungodliness:<sup>3</sup> Do ye still make great account of your laws, as if they contained the rules of truth? Yet see, the holy Scriptures, as you term them, contain also fables such as you are accustomed to laugh at, when you hear them from others."<sup>4</sup>

Yet, in the main, the power of their religious faith, so deeply rooted in the mind of this people, was too great over them to be weakened by the influence of that foreign culture; and hence the former of the effects above mentioned was certainly the more rare,

<sup>1</sup> De vita Mosis l. i. f. 607, § 6. Νόμους παραλείνουσι, καθὺς ἐγενήθησαν καὶ ἐτρέφθησαν, ἤθη δὲ πάτρια, οἷς μίμψις οὐδεμία πρόσστι δίκαια, κινουῦσιν ἐκδιητημίνοι καὶ διὰ τὴν τῶν παρόντων ἀποδοχὴν οὐδενὸς ἔτι τῶν ἀρχαίων μνήμην λαμβάνουσιν.

<sup>2</sup> De confus. ling. f. 320, § 2. Οἱ μὲν δυσχεραίνοντες τῇ πατρίᾳ πολιτείᾳ, ψόγον καὶ κατηγορίαν ἀπὸ τῶν νόμων μελιτῶντες τούτοις καὶ τοῖς παραπλησίοις, ὡς ἂν ἐπιβάθραις τῆς ἀβίότητος αὐτῶν οἱ δυσσεβεῖς χῶνται.

<sup>3</sup> He is speaking of the confusion of tongues at Babel.

<sup>4</sup> Also in the passage (de nom. mutat. p. 1053, § 8) where Philo quotes the scoffing language of an ἄθεος and ἀσεβής, the bitterness with which he speaks would seem to indicate that the scoffer was an infidel Jew. In a pagan this scoffing would have struck him as no such singular thing. He looks upon it as a punishment of the foolhardiness of this man, that he soon after hung himself: Ἰν' ὁ μιαιὸς καὶ δυσκάρτατος μὴδὲ καθάρῃ θανάτῳ τιλευτήσῃ. By means of his allegoric interpretation, Philo wishes to remove that which furnished this man an occasion for his scoffing, that others might not draw upon themselves a like punishment. He describes here a whole class of such people, who were waging an irreconcilable war with sacred things, and searching for matter of calumny wherever the letter admitted of no befitting sense. "Ἐμοὶ τῶν φιλαπιχρημάτων καὶ μάμους ἀπὸ τοῖς ἀμώμοις προσάπτειν ἰθιλότων καὶ πόλεμον ἀκήρυκτον πολιορκούντων τοῖς ἱεροῖς.

and the latter the more frequent case. It was this: the Jews, completely imbued with the elements of Hellenic culture, endeavoured to find a mean betwixt these and the religion of their fathers, which they had no wish to renounce; and to this end availed themselves of the system most in vogue with those who busied themselves with religious matters in Alexandria, that of the Platonic philosophy, which had already become a mighty power over their own intellectual life. At the same time, they were very far from consciously entertaining the idea or wish to sacrifice the authority of their ancient religion, and of their sacred writings, to the authority of a human philosophy. On the contrary, they learned, from a comparison of the religious knowledge existing among their own people with that which might be found among the Egyptians and Greeks, to understand more clearly the distinguished character of their ancient religion, the divine agency manifested in the guidance of their people, and the destination of that people as bearing upon the whole human race; and their conviction that this was indeed the high destination of the Jews, could only be strengthened and confirmed by such a comparison. So says the individual whom we would choose to name as the representative of these Alexandrians, viz. Philo.<sup>1</sup> "That which is the portion only of a few disciples of a truly genuine philosophy, the knowledge of the Highest, has become the inheritance of the whole Jewish people by laws and customs." He calls the Jews priests and prophets for all mankind.<sup>2</sup> He was conscious of the relation to universal history lying at the ground of the particular in the history of his nation—saw how the Theocratic people, as such, had a mission to fulfil which regarded entire humanity. He describes them as a priestly people, whose calling it was to invoke the blessing of God on all mankind.<sup>3</sup> He says, with this reference, that the offering, presented for the whole people, was meant for the entire race of man.<sup>4</sup>

The spirit of Judaism enabled him to understand that religious

<sup>1</sup> De caritate f. 699, § 2: "Ὅτι ἐκ φιλοσοφίας τῆς δοκιμωτάτης περιγίνεται τοῖς ἐμιμηταῖς αὐτῆς, τοῦτο καὶ διὰ νόμων καὶ ἰθὺν Ἰουδαίους, ἐπιστήμη τοῦ ἀνωτάτου καὶ πρῶτου πάντων, τὸν ἐπὶ τοῖς γνηστοῖς θεοῖς πλάνον ἀπωσαμῖνοις."

<sup>2</sup> De Abrah. f. 364, § 19.

<sup>3</sup> De vita Mosis i. f. 625, § 27. "Ἐθνους, ὅτι ἐμελλεν εἶναι ἀπάντων τῶν ἄλλων ἐργασθαι, τὰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ἀεὶ ποιησόμενον εὐχόμενος."

<sup>4</sup> De victimis f. 238, at the end, § 3.

truth should be a public thing, the common property of all. Considering how easily a Jew at Alexandria might be tempted, under such inducements as were held out by the traffic in religious mysteries, to set up another description of mysteries in competition with those of the Grecks, it is the more worthy of remark, how decidedly Philo took his stand against every such tendency, greatly distinguishing himself, in this respect, from the heathen Platonists. It wellnigh seems as if he found cause to warn his fellow-believers themselves against the fascinations of mystery, by which they also could be attracted.<sup>1</sup> "All mysteries," says he, "all parade and trickery of that sort, Moses removed from the holy giving of the law; since he did not wish those that were trained under such a form of religious policy, to be exposed, by having their minds dazzled with mysterious things, to neglect the truth, and to follow after that which belongs to night and darkness, disregarding what is worthy of the light and of the day. Hence no one of those that know Moses, and count themselves among his disciples, should allow himself to be initiated into such mysteries, or initiate others; for both the learning and the teaching of such mysteries is no trifling sin. For why, ye initiated, if they are beautiful and useful things, do ye shut yourselves up in profound darkness, and confer the benefit on two or three alone, when you might confer it on all, were you willing to publish in the market-place what would be so salutary for every one, so that all might certainly participate of a better and happier life?" He points to the fact, that in the great and glorious works of nature, there is no mystery, all is open. He bears witness of the mere empty mechanism, into which the mysteries had then degenerated; men, he says, of the worst character, and crowds of abandoned women, were initiated for money.

These religious philosophers among the Alexandrian Jews, of whom we speak, can be rightly understood and judged of, only by taking into view their entire position,—the fundamental principle of their system, which had been formed out of contradictory elements,—as well as their relation to the two opposite parties, between which they were endeavouring to gain a reconciling mean. On the one hand, they held firmly to the religion of their fathers.

<sup>1</sup> De victimas offerentib. f. 856, § 12: Μηδεις μήτε τελίσθω τῶν Μαυσίας φοιτητῶν καὶ γνωρίμων μήτε τελείτω.



They were devoted to it with true reverence and love, and looked upon the records of it as a work of the Divine Spirit. Every thing in these records, and particularly in the Pentateuch, passed with them as, in one and the same sense, divine. From these, in their opinion, were to be drawn all stores of wisdom. On the other hand, their minds were pre-occupied by a philosophical culture at variance with these convictions. They were themselves unconscious of the conflicting elements that filled their minds, and must have felt constrained to seek after some artificial method of combining them into a harmonious whole. Thus would they be involuntarily driven to *imply* in the old records of religion, which for them possessed the highest authority, a sense foreign to these records themselves, supposing all the while, that they were thus really exalting their dignity as the source of all wisdom.

As to the parties between which they moved, and which they had particularly in mind in their interpretation of the sacred writings, they were two; standing related to the two several tendencies, in connection with which, also, the philosophy of religion according to Platonism, as already set forth by us, had gone on to shape itself among the Pagans;—a sceptical and a superstitious tendency. On the one side were philosophically educated Greeks, who used what they knew of the Old Testament Scriptures according to their different turns of thinking; either with trifling spirit, to ridicule it, or with more earnestness of intention, stepping forth as defenders of the interests of true piety, to charge it with unworthy representations of God.<sup>1</sup> And there were Jews themselves, who, under the influence of foreign culture, had broke

<sup>1</sup> Thus Philo, in his second book de plantatione Noae, § 17, defends the Old Testament against those who found something blasphemous in the expression where God is called an inheritance (κληρος) of men, as, for instance, with reference to the Levites: Καὶ νῦν εἰσὶ τινες τῶν ἐπιμορφάζοντων εὐσιβίαν, οἳ τὸ πρόχριστον τοῦ λόγου παρασυκοφαντοῦσι, φάσκοντες οὐθ' ὅσιον οὐτ' ἀσφαλὲς λέγειν ἀνθρώπου Θεὸν κληρον. We might suppose that this attack on the Old Testament proceeded from Jews, who, by the preponderant influence of their Greek education, had become alienated from the religion of their fathers, and inclined to a certain species of Deism that avoided anthropopathism. But the manner in which Philo expresses himself seems more accordant with the supposition that he had pagans in view; for if he were speaking of apostate Jews, his language would doubtless have been more excited and bitter, as it usually is in such cases. The allusion is to such pagan accusers of the Old Testament, as it seems to me, in a passage to be found only in the Armenian translation of quest. in Genes. l. iii. § 3, ed. Lips. opp. Philon. t. vii. p. 5.

loose from the religion of their fathers, and joined themselves with these opponents. On the other side were those no less arrogant than narrow-minded Pharisaical scribes, who would apprehend the things of God with fleshly sense, sought the highest wisdom in little verbal refinements, and by their grossly literal interpretations were led away into the most absurd and extravagant opinions<sup>1</sup>—men who, from their fundamental principle of adhering to the letter, and their low sensual views, came to form the rudest notions of God and divine things,—of God's shape, of his anger, of his arbitrary will,—and by such notions contributed most to bring Judaism into contempt with the educated Greeks.<sup>2</sup>

Now the object of those Jewish philosophers in religion, like that of the heathen Platonists, was by making the distinction between spirit and letter, idea and symbol, in the old records of religion, to strike out for themselves a direct middle course betwixt the above-mentioned extremes. There was this truth lying at the basis of their endeavours, that in those exhibitions of truth which belong to the religious province, matter and form are not so related to each other as in other writings; that here, where the form is something that cannot fully answer to the immeasurable greatness of the matter, the mind must read between the lines with its thoughts directed towards the divine, in order to a cognizance of the divine matter in its earthly vessel. This principle had, moreover, a special title to be employed in its application to the Old Testament, inasmuch as within the latter dwells a spirit enveloped under a form still more limited and more limiting than elsewhere, struggling towards a future revelation and development, whereby it was destined to be freed from this confinement. But as the consciousness of *this* spirit, first revealed by Christianity, was to them wanting, they might the more naturally, on this very account, allow themselves to be guided by a foreign spirit, in interpreting the religion of their fathers. It was a foreign principle, borrowed from the Platonic philosophy, from

<sup>1</sup> Philo (de somniis l. i. f. 580, § 17) describes them thus: *Τοὺς τῆς ῥητῆς πραγματείας σοφιστὰς καὶ λίαν τὰς ὀφρῦς ἀνισπακότας.*

<sup>2</sup> Thus Philo (de plantat. Noae l. ii. f. 219, § 8) directs his discourse against those who took every thing in a literal sense in the account of Paradise. He says of them: *Πολλὴ καὶ δυσθεράπειτος ἡ εὐθμία.* He says, those sensual notions of God led to the destruction of practical religion; *ἵπ' εὐσεβείας καὶ ὁσίτητος καθαιρίσει ἐκθεσμότητα ὄντα εὐρίματα.*

which they started in pursuit of the key to the spiritual understanding of the Old Testament. Instead of referring its contents to the end of practical religion, they were hunting everywhere after universal ideas, only hid under an allegorical cover,—such ideas as had been formed in their own minds from intercourse with the Platonic philosophy. To excite the receptive mind to explore these ideas, they represented as the highest aim of those writings.

One extreme opposed itself to the other. Over against that slavery to the letter which characterized a narrow sensual *Rabbinism*, stood a tendency to evaporate everything into *universals*. The necessary means of arriving at a knowledge of the spirit contained under the cover of the letter were despised. The over-leaping those mediating *momenta* of logical, grammatical, and historical interpretation, met its own penalty, in the manifold delusions which ensued. Wholly a stranger to the history, the manners, and the language of the ancient people, and despising the rules of grammatical and logical interpretation, a Philo found many difficulties in the Greek version of the so-called Seventy Interpreters, in which he was accustomed to read the Old Testament,—a version of the O. T. which was not only current at Alexandria, but of the highest authority, on account of the story of its miraculous origin. They were difficulties, however, which he might have easily solved by means of the helps above mentioned. He frequently overlooked here the simplest sense, which first offered itself, and instead of this, sought a more profound one, which was merely what had been put into the words by himself.<sup>1</sup> But in addition to this, that mistaken reverence for the sacred writings, that exaggerated view of the influence of the Holy Spirit, whereby the inspired writers were considered merely as passive organs, contributed no small share in compelling men who regarded everything as in one and the same sense divine, and wholly overlooked the medium of connection between the divine and the human, to find, at the position in which they had thus

<sup>1</sup> We have a remarkable example in the work *Quis rerum divinar. hæres*, f. 492, § 16, where, in the phrase *ἐζηγάγισεν αὐτὸν ἐζω*, he looks for some deeper meaning, in the apparently unnecessary repetition of the word *ἐζω*; and again, in the case where the repetition of the noun, according to the Hebrew usage, leads him to conceive of a two-fold subject, and furnishes him an occasion of introducing his idea of the *Logos*.

placed themselves, much that was difficult and revolting—much that they must labour to remove by an arbitrary spiritualization. Thus the one-sided *supernaturalistic* element of the Jewish position led directly to the opposite extreme of an arbitrary rationalism,<sup>1</sup>—an error which might have been avoided by that method of conciliatory mediation between the supernatural and the natural which was presented in our statement of the views of Plutarch.

Yet these Alexandrian Jews were well aware of the difference between the mythical religion of other nations and the historical religion of their own people. They did consider, it is true, the historical and literal sense as a veil for those universal ideas, the communication of which to the human mind was the highest aim of God's revelations; but still they insisted also, in the main, on the objective reality and truth of the history and of the letter, and ascribed to both their importance as a means of religious and moral training for such as could not soar to those heights of contemplation. Far was it from their thoughts to deny the reality of the supernatural in the history of their nation, and to allow it only an ideal significance. "He who will not believe the miraculous as miraculous," says Philo, in defending the Old Testament history, "proves by this, that he knows not God, and that he has never sought after Him; for otherwise he would have understood, by looking at that truly great and awe-inspiring sight, the miracle of the Universe, that these miracles (referring to the guidance of God's people) are but child's play for the divine power."<sup>2</sup> But the truly miraculous has become despised through familiarity. The unusual, on the contrary, although in itself insignificant, yet through our love of novelty, transports us with amazement."<sup>3</sup>

Still they found individual passages, the literal understanding of which presented insurmountable difficulties,—difficulties, it might be, for any rational apprehension whatever, or for their own

<sup>1</sup> "Einer rationalistisch-idealistischen Willkuhr."

<sup>2</sup> De vitâ Mosis l. ii. § 38: Εὐ δὲ τις τούτοις ἀπιστιῶ, θεὸν οὐτ' εἶδεν οὐτ' ἐξήτησε σάωσι. Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν εὐθίως, ὅτι τὰ παράδοξα δὴ ταῦτα καὶ παράλογα θεοῦ παύγια εἶσιν, ἀπιδὼν εἰς τὰ τῶ ὄντι μεγάλα καὶ σπουδῆς ἄξια, γίνισιν οὐρανοῦ. κ. τ. λ.

<sup>3</sup> Ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὄντα θαυμάσια, καταπιφρόνηται τῶ συνήθει. Τὰ δὲ μὴ ἐν ἴσθι, καὶ ἂν μικρὰ ᾖ, καταπληττόμεθα τῶ φιλοκαίνο.

minds, at the particular position assumed by *their philosophy of religion*. Such especially were those passages, in interpreting which, the Rabbins, who explained everything according to the letter, fell, no doubt, into absurd and fantastic representations; as, for instance, in the account of Paradise. Now here it was beyond the power of the Alexandrians, from their own position, to find a means of conciliation between the divine and human, answering to the necessities of reason; as, for example, in distinguishing between a fact lying at the bottom, and the purely symbolical character of a form of tradition. They were forced to push the opposition to the altogether literal mode of apprehension so far as to deny the reality of the literal and historical facts throughout, recognising only some ideal truth, some universal thought, that presented itself to them out of the train of speculations created by a fusion of the Platonic philosophy with religious ideas of Judaism.<sup>1</sup> But it was far from the intention of a Philo, in maintaining such views, to derogate from the authority of the sacred writings. On the contrary, as he referred every thing they contained to the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, so he recognised the wisdom of that spirit in permitting the writers actuated by Him, to represent many things in such a form as, literally understood, could give no tenable sense whatever; to the end that those who would otherwise be tempted to rest satisfied with the bare letter, and search no farther, might be excited to explore that ideal sense lying at the bottom;<sup>2</sup> to conduct to this, being in truth the highest aim of the divine revelations. Hence such stones of stumbling must be scattered here and there, as means of excitement for the spiritually blind.<sup>3</sup>

Thus there came to be a twofold position in respect to religion and the understanding of its records;—a faith clinging to the letter and to the history, and a contemplation soaring to the ideas veiled under the historical and the literal facts. The first was, as we see, in the main, common to both positions. Yet many individuals separated already into opposite parties, at the

<sup>1</sup> After pointing out the difficulty of understanding, in a literal sense, the account of the creation of the woman, in Genesis, Philo concludes thus: Τὸ ῥητὸν ἐπὶ τούτου μωδῶς ἴσσι. Legis. alleg. l. ii. § 7.

<sup>2</sup> Μόνον οὐκ ἰσαργῶς προτρέiptαν ἀφίστασθαι τοῦ ῥητοῦ. Quod deterior potiori insid. § 6.

<sup>3</sup> Τὰ σκάνδαλα τῆς γραφῆς, ἀφορμαὶ τοῖς τυφλοῖς τὴν διανοίαν.

point where the higher spiritual apprehension did not admit of being joined with an adherence to the reality of the literal and historical facts, but these latter must be wholly given up. This, however, was not the only difference between the two positions. The difference lying at the root, and which developed itself out of this root, could not fail to exert a more wide-reaching influence on the whole mode of apprehending religion. From this source sprang such opposite views as follow. By those who adhered invariably to the principle of a barely literal interpretation, whatever had been said after an anthropopathic manner, in condescension to the sensuous many, concerning God, concerning the wrath of God, concerning His vindictive justice, was taken literally. This apprehension of religion after human analogies is, for men at such a stage of culture, a necessity, and subserves their interest, so far as it deters them from sin by the fear of punishment. But those who occupy the higher spiritual position, recognise in all this only a *pedagogical* element, and purify the idea of God from all admixture of the human.<sup>1</sup> It was an opposition, then, between the apprehension of God as man, and the apprehension of God not as man.<sup>2</sup> By this separation of everything pertaining to man, the idea of God was evaporated to a somewhat wholly without attributes, wholly transcendental; and the Being (*ὄν*), goodness in itself, the Absolute of Platonism, was substituted for the Jehovah of the Old Testament. By soaring upward, beyond all creaturely existence, the mind disenfranchising itself from sense, attains to the intellectual intuition of this Absolute Being, concerning whom it can pronounce only that he is, waiving all other determinations, as not answering to the exalted nature of the Supreme Essence.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This twofold position is implied in the book *Quod Deus immutab.* § 11, where the writer distinguishes that which answers to the truth in itself, and that which had been merely so expressed. *Τοῦ νοθευῆσαι χάριν τοὺς ἰστέως μὴ δυναμένους σωφρονίζεσθαι, ὅσα παιδείας καὶ νοθεύσεως, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τῶ πιφυκίνας τοιοῦτον εἶναι, λείκεται.*

<sup>2</sup> This opposition between a positive apprehension of God as man, and a negative apprehension of God, to the exclusion of all human attributes, and every thing anthropopathic, occurs often in Philo's writings. The comparison of *Numb.* xxiii. 19, and *Deut.* i. 31, may be said to be classical with him on this subject. "Ἐν μὲν, ὅτι οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ Θεός, ἕτερον δὲ, ὅτι ὡς ἄνθρωπος. *Quod Deus immutab.* § 11. Comp. also the Armenian translation of the tract, *Quæst. in Genes.* l. i. § 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Οὐδεμίᾳ τῶν γεγονότων ἰδέᾳ παραβάλλουσι τὸ ὄν, ἀλλ' ἐκβεβάντες αὐτὸ πάσης ποιότητος ψιλὴν ἄνευ χαρακτῆρος τὴν ὑπαρξίν καταλαμβάνεσθαι, τὴν κατὰ τὸ εἶναι φαντασίαν μόνην ἐνεδείξαντο, μὴ μορφώσαντες αὐτό.* *Quod Deus immutab.* § 11.

In accordance with this opposition of views is the distinction which Philo makes between those who are, in the proper sense, sons of God, having elevated themselves, by means of contemplation, to the highest Being, or attained to the knowledge of him in his *immediate self-manifestation*,<sup>1</sup> and those who have come to the knowledge of God only as he declares  $\gamma$  himself in his works, in creation, in the revelation, still enveloped in the letter, of Holy Writ;—those who attach themselves only to the Logos; consider *this* as the Supreme God himself;—rather sons of the Logos than of the true Being ( $\delta\upsilon\nu$ .) The former, moreover, need no other motives to a moral life than love to the Supreme Being for his own sake;—the principle of disinterested love of God. The others, who find themselves at that lower position, where God is known only after the analogy of man, must be trained to virtue by the hope of reward and the fear of punishment. Philo himself remarks, that answering to the two principles in religion according to which God is represented in the one case as man, and in the other, not as man, are the two principles of fear and of love in religion.<sup>3</sup> Those that have attained to the last-mentioned stage are to him the men of *pure intellect* or *pure spirit*, who have freed themselves from the dominion of sense.

Thus, to the sensuous *anthropo-morphism* and *anthropop-athism*, which characterized the grosser mode of apprehension among the Alexandrian Jews, Philo opposed a one-sided *spiritualism*, whereby the idea of God was emptied of all determinate contents,—the *real* side of the Old Testament Theism, the objective truth, and reality at bottom in the Old Testament notions of God's holiness, of his wrath, and of his vindictive justice, were totally misapprehended,—whereby all such ideas of God were ex-

<sup>1</sup> To this knowledge of God in his self-manifestation, Philo refers in the following passage: Μη εμφανισθείς μοι δι' οὐρανοῦ ἢ γῆς ἢ ὕδατος ἢ αἵρος ἢ τινος ἀπλῶς τῶν ἐν γενέσει, μηδὲ κατοπτρισαίμην ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ τῆν σὴν ἰδέαν ἢ ἐν σοὶ τῷ Θεῷ, etc. Vid. Leg. allegor. l. iii. § 33. And where he says, that as light can be seen only by means of light, so God, only by his own self-manifestation. Συνόλωσ τὸ φῶσ ἀρ' οὐ φωτὶ βλέπεται; τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἑαυτοῦ φέγγος ὦν δι' αὐτοῦ μόνου θεωρεῖται. De præm. et poen. § 7.

<sup>2</sup> The opposition between ὄν and λόγος, εἶναι and λέγεσθαι.

<sup>3</sup> Παρ' ὃ μοι δοκεῖ τοῖς προειρημένοις δυσὶ κεφαλαίοις τῷ τι "ὡς ἄνθρωπος καὶ τῷ οὐχ' ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ Θεός" ἕτερα δύο συνυφῆναι ἀκόλουθα καὶ συγγενῆ, φόβον τι καὶ ἀγάπην τοῖς Θεοπειπῶσιν αὐτὸ δι' αὐτὸ μόνον τὸ ὄν τιμῶσι τὸ ἀγαπᾶν οἰκτιροῦναι, φοβῆσθαι δὲ ἰτίρειν. Quod Deus immutab. § 14.

plained away,—a spiritualism far better suited to the Brahminic or the Buddhist system, than to the proper religion of the Old Testament. We have here, then, already, the appearance of a *mystical Rationalism*, placed in connection with the Jewish *Supranaturalism*;—a prototype of tendencies which, at still later periods, more frequently recur, where the simplicity of revealed religion becomes overcharged with human inventions. The same individual who, as we have seen, protested so strongly against the Grecian mysteries, introduced into Judaism that aristocratic distinction of the ancient world, between an *esoteric* and an *exoteric* religion; and with it, after the example of Platonism, the justification of falsehood, as a necessary means for training the uninitiated many.<sup>1</sup>

Now it is indeed true, that this mystic *Rationalism*, pushed to its extreme consequences, leads to the principle that positive religion is to be regarded simply as a means for training the many; a means which the wise can afford to dispense with, and which for them has no longer any significancy. And this mode of thinking, moreover, was actually carried, by many of the Alexandrian Jews, to an extreme where it must have finally resulted in the denial of the supra-naturalist principle itself. These Jews left off the observance of the ceremonial law, thus drawing upon themselves the charge of heresy from the more religious class, and may, doubtless, have brought the entire Alexandrian theology into bad repute.<sup>2</sup> “The observance of the outward forms of worship,” said they, “belongs to the many. We, who know that the whole is but a symbolical veil of spiritual truth, have enough in the idea, and need not concern ourselves with external forms.” But with the habit of thinking peculiar to Philo and his class, and which has been explained above, such an extreme, to which his own avowed principles led, did not fall in. He says of those more decided and

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Quod Deus immutab. § 14, and de Cherubim, § 5, in both which passages the well-known words of Plato in the Republic, relating to falsehoods that may be justified in certain cases, where they can be used for the benefit of simple persons or the sick. Vid. l. ii. p. 257, l. iii. p. 266, vol. vi. ed. Bipont. These remarks of Plato, which were grounded, indeed, in the whole aristocratic spirit of the ancient world, exerted, through various intermediate channels, a great influence on the moral sense of men in the first centuries after Christ, and even modified a part of Christian education.

<sup>2</sup> Philo de migrat. Abraami, § 16: Εἰσὶ τινες, οἱ τοὺς ῥητοῦς νόμους σύμβολα νεητῶν πραγμάτων ὑπολαμβάνοντες, τὰ μὲν ἠπέλιψαν, τῶν δὲ ῥαθύμως ὀλιγόρησαν.



consistent Idealists, "as if they lived for themselves alone in a desert, or as if they were souls without bodies, and knew not anything of human society, they despise the faith of the many, and are willing to inquire only after pure truth, as it is in itself; when the Word of God should have taught them to strive after a good name with the people, and to violate none of the reigning customs, which divine men, who were superior to us, have founded. As we must take care of the body, because it is the soul's mansion, so are we bound to be solicitous for the observance of the letter of the law. When we observe this, *that* also will become clearer, of which the letter is a symbol; and we shall escape thereby the censures and upbraidings of the multitude."<sup>1</sup>

In Egypt, the native land, in after times, of the anchorite and monastic life, this contemplative bent of the religious mind, which we have described thus far, led to results somewhat analogous to that later phenomenon. With a view of devoting themselves wholly to the contemplation of divine things, many withdrew from the world and retired into solitude. Philo was one of these;—but he was forced to learn, from his own experience, that the man carries his inward enemy into solitude with him,—that he cannot flee from himself and the world within his own breast. He gives us himself the result of his experience.<sup>2</sup> "Often I left kindred, friends, and country, and retired into the wilderness, that I might raise my thoughts to worthy contemplations: but I accomplished nothing so;—my thoughts, either scattered abroad, or, wounded by some impure impression, fell into the opposite current. But sometimes I find myself alone with my soul, in the midst of thousands, when God dispels the tumult from my breast; and so He teaches me that it is not change of place that brings evil or good; but all depends on *that* God who steers the ship of the soul in the direction he pleases." Already among the Alexandrian Jews arose the opposition between a contemplative and a practical direction of the religious life, of which Philo testifies,—the opposition between efforts directed solely towards the human, and those directed solely to the divine<sup>3</sup>—the Therapeutic life, devoted en-

<sup>1</sup> De migrat. Abraami, f. 402.

<sup>2</sup> Leg. allegor. l. ii. § 21.

<sup>3</sup> As Philo describes it. Of the latter tendency he says: "Λκρατον ἰμφορησάμενοι τὸν εὐσεβείας πόθον πολλὰ χαιρὸν φράσαντες ταῖς ἄλλαις πραγματείαις ὄλον ἀνί-

tirely to God and the moral life, devoted entirely to exhibitions of love for man. Already was the same spectacle witnessed, which, at later periods, became a common occurrence in the large cities. The opposition of the worldly to the contemplative ascetic propensity became the occasion of divisions in the domestic circle. Philo observes that he knew many a father, given to luxurious living, to be abashed by the abstemious, philosophic life of a son, and for that reason to retire from all intercourse with him.<sup>1</sup>

As Philo was anxious to find a just middle course between that class who were entangled in the letter, and the *Spiritualists* in religion, so again, he sought after some method of conciliation between the two last-mentioned tendencies, the practical and the contemplative, the anthropological and the theological. He held a combination of them both to be the more perfect way, and looked upon each, by itself and separated from the other, as but half the whole.<sup>2</sup> The discipline of the practical life seemed to him the first step of purification and preparation necessary for entering the entirely contemplative life. Already he felt himself called upon to protest against the exaggerated estimate put on the ascetic life. "When you see one," says he, "who never takes his food or his drink at the proper time, or who disdains the bath and the unction, or who neglects the clothing of his body, or torments himself with a hard couch and night-watchings, deceiving himself with this show of abstemiousness, inform him of the true way to continence, for the course he has chosen is labour to no purpose. By hunger, and the other kinds of self-torture, he is destroying both body and soul."<sup>3</sup> He speaks of people who, without being ripe for such a step, rushed suddenly on a strictly Therapeutic life, the renunciations of which they were too weak to endure, and hence were soon forced to abandon it.<sup>4</sup> And he

θεσαν τὸν οἰκεῖον βίον Θεραπεία Θεοῦ. Οἱ δὲ οὐδὲν ἕξω τῶν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους δικαίων ὑποτοπήσαντες εἶναι μόνην τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ὁμιλίαν ἠσπάσαντο, τῶν τε ἀγαθῶν τὴν χρῆσιν ἐξ Ἰσοῦ πᾶσι παρέχοντες διὰ κοινωνίας ἴμερον καὶ τὰ δεινὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ἐπικουφίζειν ἀξιοῦντες. The φιλόθεοι and the φιλόανθρωποι. De decalogo, § 22.

<sup>1</sup> Ἦδη δὲ καὶ πατέρας εἶδα διὰ τὸ ἄβροδίατον, αὐστηρὸν καὶ φιλόσοφον βίον παιδῶν ἐκτραπομίνους καὶ δι' αἰδῶ τὸν ἄγρον πρὸ τῆς πόλεως οἰκεῖν ἰλομένους. De profugis, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ἡμιτελεῖς τὴν ἀρετὴν, ὀλόκληροι οἱ παρ' ἀμφοτέροις εὐδοκιμοῦντες. De decalogo, § 22.

<sup>3</sup> The tract Quod deterior potiori insid. § 7.

<sup>4</sup> Such as went ἐπ' αὐλάς τῆς Θεραπείας and θᾶπτον ἢ προσελθεῖν ἀπειπήδισαν, τὴν

must rebuke also the secret wickedness covered up under the outside show of a rigid asceticism.<sup>1</sup> "Truth," says he, "may rightly complain of those who, without any previous trial of themselves, leave the occupations and trades of social life, and say they have renounced its honours and its pleasures. They wear contempt for the world as an outside show, but do not really condemn it. That slovenly, austere look, that abstemious and miserable life, they use as baits; as if they were friends to strict morals and the government of self. But closer observers, who penetrate within, and are not to be led wrong by outward appearances, cannot be imposed upon thus." Philo would have those persons only who had been tried in the active duties of social life, pass over to the contemplative; as the Levites were permitted to rest from the active service of the temple only after having passed their fiftieth year. *Human* virtue should go first,—the *divine* follow after.<sup>2</sup>

This ascetic, contemplative propensity, which we observed in the bud among the Alexandrian Jews, gave birth to a spiritual society, composed of men and unmarried women, which sprung up in the neighbourhood of Alexandria; a society, whose name simply—the *Therapeutæ*<sup>3</sup>—denotes the striving after a life abstracted from worldly things and consecrated to the contemplation of God. Their principal seat was in a quiet and pleasant district on the border of lake Mœris, not far from Alexandria. Here they lived, like the later anchorites, shut up singly in their cells,<sup>4</sup> their only employment being prayer, and the contemplation of divine things. The basis of their contemplation was an allegoric interpretation of Scripture, and they had old theosophic writings, which served to guide them in their more profound investigations of Scripture, according to the principles of the Alexandrian Hermeneutics. Bread and water constituted their only diet, and they practised frequent fasting. They ate nothing until evening; for, through contempt of the body, they were ashamed, so long as sun-

αὐστηρὴν διαίταν αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν ἄϋπνον ἀρεσκίαν καὶ τὸν συνεχῆ καὶ ἀκάματον πόνον οὐκ ἐπιγόντες. De profugis, § 7.

<sup>1</sup> L. c. § 6.

<sup>2</sup> Γνωρίσθητε οὖν πρότερον τῇ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἀρετῇ, ἵνα καὶ τῇ πρὸς θεὸν συσταθῆτε. De profugis, f. 455, § 6.

<sup>3</sup> Θεραπειταὶ καὶ Θεραπειτριδῆς.

<sup>4</sup> Σιμωνίαι, μοναστήρια.

light was visible, to take sensible nourishment, to acknowledge this dependence on the world of sense. Many of them fasted for three or even six days in succession. Every Sabbath they came together; and as the number seven was particularly sacred with them, they held a still more solemn convocation once in every seven weeks. They celebrated, on this occasion, a simple love-feast, consisting of bread seasoned with salt and hyssop; mystic discourses were delivered, hymns which had been handed down from old tradition were sung, and, amidst choral music, dances of mystic import were kept up late into the night. The passage of their fathers through the Red Sea, on their departure from Egypt, is supposed to have been symbolically represented by the exhibition of these choirs and dances. As they were used to give to all historical facts a higher sense, bearing upon the life of the spirit, it is not improbable that they had something of the like nature in view in this celebration. Perhaps they considered the departure from Egypt as a symbol of the deliverance of the spirit from the bondage of sense, of its elevation from sensible things to the divine.<sup>1</sup>

Many features of relationship between the sect of the Therapeutæ and that of the Essenes, might seem to render probable the derivation of the one from the other; and this is the prevailing opinion in modern times. It might be fancied also that the same signification was to be recognised in the names of both these communities; for if we follow the derivation which Philo himself favours in a passage of the book concerning the Therapeutic mode of life,—and the name of this sect, according to *one* sense of the radical Greek word, signifies a physician, and the Essenes<sup>2</sup> so denominated themselves, as physicians of the soul and of the body,—it would be evident that the one is but a translation of the other. But this explanation of the name of the Therapeutæ can hardly be considered the right one. On the contrary, it suits much better with the peculiar spiritual bent of the Therapeutæ, and with the theological language of the Alexandrians, if we suppose they applied this name to themselves, as the genuine spiri-

<sup>1</sup> See Philo de sacrif. Abel et Caini, § 17 : Διάλειψις ἐπι θείον του γεννητου και φθαρτου το πάσχα εἶρηται.

<sup>2</sup> After the Chaldee רופא, *physician*.

tual worshippers of God, the Contemplatists.<sup>1</sup> The features of resemblance between these societies, as well in the form of their association as in the circumstance of their repudiating slavery, as a thing contrary to nature, are yet by no means such as to warrant the theory of an outward connection. Analogous tendencies of the Jewish mind in Palestine, and of the Jewish-Alexandrian mind in Egypt, might have easily produced two such mystic fraternities, independently of one another, with a form adapted to the different countries. The Essenes owed their origin, as we have seen, to the existence of a practical mysticism, which is ever wont to be called forth by such party oppositions as were there manifested; and the society of the Therapeutæ appears to us as a natural efflux of the peculiar religious tendency which had developed itself among the Alexandrian Jews.

Neither the Essenes nor the Therapeutæ ought to be regarded as isolated phenomena, confined exclusively to certain countries. There were in this case more general tendencies, which belonged to the signs of the times, at work beneath the surface; and the influence of such tendencies was at that time more widely spread than in Palestine and Egypt. In manifold forms of appearance, which the history of Jewish-Christian sects, in the first centuries after Christ, leads us to recognise or to presuppose, this influence is distinctly visible.<sup>2</sup>

Having thus given an outline of the different main directions of the religious and theological mind among the Jews, we would now consider more particularly the relation of the same to Christianity. Looking at the great mass of the Jewish people, we find that the predominance of the worldly spirit, which would apprehend the divine under notions of sense, the rage for the wonderful described by St Paul, confidence in the inalienable rights of their theocratic descent according to the flesh and in the outward show of legal righteousness, constituted the chief obstacles to the

<sup>1</sup> Philo often uses the following expressions as synonymous: *γίνος Θεραπευτικόν, γίνος Ικετικόν, γίνος ὀρατικόν, ὁ Ἰσραήλ = ἀνὴρ ὁρῶν τὸν Θεόν.* De victimas offerentib. f. 854. *ἰκίται καὶ Θεραπειταὶ τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος.* De monarchia, f. 816. *ἀνδρὸς ἰκίτου καὶ φιλοθείου Θεὸν μόνον Θεραπειῖν ἀξιοῦντος.* De decalogo, f. 760. *οἱ πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσαντες ταῖς ἄλλαις πραγματείαις, ὅλον ἀνέβισαν τὸν οἰκίον βίον Θεραπεία Θεοῦ.* L. iii. de vita Mosis, f. 681. *τὸ Θεραπευτικὸν αὐτοῦ (τοῦ Θεοῦ) γίνος.*

<sup>2</sup> The language of Philo himself intimates this, when he says of the Therapeutæ: *Πολλαχοῦ μὲν οὖν τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ γίνος. Ἔδει γὰρ ἀγαθοῦ τελείου μετασχίῖν καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὴν Βάρβαρον.* De vita contemplativa, § 3.

reception of the Gospel. Whenever men, in this position of mind, were led, under the impulse of momentary impressions, to embrace Christianity, it might easily happen, that because they saw their earthly expectations were not fulfilled, and they had always remained Jews in their mode of thinking, they would soon renounce again, in the same outward way, that to which properly they had always remained strangers. Or if they continued to be Christians outwardly, they were never penetrated with the spirit of the Gospel. Christianity itself they apprehended only after a fleshly manner, mixing it up with all their Jewish delusions; and the faith in one God, as well as in Jesus as the Messiah, they converted into an *opus operatum*, wholly without influence on the inner life. They were such men as Justin Martyr describes,<sup>1</sup> who deceived themselves with the notion, that although they were sinners, if they did but have the knowledge of God,<sup>2</sup> the Lord would not charge sin to their account; such falsifiers of the Gospel as the Apostle Paul often rebukes; such nominal Christians as James writes against. But as the Pagans, on the other hand, could not be under the same temptation to hold a merely preparatory position as the end itself, as Christianity must have presented itself to them as in direct opposition to what they were before, hence it was the case, as Justin Martyr affirms, that converts, in greater numbers, and of more genuine character, proceeded from the body of the Pagans, than from the great mass of the Jews.<sup>3</sup> Yet in every case, where the feeling of the higher necessities of man's nature, the recipiency for the divine element, made its appearance, although it might be enveloped under some still predominating element of sense, Christianity could find an entrance through all such obstacles. The expectation of the Messiah, although clouded by a strong colouring of sense, could prepare the way for it to such hearts, and they would then go on to

<sup>1</sup> In the dialogue, c. Tryph. f. 370. The words of Justin Martyr directed against such Jews, arguing that there can be no forgiveness of sin without repentance: 'Αλλ' οὐχ ὡς ὑμῖς ἀπατάτε ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς ὅμοιοι ὑμῖν κατὰ τοῦτο, οἱ λίγουσιν, ὅτι καὶ ἄμαρτωλοὶ εἴσι, θιὸν δὲ γινώσκουσιν, οὐ μὴ λογίσηται αὐτοῖς κύριος ἁμαρτίαν.

<sup>2</sup> Such vain and empty knowledge of God as that which St John is contending against in his first epistle.

<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr, Apolog. l. ii. f. 88. Πλείονάς τε καὶ ἀληθέστους τοὺς ἐξ ἰθῶν τῶν ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων καὶ Σαμαρείων χριστιανούς, ἀληθέστριοι οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν ἰθῶν καὶ πιστότεροι.

become continually more spiritual in their views, through the power of Christian faith.

As to the particular systems of Jewish theology which have passed under our review, it may be observed, first, of the cold, egoistic Sadduceeism, which suffered no aspiration after things beyond the limits of an earthly existence to emerge, that it presented no point of union whatever for the Gospel. At least, even in that case where the Gospel found, as it did everywhere, a medium of entrance in the simply human element at bottom, which could not be wholly suppressed, the conversion of the Sadducees was not one for which the way had been prepared by the previous mode of thinking: and for the very reason that the previously existing habit of thought formed here no transition-point, and no medium of union between the two, it is impossible to conceive of any intermingling of Sadduceeism with Christianity. Where it has been attempted to find the traces of such a mixture, in the case of some deniers of the doctrine of the resurrection in the apostolic age, this has been done without any sufficient grounds,—as the fact may be traced to altogether different causes.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the Pharisees, spiritual pride, self-righteousness, the narrowness and arrogance of a dead Scripture-learning, and the absence of what our Saviour terms poverty of spirit, were in general the hindrances to faith. We must be careful, however, to distinguish among the Pharisees the *two* classes, which have been already pointed out. To those who, from the legal position, were striving with a certain honest earnestness after righteousness, the law might, without doubt, serve in the end as a school-master to bring them to Christ. Through that painful struggle described by Paul, from his own experience, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, they might obtain peace in believing. But those Pharisees who came to Christianity without passing through any such crisis of the inner life, might be liable to the temptation of blending their previous Pharisaical mode of thinking with the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah,—who for them, however, was not, in any true sense, the Saviour,—and of wishing, at the same time, to hold fast by their righteousness of works.

<sup>1</sup> See my History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles.

In Christianity there was also present an element of mysticism. And on this side it might particularly attract that description of religious mind which was exhibited in the societies of the Essenes and Therapeutæ. But the mystic element, carried to an undue extreme, which suppressed every thing else that belongs to the purely human in our nature, might mislead men to shut themselves up within a little contracted circle of feeling and intuitions, and to bar themselves against every other influence which might strive to reach them. To meet Christianity with that poverty of spirit which it requires, must often have been the hardest task, also, for *such* men, if they must start from the position of their imagined spiritual perfection. And even if, attracted by the mystic element in Christianity, they surrendered to its power, yet they could not have appropriated to themselves that poverty of spirit, in any such measure as to be able to receive Christianity into their hearts in its unstinted entirety. Easily might such persons be tempted to carry over with them their supercilious theosophy and asceticism, insomuch that the divine foolishness of the Gospel must forfeit its true character; and this was the source whence sprung many sects, corrupting in their influence on Christianity, the germs of which we find already in the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians, and in his pastoral letters.

As to the Alexandrian theology, there were in it, as we have seen, two elements,—a *mystico-rationalist* element, sprung from the influence of the Platonic philosophy on the Jewish theism; and a *supra-naturalist* element, derived from the Jewish national spirit and education. These were blended together, or they might be said rather to subsist one beside the other, than to be united by any sort of organic interpenetration. Unless a new and higher power had come in to influence this process of development, one of two things must, doubtless, have been the final result; either the *supra-naturalist* element would have been overpowered and crushed by the *mystico-rationalist*, or the latter of these by the former. And if the last had been the case, the Alexandrian theology might then have paved the way for a certain mystic religion of reason, which had used historical Judaism simply as a symbolical drapery. Whoever, now, is unable to perceive the significance of faith in a God above nature—the significance of Christianity as a religion proceeding out of supernatural facts in history,



—to him this greatest among all the great phenomena in the history of the world, whereby the faith in a positive religion was once more introduced with such overwhelming power among men, must appear like the stumbling upon a monstrous retrograde step, by means of which the race was placed ages back from the goal which it had been already on the very point of reaching. Considered from such a point of view, it could not but be regretted, that instead of a primal type of humanity—that ethereal idea of Alexandrian theology—the Son of Man must appear in flesh and blood; instead of an ideal word, the Word that became flesh must dwell among us. Yet the scanty thoughts that are constantly recurring under manifold shapes in the writings of Philo, the representative of that tendency, witness of its poverty, and shew that, without the infusion of a new creative spirit of life, it must have led of itself to its own dissolution.

Those two elements, combined together in the Alexandrian theology, might operate in different ways,—either to secure a point of union for Christianity, or to call forth an opposition to it.

The preponderance of Grecian culture and of the idealist element operated in the case of these Alexandrian Jews, as doubtless, also, of others over whom the Grecian culture generally had acquired great influence,—as, for instance, of a Josephus—very much to repress the expectation of a *personal Messiah*. With this expectation vanished the most important point of agreement and possible union between their system and Christianity; but with it vanished also that stone of stumbling which the preaching of the cross must have proved to such as gave an earthly shaping to that idea of the Messiah. But yet we cannot suppose that the Alexandrian theology could have stripped away all those expectations, which were so deeply rooted in the religious spirit of the Jewish people, and so closely interwoven with the national sympathies and the national pride itself. Even Philo expresses the conviction that the Mosaic law, the temple, and the temple-service, are designed for perpetuity.<sup>1</sup> Regarding the calamities of

<sup>1</sup> Vid. de vita Mosis, l. ii. § 3, concerning the Mosaic laws. Τὰ δὲ τούτου μόνου βίβλαια, ἀσάλευτα μίνει πανγίως ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἐργάθη μέχρι νῦν καὶ πρὸς ἔπιτα πάντα διαμίνειν ἐλπὶς αὐτὰ αἰῶνα ὡσπερ ἀθάνατα, ἕως ἂν ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη καὶ ὁ σύμπας οὐρανός τε καὶ κόσμος ᾗ. And concerning the revenues of the temple at Jerusalem, he says, that they will endure as long as this human race and the world. 'Εφ' ὅσον τὸ ἀνθρώ-

the Jews as a righteous punishment, he cherished the hope, that when they should one day become converted, they would be gathered from all the nations among which they were scattered or in captivity, by some extraordinary appearance from heaven, and led back to Jerusalem. Their piety, inspiring reverence and awe, would repress the attacks of their enemies, or secure the victory on their side. Then would a golden age begin from Jerusalem. Every thing would be again restored to that primeval state from which mankind had become estranged by their fall from the heavenly image. All nature would then become once more subject to man, and no hostile power remain behind to annoy him.<sup>1</sup> We see here what peculiar shaping the common Jewish notions of the Messiah's time and the attendant phenomena had taken, in the spiritualizing schools of the Alexandrians.

Thus was Christianity met in the present case also, not indeed by the craving after a personal Messiah, but yet by a desire for the universal re-establishment of the Theocracy—for a glorious state of the world. It is possible that, with the doctrine concerning the opposition between the idea and its manifestation; with the recognition of a defect,<sup>2</sup> inherent in everything that appears in the world of sense; with the excited aspiration after a godlike life, raised above all sensual alloy, might be aroused the sense of a need of redemption—the idea of it, and faith in its actual realization. Thus many of the peculiar ideas belonging to the Alexandrian philosophy of religion, as, for instance, the idea of a mediating divine Word, through whom the world is connected

παν γίνος διαμεινῆ, ἀεὶ καὶ αἱ πρόσδοι τοῦ ἱεροῦ φυλαχθήσονται συνδιαιωνίζουσαι παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ. De monarch. l. ii. § 3. So far was he from thinking that the temple would ever be destroyed, or the worship of God could cease to be connected with it.

<sup>1</sup> See Philo's tract, de execrationib. § 9: Οἱ πρὸ μικροῦ σποράδες ἐν Ἑλλάδι καὶ Βαρεβάρῃ, κατὰ νήσους καὶ κατὰ ἡπείρους ἀναστάντες ὄρη μὴ μῆ πρὸς ἕνα συντίουσι ἀλλαχόθεν ἄλλοι τὸν ἀποδειχθέντα χώρον ξιναγόμενοι πρὸς τινος Θεοτίρας ἢ κατὰ φύσιν ἀνθρωπίνην ὄψειν ἀδήλου μὲν ἑτέροις, μόνοις δὲ τοῖς ἀνασωζομένοις ἐμφανῶς. Comp. de præm. et pœnis, § 19. Concerning the reconciliation of nature with reformed man, where he had certain passages of the prophets before his mind, consult de præm. et pœnis, § 15.

<sup>2</sup> "If God willed to judge the human race without mercy, He could only condemn them, since no man remains free from fault from his birth to his death." Quod Deus immutab. § 16. The συγγενεῖς παντὶ γεννητῷ κῆρις.—Παντὶ γεννητῷ καὶ ἂν σπουδαῖον ἦ, παρ' ὅσον ἦλθεν εἰς γένεσιν, συμφυεῖς τὸ ἀμαρτάνον. Hence the necessity of sin-offerings. De vita Mosis, l. iii. § 17.

with God; of his high-priestly office in relation to the phenomenal world; of the first heavenly man; of a godlike life,<sup>1</sup> might, by conducting to Christianity, become converted from a mere ideal element into a real one. Christianity might present itself to men of this Alexandrian school, as a Gnosis, which now for the first time taught a right understanding of the spirit of the Old Testament. The epistle ascribed to Barnabas contains examples of such points of transition, through which men of Alexandrian culture might be led over to Christianity.

But it is possible, too, that the *mystico-rationalist* element in the system of the Alexandrian Jews, which, in its self-sufficiency, would not admit the want of any new revelations, as well as the Jewish, which held fast to the traditional religious forms as of eternal validity, might oppose itself to Christianity. And both these tendencies combining together, might lead to peculiar corruptions of it; on the one side, by introducing an *idealistic* element, resolving everything else into itself, and the distinction between esoteric and exoteric religious doctrine; on the other, by making of it merely a spiritualized Judaism. We shall come across these influences again in the history of sects.

Individual ideas of the Alexandrian theology found their way also into those regions where the writings and studies of these men had not been introduced. They were connected with a doctrine concerning spirits formed out of Jewish Oriental elements. There was a longing to lift the veil which covers the world of spirits, to have fellowship with it. Men busied themselves with legends and fictions respecting apparitions of the highest intelligences under the envelope of a human body.<sup>2</sup> It was such a vague foreboding tendency of mind, impatient of the limits of this earthly existence, and aspiring after communications from the unseen world, that preceded and accompanied the highest revelation.

Among the remarkable coincidences which prepared the way

<sup>1</sup> Ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἢ πρὸς τὸ ὄν καταφυγή. De profugis, § 15. Ζωὴ αἰδίου, § 18. Δύναμις ἀληθινῆς ζωῆς. Legis allegor. i. § 12. But such language might easily proceed from the same common source of the mind, and it is only the most narrow understanding that can suppose, that in every case where it occurs, it must have been derived from Philo, or at least from this Alexandrian theology.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Magus, for instance, who appropriated to himself ideas of this sort that were floating about in the East. See also the fragment of the apocryphal writing, Περὶ τῆς Ἰωσήφ, in Orig. in Joann. T. ii. § 25.

for the appearance of Christianity, must be reckoned the dispersion of the Jews among Greeks and Romans. Those of them who were Pharisaically disposed, took great pains to make proselytes. The wavering authority of the old national religions, the unsatisfied religious necessities of so many, came in to aid them. Reverence for that powerful being, the God of the Jewish people; for the hidden sanctities of the magnificent temple of Jerusalem, had long since found its way among pagans. Jewish magicians (Goetæ) ventured on many deceptive tricks, in the employment of which they were extremely skilful, to produce surprise and bewilderment. Hence the inclination to Judaism, particularly in several of the large capital towns, had become so widely extended, that, as it is well known, the Roman authors, in the time of the first emperors, often make it a subject of complaint; and Seneca, in his tract concerning superstition, could say of the Jews, "the conquered have given laws to the conquerors."<sup>1</sup> The Jewish proselyte-makers, blind teachers of the blind, having no conception of the essential character of the religion themselves, could impart none to others. Substituting a dead *particularistic* monotheism in the place of polytheism, they led those who chose them as guides, often merely to exchange one superstition for another; and so furnished them with new means for hushing the accusations of their conscience—whence our Saviour's rebuke, directed against this class of men, that they made their proselytes twofold more the children of hell than themselves. But here, however, we must distinguish with precision the two classes of proselytes: the proselytes in the strict sense of the word, the proselytes of justice, who took upon them circumcision and the whole ceremonial law; and the proselytes in the wider sense, the proselytes of the gate, who simply pledged themselves to the renunciation of idolatry, to the worship of God, to abstain from the pagan excesses, and from everything that seemed to stand connected with idolatry.<sup>2</sup> The former class usually became slaves to all Jewish superstition and fanaticism, and allowed themselves to be led blindfold by their Jewish teachers. The more difficult they had found it to bow themselves to a yoke which must have proved so burdensome to the national habits of a Greek or

<sup>1</sup> Victoribus victi leges dederunt.

<sup>2</sup> The so called seven precepts of Noah.

a Roman, the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law, the less could they be made conscious that all this should have been to no purpose, that they enjoyed thereby no advantage over others, that they should renounce this imagined righteousness. Hence such proselytes were often the fiercest persecutors of Christianity, and suffered themselves to become tools of the Jews, in exciting the pagans against the Christians. It is to this class, the language of Justin Martyr to the Jews should be applied.<sup>1</sup> “The proselytes do not simply not believe, but they blaspheme the name of Christ twofold more than yourselves,—and they would murder and torture us, who do believe on him; for they strive in every respect to become like you.” Those proselytes of the gate, on the other hand, had adopted from the Jewish system the principles of theism, without becoming wholly Jews. They had obtained some knowledge of the sacred writings of the Jews, and had heard of the great Teacher and King who was to come,—the Messiah. In what they had read in that Greek translation of the Old Testament, which to a reader not a Jew was often wholly unintelligible, or in what they had heard from Jewish teachers, there was much that still remained dark to them,—they were in the condition of inquirers. By means of the ideas they had acquired from the Jews, concerning the unity of God, the divine government of the world, the divine judgment concerning the Messiah, they were better prepared for the gospel than other pagans;—and because they believed themselves already to *have* less; because they had as yet no perfected system of religion, and were eager for new instruction in divine things—because they had no sympathy with Jewish prejudices—for all these reasons, the Gospel could find its way more easily to them than to the native Jews. From the beginning, their attention must have been drawn to a doctrine which engaged, without making them Jews, to secure for them a full participation in the fulfilment of all those promises of which the Jews had told them. Hence it was to these proselytes of the gate (the φοβούμενοι τὸν Θεόν, εὐσεβεῖς, of the New Testament), that the preaching of the Gospel was

<sup>1</sup> His words are as follow (Dialog. c. Tryph. f. 350): Οἱ δὲ προσήλυτοι οὐ μόνον οὐ πιστεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ διπλότῃρον ὑμῶν βλασφημοῦσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡμᾶς τοὺς εἰς ἑκείνον πιστεύοντας καὶ φονεύειν καὶ αἰκίζειν βούλονται, κατὰ πάντα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἕξομοιοῦσθαι σπεινῶσιν.

usually directed, according to the Acts of the Apostles, after it had been rejected by the blinded Jews ; and here the seed of the divine word found not unfrequently a receptive soil in souls anxious for salvation. There were those also, without doubt, among the proselytes of the gate, who, falling short of true earnestness in seeking after religious truth, were only wishing, in every case, to have a convenient way which would lead to heaven without the necessity of self-denial, and who, undecided between Judaism and Paganism, in order, at all events, to go safe, sometimes invoked Jehovah in the synagogue, and sometimes the gods in the temples.

<sup>1</sup> Commodianus, in his Instructions, has given a picture of this class of men, the *inter utrumque viventes* :

Inter utrumque putans dubie vivendo cavere,  
Nudatus a lege decrepitus luxu procedis ?  
Quid in synagoga decurris ad Pharisæos,  
Ut tibi misericors fiat, quem denegas ultro ?  
Exis inde foris, iterum tu fana requiris.

# CHURCH HISTORY.

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## SECTION FIRST.

### RELATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO THE UNCHRISTIAN WORLD.

#### I. PROMULGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

##### I. PROMULGATION OF CHRISTIANITY GENERALLY ; HINDRANCES TO ITS SPREAD ; CAUSES AND MEANS OF ITS PROGRESS.

IF we contemplate the essential character of Christianity in its relation to the religious state of the world as it has just been described, we shall be at no loss to see what it was that tended on the one hand to further, and on the other to retard the progress of the Christian faith. Our Saviour referred to the signs of the times as witnessing of him,—and, in like manner, this contemplation will disclose to us, in the movements of the intellectual world then going on, the signs which heralded the new and great epoch in the history of the world ; and it will be clear to us that, as has been intimated in the introduction, the same tendencies which, singly and by themselves, presented the stoutest opposition to Christianity, and most effectually debarred its entrance, must, when combined together, only serve to hasten its triumph. It was a fact grounded in the relation of Christianity to the point of attainment which the general life of humanity had then reached, that the obstacles opposing themselves to the power which was destined to the sovereignty of the world, were converted into

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means for its advancement. We must therefore contemplate both in their connection with each other.

What, in the first place, particularly served to make possible and to facilitate the introduction of such a religion everywhere, was its own peculiar character, as one raised above every kind of outward, sensible form, and hence capable of entering into all the existing forms of human society, since it was not its aim to found a kingdom of this world. How Christianity could adapt itself to all earthly relations, and, while it allowed men still to remain in them, yet by the new spirit which it gave them, the divine life which it breathed into them, how it was enabled to raise men above these relations, is distinctly set before us by a Christian living in the early part of the second century, who thus describes his contemporaries:<sup>1</sup> "The Christians are not separated from other men by earthly abode, by language, or by customs. They dwell nowhere in cities by themselves, they do not use a different language, or affect a singular mode of life. They dwell in the cities of the Greeks, and of the barbarians, each as his lot has been cast; and while they conform to the usages of the country, in respect to dress, food, and other things pertaining to the outward life, they yet shew a peculiarity of conduct wonderful and striking to all. They obey the existing laws, and conquer the laws by their own living."

But this same loftier spirit, which could merge itself in all the forms it found at hand, must yet, while it coalesced with all the *purely human*, come into conflict with all the *ungodly* nature of mankind, with whatever issued from it and was connected with it. It announced itself as a power aiming at the *renovation of the world*; and the world sought to maintain itself in its old ungodly character. While Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil, so, too, he came not to bring peace upon the earth but the sword. Hence the necessary collision with prevailing modes of thinking and manners. Christianity could find entrance everywhere, precisely because it was the religion of God's sovereignty in the heart, and excluded from itself every political element; but to the fundamental position of the old world, which Christianity was to overthrow, belonged religion as an institution of the State. The pagan religion, as such, was so closely interwoven with the entire

<sup>1</sup> The author of the letter to Diognet.



civil and social life, that whatever attacked the one must soon be brought into conflict also with the other. This conflict might, in many cases at least, have been avoided, if the early Church, like that of later times, had been inclined to accommodate itself to the world, more than the holiness of Christianity allowed, and to secularize itself, in order to gain the world as a mass. But with the primitive Christians this was not the case; they were much more inclined to a stern repulsion of every thing that pertained to paganism, even of that which had but a seeming connection with it, than to any sort of lax accommodation; and assuredly it was at that period far more wholesome, and better adapted to preserve the purity of Christian doctrine and of the Christian life, to go to an extreme in the first of these ways than in the last.

And the religion which thus opposed itself to these deep-rooted customs and modes of thinking, which threatened to shake to the foundation what had been established by ages of duration, came from a people despised for the most part in the cultivated world, and at first found readiest admission among the lower classes of society;—a circumstance which sufficed of itself to make the learned aristocracy of Rome and Greece look down on such a religion with contempt. How should they hope to find more in the shops of mechanics than in the schools of the philosophers! Celsus, the first writer against Christianity, jeers at the fact,<sup>1</sup> *that wool-workers, cobblers, leather-dressers, the most illiterate and vulgar of mankind, were zealous preachers of the Gospel, and addressed themselves, particularly in the outset, to women and children.*” Of a faith which, adapted to all stages of culture, pre-supposed a like want in all, the men of this stamp had not the remotest conception. Their standing objection against the Christians was, that they preached only a blind faith;<sup>2</sup> they should prove what they advanced on philosophic grounds. And as Christianity had against it, on the one hand, the pride of culture, and was placed in the same class with all kinds of superstition; so, on the other, it found in superstition itself, and in

<sup>1</sup> In Origen, c. Cels. l. iii. f. 55: ‘Ὁρῶμεν δὴ καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας οἰκίας ἐργουργοὺς καὶ σκυτοτόμοις καὶ κναφίῃς τοῦς ἀπαιδευτοτάτους τε καὶ ἀγροικοτάτους ἐναντίον μὲν τῶν πρῶτων καὶ φρονιμωτέρων δεσποτῶν οὐδὲν φθίγγεσθαι, τολμῶντας, ἐπιδαὶν δὲ τῶν παιδῶν ἰδίᾳ λάβωνται καὶ γυναικῶν τινῶν σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀνοήτων θαυμάσιά τινα διέξίνοντας.

<sup>2</sup> Πίστιν ἀλογόν.

fanaticism, its fiercest enemies. It had to contend no less with the rudeness than with the cultivation of the world.

Without question it is true, the old popular religions had been shaken by the attacks of unbelief, and robbed of their authority; but we have seen also, how men had resorted back with renewed fanaticism to the old religion; and hence the bloody struggle in its defence. The dreadful rage of the populace against the Christians is a sufficient indication of the tone of religious feeling which existed at that time among them;—the superstition called forth by the assaults of unbelief held stronger dominion, perhaps, than ever over the people, and *a part* of the educated class. To the multitudes, who at this period moved in the dim twilight of superstition, Plutarch thought he might apply the language of Heraclitus in describing the world of dreams: “They found themselves, while awake in broad daylight, *each in his own world*,”—a world that excluded every ray of reason and truth. These men, who would see their gods with the bodily eye, and were used to carry them about engraved on their rings, or in miniature pictures which served as amulets, so that they might kiss and worship them at pleasure; how often did they throw out to Christians the challenge, “*Shew us your God!*”<sup>1</sup> And to such men came a spiritual religion, bringing with it no worship of sensible objects, no sacrifices, temple, images, nor altars:—bald and naked, as the pagans reproachfully represented it.

There was, indeed, generally diffused at this time, as we have already remarked, a spirit of inquiry, and of longing after some new communication from heaven. In spite of the pertinacity with which men clung to the old superstition, there existed a susceptibility, in various ways, for new religious impressions. But this longing, which, having no distinct consciousness of its object, was directed by blind feeling, easily exposed men also to deception, and opened the way for every species of fanaticism.

Quite at the beginning of the second century, Celsus supposed he could account for the rapid progress of Christianity, from the credulity of the age; and referred to the multitude of magicians that were trying to deceive men by a pretended exhibition of supernatural powers, and who with many found ready belief, creating a great sensation for the moment, which, however, soon subsided

<sup>1</sup> As we may see from the Apologies, particularly Theophilus ad Autolyceum.

Yet there was a great difference, as Origen justly replied to Celsus, between their mode of proceeding and that of the preachers of the Gospel. Those magicians flattered men's sinful inclinations, they fell in with their previous modes of thinking, and required the renunciation of nothing. On the other hand, whoever in the primitive times would be a Christian, must break loose from many of his hitherto favourite inclinations, and be ready to give up every thing for his faith. Tertullian says,<sup>1</sup> that more were deterred from embracing Christianity by unwillingness to forfeit their pleasures, than by the fear of hazarding their life. And the excitement of mind occasioned by such wandering fanatics and magicians, disappeared as suddenly as it was awakened. That it was quite otherwise with the power working in Christianity, appeared evident from the permanence of its effects, in their ever-widening circle,—a testimony which Origen could cite from history against Celsus.

But the influence of such people, of which the opponents of Christianity themselves bear witness, presented a new obstacle to its progress. It must force its way through the ring of delusions, within which those people had succeeded in charm-binding the minds of men before it could reach their consciences and hearts. The examples of a Simon Magus, an Elymas, an Alexander of Abonoteichos, shew in what way this class of people opposed the progress of the Gospel. It needed striking facts, addressed to the outward sense, to bring men, entangled in such deceptive arts, out of their bewilderment to the sober exercise of reason, and render them receptive of higher spiritual impressions.

To this end served those supernatural effects, which proceeded from the new creative power of Christianity, and which were destined to accompany it, until it had entered completely into the natural process of human development. The Apostle Paul appeals to such effects, witnessing of the power of the divine Spirit which inspired his preaching, as well-known and undeniable facts, in epistles addressed to the churches which had beheld them; and the narratives in the Acts illustrate, with particular examples, the power of those effects, in first arresting the attention, and in dispelling those delusive influences. The transition from that

<sup>1</sup> De spectaculis, c. 2. Plures denique invenias, quos magis periculum voluptatis, quam vitæ, avocet ab hac secta.

first period in the process of the development of the Church, in which the supernatural, immediate, and creative power predominated, to the second, in which the same divine principle displayed its activity in the form of natural connection, was not a sudden event, but took place by a series of gradual and insensible changes. We are not warranted, nor are we in a condition to draw so sharply the line of demarcation between what is supernatural and what is natural in the effects proceeding from the power of Christianity, when it has once taken possession of human nature.

The Church teachers, until after the middle of the third century, appeal in language that shews the consciousness of truth, and often before the pagans themselves, to such extraordinary phenomena, as conducing to the spread of the faith; and however we may be disposed to distinguish the facts at bottom from the point of view in which they are contemplated by the narrator, we must still admit the facts themselves, and their effects on the minds of men. It remains, therefore, undeniable, that even subsequent to the Apostolic times, the spread of the Gospel was advanced by such means. Let us present some of these cases in their living connection with the character and spirit of those times. The Christian meets with some unhappy man, plunged in heathenish superstition, and diseased in body and soul, who had hoped in vain to get relief in the temple of Esculapius,—the resort of multitudes at that time, who sought a cure for their diseases in dreams sent from the god of medicine. He had tried also to no purpose the various incantations and amulets of pagan priests and magicians. The Christian admonishes him not to look for help from impotent dumb idols, or from demoniacal powers, but to betake himself to that Almighty God, who only can help. He hears the prayers of such as invoke His aid in the name of Him by whom He has redeemed the world from sin. The Christian employs no magic formulas, no amulets; but simply calling upon God through Christ, he lays his hand on the sick man's head, in believing confidence in his Saviour. The sick man is healed; and the cure of the body leads to that of the soul. There were,—particularly at this period of the rending asunder and breaking up of the old world on its way to dissolution,—multitudes of persons, labouring under bodily and mental diseases, who, as we have already observed, believed themselves under the



dominion and persecution of some demoniacal power. The whole might of the ungodly, the destroying principle, must be roused to action, when the healing power of the divine was to enter into humanity. The revelation of heavenly peace, bringing back all to harmony, must be preceded by the deep-felt inward disunion, which betrayed itself in such cases. There was no want, either among pagans or Jews, of those who pretended to be able, by various methods,—perfuming with incense, embrocations, medicinal herbs, amulets, adjurations expressed in strange enigmatical formulas,—to expel those demoniacal powers. In every case, if they produced any effect, it was only to drive out one devil by means of another ; and hence the true dominion of the demoniacal power must, by their means, have been much rather confirmed than weakened. The words which our Saviour himself spoke, in reference to such transactions, found here their appropriate application. “He that is not with me is against me.” But how much belief, at that time, these pretended exorcists could inspire, is shewn by the prayer of thanks which the Emperor Marcus Aurelius offers to the gods, because he had learned from a wise instructor, to trust in none of the tales about the incantations and exorcisms of magicians and wonder-workers.<sup>1</sup>

It so happens now that one who has vainly sought relief from such impostors falls in with a devout Christian. The latter recognises here the power of darkness, and thinks of looking for no other cause of the disease. But he is confident of this, that his Saviour has overcome that power, and that in whatsoever shape it may manifest itself, it must yield to him. In this confidence, he prays and witnesses of him who by his sufferings triumphed over the gates of hell ; and his prayer, drawing down the powers of heaven, works deeply upon the distracted nature of the sick man. Peace succeeds to the conflicts that had raged within ; and led to the faith by this experience of a change in his own personal condition, he is now first delivered, in the full sense, from the dominion of evil,—thoroughly and permanently healed by the enlightening and sanctifying power of the truth ; so that the evil spirit, returning back to the house, finds it no longer swept and garnished for his reception.

<sup>1</sup> I. 6. Τὸ ἀπιστητικὸν τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν τερατισομένων καὶ γοητῶν περὶ ἐσθδῶν καὶ περὶ δαιμόνων ἀποσομπῆς καὶ τῶν τοιούτων λεγομένοις

Of such effects, Justin Martyr witnesses, when addressing himself to the pagans.<sup>1</sup> He says: "That the kingdom of evil spirits has been destroyed by Jesus, you may, even at the present time, convince yourselves by what passes before your own eyes; for many of our people, of us Christians, have healed and still continue to heal, in every part of the world, and in your city (Rome), numbers possessed of evil spirits, such as could not be healed by other exorcists, simply by adjuring them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate." We learn from Irenæus, that the cure of such disorders not unfrequently prepared the way for the conversion of men to Christianity; for he says, that often they who had been delivered from evil spirits attained to the faith, and united with the Church.<sup>2</sup> The inward conflicts of a soul that could find no longer the satisfaction of its religious wants in what the old world had to offer, may have frequently been the occasion of such forms of disease; and by the Christian influence, the disorder was overcome in its cause, and not in its symptoms merely. As a particular gift, quite distinct from the healing of those demoniacal diseases, Irenæus mentions other modes of restoring the sick, by the laying on of the hands of Christians,<sup>3</sup>—raising of the dead (*i. e.* such as seemed to be dead), who afterwards remained living in the church for many years.<sup>4</sup> He appeals to the variety of gifts which the true disciples of Christ had received from him, and which they employed, each after his own measure, for the benefit of other men. What was thus wrought by the Christians, simply from love, and without any expectation of temporal reward, through prayer to God and invocation of the name of Christ, he contrasts with the juggling tricks resorted to as a means of livelihood. Origen recognises in the miraculous powers still existing in his time, though already sensibly diminished, a proof of what served, in the first times of the appearance of Christianity particularly, to advance its progress.<sup>5</sup> In his defence of Christianity against Celsus, he cites

<sup>1</sup> In his first Apology, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Ὡστε πολλάκις καὶ πιστεύειν αὐτοὺς ἐκίνοῦς τοὺς καθαρισθῆντας ἀπὸ τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ εἶναι ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. Adv. hæres, l. ii. c. 32, § 4. Ed. Massuet.

<sup>3</sup> Ἄλλοι δὲ τοὺς κάμνοντας διὰ τῆς τῶν χειρῶν ἐπιθέσεως ἰῶνται.

<sup>4</sup> Καὶ νεκροὶ ἠγέρθησαν καὶ παρέμειναν σὺν ἡμῖν ἰκανοῖς ἔτεσιν.

<sup>5</sup> Τὰς τεραστίους δυνάμεις, ἃς κατασκευαστίον γιγνόναι ἐκ τοῦ ἔχου αὐτῶν ἔτι σώζεσθαι παρὰ τοῖς κατὰ τὸ βούλημα τοῦ λόγου βιοῦσιν. c. Cels. l. i. § 2.

examples from his own experience, where he had been himself an *eye-witness of the fact*, how, by invocation of the name of God and of Jesus, in connection with the preaching of his history, many were healed of grievous diseases and states of insanity, which had withstood all other means of the healing art.<sup>1</sup> It is a remarkable fact, attested by Tertullian and Origen, that so many were conducted to Christianity by extraordinary psychological phenomena. Tertullian relates, that the greater part came to the knowledge of the true God by means of visions.<sup>2</sup> Now, although this church father was inclined to exaggeration generally, and to lay too much stress on such appearances in particular; yet what he says here is confirmed by the testimony of Origen. The latter asserts that "Many have come to Christianity, as it were against their will, their affections being suddenly changed, by a certain Spirit, from the hatred of the Gospel to such love of it as makes them ready to lay down their lives for it,—and this through the medium of visions which occurred to them when awake or in dreams."<sup>3</sup> He calls God to witness, that it was most remote from his inclination to attempt adding anything to the glory of Christianity by false statements; although he could relate many things seemingly incredible, which he had *himself witnessed*. Such testimonies are full of instruction, since they make us acquainted with the manner in which conversions at this period were often brought about. We shall, indeed, have to trace these phenomena, not so much to a divine miraculous agency, operating from without, as to the power with which Christianity moved the spiritual life of the period. From the manner in which the divine principle of life in Christianity,—the new force that had come in among mankind,—and the principle of paganism came into collision with each other, extraordinary phenomena in the world of consciousness could not fail to result, through which the crisis in the religious life of individuals must pass ere it arrived at its end.

<sup>1</sup> Τούτοις γὰρ καὶ ἡμῖς ἐωράκαμεν πολλοὺς ἀπαλλαγέντας χαλεπῶν συμπτωμάτων ἐκστάσεων καὶ μανιῶν καὶ ἄλλων μυρίων, ἅπερ οὐτ' ἄνθρωποι οὐτε δαίμονες ἐβραβείυσαν. c. Cels. l. iii. c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Major pæne vis hominum e visionibus Deum discunt. De anima, c. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Πολλοὶ ὡσπερ εἰ ἄκοντες προσεληλύθασιν χριστιανισμῷ, πνεύματός τινος τρέψαντος αὐτῶν τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν αἰφνίδιον ἀπὸ τοῦ μισεῖν τὸν λόγον ἐπὶ τὸ ὑπεραποθανεῖν αὐτοῦ, καὶ φαντασιώσαντος αὐτοὺς ὕπαρ ἢ ὄναρ. c. Cels. l. i. c. 46.

Yet as each particular miracle, wrought by Christ, was but a single flash from the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, and was to operate simply to this end, that the immediate self-manifestation of this fulness might be brought nearer before the minds of men; so too are all succeeding miracles but single flashes, issuing forth from the immediate divine power of the Gospel, and contributing to introduce the revelation of this itself into the religious consciousness. Without this itself, and its relation to man's nature, and to the peculiar conditions of man's nature in this particular period, all else would have been to no purpose; and that which the divine power in the Gospel wrought immediately by itself in man's nature, still allied to God though estranged from its original source, continued ever to be the main thing, the end for which all else was but subsidiary and preparatory. It is this which the Apostle Paul places above all other kinds of evidence, above all particular miracles, and describes as the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.<sup>1</sup> And as this divine power shewed its efficacy on the inner life of the man, so it manifested itself, with an attractive force in the outward appearance and actions of that life; and it was this which, more than everything beside, wrought to the conversion of the heathen.

To this experience Justin Martyr makes his appeal,<sup>2</sup> where, after citing the words of our Lord, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven," he adds: "Our Lord would not have us recompense evil for evil; but requires that, by the power of patience and meekness, we should draw all from the shame of their evil passions. And we can point out many among us who, from overbearing and tyrannical men, have been thus changed by a victorious power, when they have seen how their neighbours could bear all things, or observed the singular patience of their defrauded fellow-travellers, or come to be acquainted with Christians in any of the other relations of life." The distinguished virtues of the Christians must have shone forth the more brightly,

<sup>1</sup> A passage which, indeed, came to be misunderstood at a very early period, because too much importance was attached to *the outward*. Thus it was Origen's opinion that the ἀποδείξεις πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως is so predicated of the ἀποδείξεις—διὰ τὰς προφητείας καὶ τὰς τεραστίους δυνάμεις. c. Cels. l. i. § 2.

<sup>2</sup> Apologet. ii. f. 63.



as contrasted with the prevailing vices; their severity of morals, sometimes even carried to excess, as opposed to the general depravation of the age; their hearty fraternal love, in contrast with that predominant selfishness which separated man from man, and rendered each distrustful of the other, in so much that men could not comprehend the nature of Christian fellowship, nor sufficiently wonder at its fruits. "See,"—was the common remark,—“how they love one another.” “This seems so extraordinary to them,” says Tertullian,<sup>1</sup> “because *they* are used to hate one another. See how, among the Christians, one is ready to die for the others; this seems so wonderful to *them*, because *they* themselves are far more ready to murder one another.” Although a brotherly union of this sort excited suspicion in those who were used to watch everything with the jealous eye of police espionage,<sup>2</sup> and several persecutions of the Christians were thereby occasioned; yet on all minds not narrowed by such habits, or not abandoned to fanaticism, a quite different impression must have been produced, and the question could hardly fail to arise in them, “What is it which can thus bind together the hearts of men in other respects wholly strangers to one another?” In a time when civilization had degenerated to effeminacy,<sup>3</sup> in a time of servile cowardice, the life-renovating enthusiasm, the heroism of faith, with which the Christians despised tortures and death, when the question was whether they would do what was contrary to conscience,—this heroism of the Christians did indeed strike many so forcibly as an appearance foreign to the age, that they were inclined to consider a character so well befitting the heroic days of antiquity, but not these more refined and gentle times, a matter of reproach.<sup>4</sup> But although the ordinary Roman statesmen, though the followers of a set worldly prudence, though the cool Stoic, who required everywhere philosophic demonstration,—saw in the spirit with which the Christians, in testimony of their faith, went to

<sup>1</sup> Sed ejusmodi vel maxime dilectionis operatio notam nobis inurit penes quosdam. Vide, inquiunt, ut invicem se diligant. Ipsi enim invicem oderunt. Et pro alterutro mori sint parati, ipsi enim ad occidendum alterutrum paratiores. Apologet. c. 39.

<sup>2</sup> This view of the matter is expressed in the language of the Pagan Cæcilius, in the Octavius of Minucius Felix (§ 9); Occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt et amant mutuo pæne ante quam noverint.

<sup>3</sup> Ipsa urbanitate decepti, says Tertullian of his contemporaries.

<sup>4</sup> Well enough for the ingenia duriora robustioris antiquitatis, but not for the tranquillitas pacis and the ingenia mitiora. Tertull. adv. Nat. i. c. 18.

death, nothing but blind enthusiasm; yet the confidence and the cheerfulness of these suffering, dying men, could not fail to make an impression on less hardened or less prejudiced minds, whereby they would be led to inquire more deeply into the cause, for which men could be thus impelled to sacrifice their all. Outward force could effect nothing against the inward power of divine truth; it could only operate to render the might of this truth more gloriously manifest. Hence Tertullian concludes his "Apology" with these words, addressed to the persecutors of the Christians: "All your refinements of cruelty can accomplish nothing; on the contrary, they serve as a lure to this sect. Our number increases the more you destroy us. The blood of the Christians is the seed of a new harvest. Your philosophers, who exhort to the endurance of pain and death, make fewer disciples by their words than the Christians by their deeds. That obstinacy for which you reproach us is a preceptor. For who that beholds it, is not impelled to inquire into the cause? And who, when he has inquired, does not embrace it; and when he has embraced it, does not himself wish to suffer for it?"<sup>1</sup>

Add to this, that Christianity appeared when the time was now fulfilled, that the glory of the "eternal city" must depart from her; for so long as that power still had dominion over the minds of men, and swallowed up all other interests, small place was left for that feeling of need which led men to Christianity. But when all was now becoming old and withered, which had hitherto been an object of enthusiastic love, and had given a certain buoyancy to the soul, Christianity appeared, and called men from the sinking old world to a new creation, destined for eternity. As Augustin finely expresses it, "Christ appeared to the men of a decrepit, dying world, that, while all around them was fading, they might through him receive a new youthful life." And the higher life which Christianity imparted required no brilliant outward relations for the manifestation of its glory, like what had been wondered at as great in the old civic virtue. Into the midst of circumstances and situations the most cramping and depressing, this divine life could find its way, and cause its glory to shine

<sup>1</sup> Semen est sanguis Christianorum—illa ipsa obstinatio, quam exprobratis, magistra est. Quis enim non contemplatione ejus concutitur ad requirendum, quid intus in re sit?

forth in weak and despised vessels, and raise men above all that would bow them down to the earth, without their overstepping the bounds of that earthly order, in which they considered themselves placed by an overruling Providence. The slave, in his earthly relations, remained a slave still, and fulfilled all the duties of his place with far greater fidelity and conscientiousness than before; and yet he felt himself free within, shewed an elevation of soul, an assurance, a power of faith and of resignation, which must have filled his master with amazement. Men in the lowest class of society, who had hitherto known nothing in religion but ceremonial rites and mythical stories, attained to a clear and confident religious conviction. The remarkable words, already quoted from Celsus, as well as many individual examples of these first Christian times, shew us how often from *women*,<sup>1</sup> who, as wives and mothers, let a spiritual light shine out in the midst of pagan corruption; how often from young men, boys and maidens; from slaves who put their masters to shame, Christianity was diffused through whole families. "Every Christian mechanic," says Tertullian, "has found God, and shews him to you; and then points out to you everything in fact you require to know of God; although Plato (in *Timæus*) says, that it is hard to find the Creator of the universe, and impossible, after one has found him, to make him known to all." In like manner, Athenagoras: "With us you may find ignorant people, mechanics, old women, who, though unable to prove with words the saving power of their religion, yet by their deeds prove the saving influence of the disposition it has bestowed on them; for they do not learn words by rote, but they exhibit good works; when struck, they strike not again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to them that ask them, and love their neighbours as themselves."

The gross material notions, which we find to have prevailed among a large portion of the early Christians, as, for example, among the Chiliasts, have frequently been set forth as a reproach to Christianity. But precisely in this is its distinguishing character manifest,—that as it is not a system of notions, but an

<sup>1</sup> Compare the words of the pagan Cæcilius in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, where he says, speaking of the Christians (c. 8): "Qui de ultima fæce collectis imperitioribus et mulieribus credulis sexus sui facilitate labentibus plebem profanæ conjurationis instituunt."

announcement of facts, it could be brought within the range, even of a material habit of thinking, could lower itself down to its comprehension, mix in with it, and even in this material form, by the power of those facts, communicate a divine life, and thereby gradually ennoble the entire nature of the man, with all its powers and propensities, and so also spiritualize the habits of thinking. And in connection with this phenomenon, we must take still another; that, at the same time, the pole of humanity most opposite to this was seized by Christianity with overwhelming power, as is evident when we compare the Gnostics with those Chiliasts. So deeply marked, from the first, on the developing process of this religion, is the impress of its divinely human character, by virtue of which it could and must attract the opposite poles of man's nature, entering as well into these as into all the other intermediate stages. And it was, as we shall see, precisely by means of this, its distinguishing characteristic, that the more general diffusion and triumph of Christianity over the old world were advanced.

## II. PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN PARTICULAR DISTRICTS.

The great highways by which the knowledge of the Gospel was to be diffused abroad had already been opened by the intercourse of nations. The easy means of inter-communication within the vast Roman empire; the close relation between the Jews dispersed through all lands and those at Jerusalem; the manner in which all parts of the Roman empire were linked in with the great capital of the world; the connection of the provinces with their metropolitan towns, and of the larger portions of the empire with the more considerable cities, were all circumstances favourable to this object. These cities, such as Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, were centres of commercial, political, and literary correspondence; and hence became also the principal seats, chosen for the propagation of the Gospel, where the first preachers tarried longest. Commercial intercourse, which had served from the earliest times, not merely for the exchange of worldly goods, but also for transmitting the nobler treasures of the mind, could now be used as a means for diffusing the highest spiritual blessings.

As a general thing, Christianity at first made progress in the cities; for as it was needful, above all, to gain fixed seats for the propagation of the Gospel, the first preachers, passing rapidly over the country, had to propose their message first in the cities, whence it might afterwards be more easily diffused through the country by native teachers. On the other hand, in the country, greater obstacles must necessarily have been encountered, owing to the entire rudeness, the blind superstition, and the heathen fanaticism of the people: oftentimes also to the want of a knowledge in the early preachers of the old provincial dialects; while in the towns, they could, for the most part, make themselves sufficiently well understood in the Greek or the Latin language. Yet we know from Pliny's report to the Emperor Trajan, from the account given by the Roman Bishop Clemens,<sup>1</sup> and from the relation of Justin Martyr,<sup>2</sup> that this was not the case everywhere: and that, in many districts, country churches were formed very early; and Origen says expressly,<sup>3</sup> that many considered it their duty to visit not only the cities, but also the country towns and villas. That this was so seems evident, moreover, from the great number of country bishops in particular districts.

In the New Testament, we find accounts of the dissemination of Christianity in Syria, in Cilicia; probably also in the Parthian empire, at that time so widely extended;<sup>4</sup> in Arabia; in Lesser Asia, and the countries adjacent; in Greece, and the bordering countries as far as Illyricum; in Italy. But we are greatly deficient in further and credible accounts on this subject; the later traditions, growing out of the eagerness to trace each national church to an apostolic origin, deserve no examination. We confine ourselves to what can be safely credited.

The ancient legend of the correspondence by letter between a prince belonging to the dynasty of the Abgares, or Agbares, the Agbar Uchomo (who ruled over the small state of Edessa Osrhoëne of Mesopotamia), and our Saviour, to whom he is said

<sup>1</sup> Ep. i. Corinth. c. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Apologet. ii. f. 98.

<sup>3</sup> c. Cels. l. iii. c. 9: *Τινὲς ἔργον πιστοῖνται ἐκ περιέρχισθαι οὐ μόνον πόλεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ κάμους καὶ ἰσαύλους.*

<sup>4</sup> For the circumstance that Peter (1 Ep. v. 13) greets from his wife in Babylon—whether it was the then capital of Seleucia, or more probably the old fallen Babylon—leads to the conjecture, that he was residing in those countries.

to have applied for the cure of a grievous disorder, is entitled to no credit; nor that of his conversion by Thaddeus, one of the seventy disciples. Eusebius found the documents from which he drew up his narrative in the public archives of Edessa; and permitted himself to be deceived by them. The letter ascribed to Christ is in no sense worthy of him, and bears throughout the marks of having been compiled from several passages of the Gospels. It is moreover inconceivable how anything, written by Christ himself, could have remained, down to Eusebius' time, unknown to the rest of the world. Finally, the letter of Abgarus is not couched in such language as would have been used by an oriental prince. Whether, in other respects, there is any truth lying at the bottom of the account we cannot know. It is only certain, that Christianity was early diffused in this country; yet it is not till between the years 160–170 we find indications that one of those princes, Abgar Bar Manu, was a Christian. The learned Christian Bardesanes is said to have stood very high with him; and we are informed by this writer, that Abgar forbade the self-mutilations usually connected with the worship of Cybele, under a severe penalty (the loss of their hands to those who were guilty of it.) From this alone, it is by no means clear that he was a Christian; but it is also on the coins of this prince that the usual symbols of the Baal worship of this country are, for the first time, wanting; and the sign of the cross appears in their place.<sup>1</sup> In the year 202, the Christians of Edessa had already a church built, as it seems, after the model of the temple at Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

If Peter preached the Gospel in the Parthian empire,<sup>3</sup> some seed of Christianity, at an early period, may have easily reached *Persia* also, which then belonged to that empire; but the frequent wars of the Parthians with the Romans hindered the communication between Parthian and Roman Christians. The above-men-

<sup>1</sup> Bayer, *historia Edessena e nummis illustrata*, l. iii. p. 173. But Bayer places him, no doubt incorrectly, as late as A.C. 200.

<sup>2</sup> In the chronicle of Edessa, compiled from ancient documents, about the middle of the sixth century, it is reported, in expressions which presuppose a document not written by the hand of a Christian, that by the violence of a flood the templum ecclesie Christianorum had been destroyed. V. *Assemani Bibliotheca orientalis*, T. i. p. 391.

<sup>3</sup> According to the tradition preserved in Origen; Euseb. iii. 1, also the Apostle Thomas.

tioned Bardesanes of Edessa, who wrote in the time of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, notices the spread of Christianity in Parthia, Media, Persia, Bactria.<sup>1</sup> After the restoration of the ancient Persian empire to its independence, under the Sassanides, the Persian Christians become better known to us by the attempts of the Persian Mani, in the last half of the second century, to form a new code of religious doctrines by the fusion of old oriental systems of religion with Christianity.

In Arabia, the great number of Jews residing in that country might afford a medium of access for the preaching of the Gospel; but the same circumstance would also present a powerful hinderance; and the latter, no doubt, was much more the case than the former. It is clear, from his own words, that the Apostle Paul, soon after his conversion, retired from Damascus to Arabia. But to what purpose he applied his residence in this country, and what he accomplished there, remains uncertain.<sup>2</sup> If the country called India, in a tradition of which we shall presently speak, is to be taken as meaning a part of Arabia, then the Apostle Bartholomew preached the Gospel to the Jews in Arabia, and took with him, for this purpose, a gospel written in the Hebrew (Aramaic) language,—probably that compilation of our Lord's discourses by Matthew, which lies at the basis of our present Gospel according to St Matthew.<sup>3</sup> Allowing this to be so, then, in the last half of the second century, the learned Alexandrian catechist, Pantænus, was teacher of a portion of this people. In the early part of the third century, the great Alexandrian church father, Origen, laboured in the same field. Yet we must doubtless suppose here only that part of Arabia is meant which was already in subjection to the Roman empire. We have the account, namely, from Eusebius,<sup>4</sup> that at that time the Arabian commander sent an order to Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, and to the then Prefect of Egypt, earnestly requesting that Origen might be allowed to come to him, since he was desirous of conferring with him in person.<sup>5</sup> Assuredly this Arabian commander was not the

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. Præparat. Evang. l. vi. c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> See my History of the Planting, &c. vol. i. p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> See my History of the Planting, &c. vol. i. p. 131, Remark.

<sup>4</sup> L. vi. c. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Ἐπιστάς τις τῶν στρατιωτικῶν (which suggests some person of the Roman office of

hereditary chief of some wandering tribe of Arabs, as a person of that class could hardly be supposed to have ever heard anything of Origen; but a Roman governor, whom the fame of the great teacher,—celebrated at this time for his holy life, his wisdom, and scientific attainments even among the pagans,—might have moved to seek a personal conversation with him on religious subjects. Perhaps he belonged to the number of *truth-seeking* men among the pagans of those times. If so, Origen would not have failed to avail himself of this interview, for the purpose of winning over the governor to the side of the Gospel. At a somewhat later period we find Christian churches in Arabia, with which Origen stood in some more intimate connection. To the further propagation of the Gospel in these parts in still later times, the nomadic life of the people and the influence of hostile Jews presented great obstacles.

The ancient Syro-Persian church, whose remains have been preserved down to the present moment, on the coast of Malabar, in the East Indies, names the Apostle Thomas as its founder, and professes to be able to point out the place of his burial. Were this a tradition handed down, independent of other accounts, within the community itself, we could not, it is true, consider it as credible testimony; but neither should we be warranted to assert absolutely its falsity.<sup>1</sup> Yet this Church, of which we find the earliest notice in the reports of Cosmas Indicopleustes, about the middle of the sixth century, might perhaps be indebted for its existence to a later mercantile colony of Syro-Persian Christians, and having brought with it the traditions of the Greek Church, might have simply transmitted these, but after a time forgotten the channel from whence it had originally derived them. We must examine more closely, then, these traditions themselves.

*dux Arabiæ*), ἀντιδίδου γράμματα Δημητρίῳ τε τῷ τῆς παροικίας ἐπισκόπῳ καὶ τῷ τότε τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐπαρχῆ παρὰ τοῦ τῆς Ἀραβίας ἡγουμίνου (as a *dux Arabiæ* afterwards occurs in the *Notitia imperii*.)

<sup>1</sup> It becomes the conscientious inquirer, who leans neither on the side of arbitrary doubt nor on that of arbitrary assertion, to express himself, in matters of this sort, as my friend and honoured colleague Ritter has done, in his instructive remarks on this point, in the *Erdkunde von Asien* (Bd. iv. Iste Abtheilung, S. 602): "What European science cannot prove, is not therefore to be rejected as untrue, but only to be regarded as problematical for the present; by no means, however, is any structure to be erected upon it as a safe foundation."



But the Greek traditions, although old, are yet very indefinite and uncertain. The unsettled use of the geographic name India contributes to this uncertainty. Ethiopia and Arabia Felix, the adjacent *Insula Dioscoridis* (the island *Diu Zocotara*, near the mouth of the Arabian Gulf), were designated by this name.<sup>1</sup> These countries, however, maintained by trade a lively intercourse with India proper, and could thus furnish a channel for the propagation of Christianity in the latter. Gregory of Nanzianzen says,<sup>2</sup> that Thomas preached the Gospel to the Indians; but Jerome understands the India here meant to be Ethiopia.<sup>3</sup> If the tradition in Origen, which makes Thomas the apostle to the Parthians, were credible, it would not be so very remote from the former legend, since the Parthian empire touched at that time on the boundaries of India. In all events, such legends are not deserving of much confidence. Eusebius<sup>4</sup> relates, as we have observed already, that Pantænus undertook a missionary tour to the people dwelling eastward, which he extended as far as India. There he found already some seeds of Christianity, which had been conveyed thither by the Apostle Bartholomew, as well as a Hebrew gospel which the same Apostle had taken with him. The mention of the Hebrew gospel is not at all inconsistent with the supposition that India proper is here meant, if it may be assumed that the Jews who now dwell on the coast of Malabar had then already arrived there. The language of Eusebius seems to intimate, that he himself had before his mind a remoter country than Arabia, and rather favours the supposition that he meant to speak of India proper. Yet it may be a question whether he was not himself deceived by the name. To settle the controverted question, what countries we are to think of here, we must compare also the later accounts of the fourth century. In the time of the Emperor Constantine,<sup>5</sup> there was a missionary, Theophilus, with the surname *Indicus*, who came from the island *Diu* ( $\Delta\iota\epsilon\sigma\delta\iota\upsilon$ ), by

<sup>1</sup> According to Ritter (l. c. S. 603), to be explained from the fact, that not only Indian trade colonies—the *Banians*, *Banig-yana*, according to the Sanscrit, trade-people (see Ritter, l. c. S. 443)—had settled there, and that the whole region furnished staple places for Indian wares, but that these were the few direct intermediate stations for the uninterrupted commerce with foreign India.

<sup>2</sup> Orat. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 148.

<sup>4</sup> L. i. c. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Vid. *Philostorg. hist.* l. iii. c. 4 and 5.

which is to be understood the above-mentioned island, Zokotara. He found in his native land, and in the other districts of India,<sup>1</sup> which he visited from there, Christianity planted already, and had only many things to correct.

We next cross over to Africa. *The country* in this quarter of the world, where Christianity must be disseminated first, was *Egypt*; for here were presented, in the Grecian and Jewish culture at Alexandria, those points of contact and union of which we have already spoken. Even among the first zealous preachers of the Gospel we find men of Alexandrian education, as, for instance, *Apollo*s of Alexandria, and probably also *Barnabas* of Cyprus. The epistle to the Hebrews, the epistle ascribed to *Barnabas*, the gospel of the Egyptians (*εὐαγγέλιον κατ' Αἰγυπτίων*), in which the Alexandrian-theosophic taste displays itself,—the Gnosis in the first half of the second century,—are proofs of the influence exerted by Christianity, at a very early period, on the philosophy of the Alexandrian Jews. An ancient tradition names the evangelist *Mark* as the founder of the Alexandrian Church. From Alexandria, Christianity must have easily found its way to *Cyrene*, on account of the constant intercourse and the congeniality of spirit between the two places. But although the Gospel early found its way into the parts of Lower Egypt inhabited by Grecian and Jewish colonies, yet it would not be so easy for it to penetrate thence into Middle, and particularly into Upper Egypt; for in those parts, the foreign Coptic language, the dominion of the priests, and the old Egyptian superstition, stood in the way. Yet a persecution of the Christians in *Thebais*, under the Emperor *Septimius Severus*,<sup>2</sup> proves that Christianity had already made progress in Upper Egypt, as early as the last times of the second century. Probably in the first half of the third century, this province had a version of the New Testament in its own ancient dialect.

Respecting the diffusion of Christianity in *Ethiopia* (*Abyssinia*) we find in these centuries no distinct and credible account. History is silent as to the consequences which resulted from the conversion of that court-officer of *Candace*, Queen of *Meroe*, which

<sup>1</sup> Ἐπιθὲν τίς τὴν ἄλλην ἀφίκετο Ἰνδικήν.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. vi. c. 1.

is related in the Acts.<sup>1</sup> We shall find the first certain indications of the conversion of a part of Abyssinia, through the instrumentality of Frumentius, in the fourth century. Yet the question might be raised,<sup>2</sup> whether some seeds of Christianity may not, even earlier than this, have been brought into other districts of this country by Jewish Christians; and whether many Jewish customs, and the significancy which is ascribed by *one* party to the baptism of Christ,<sup>3</sup> may not be traced to this fact.

In consequence of their connection with Rome, the Gospel early found its way to *Carthage*, and to the whole of *proconsular Africa*. This church at Carthage becomes first known to us, onward from the last years of the second century, through the presbyter Tertullian; but even then it appears to have been in a very flourishing condition. The Christians in those districts were at that time already very numerous; and it was a matter of complaint, that Christianity continued to spread, in town and country, among all ranks, and indeed in the highest.<sup>4</sup> To pass over those passages where Tertullian expresses himself rhetorically, we find in his tract addressed to the governor, Scapula,<sup>5</sup> that he could speak already of a persecution of Christians in Mauritania. After the middle of the third century, Christianity had now made such progress in Mauritania and Numidia, that under Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, a synod was held, consisting of eighty-seven bishops.

Passing over to Europe, we have in Rome a principal seat for the propagation of Christianity, yet not the only one. Flourishing communities at Lugdunum (*Lyons*) and Vienna, come to our knowledge during a bloody persecution, in 177. The great number of Christians from Asia Minor, whom we find here, and the intimate connection of these communities with those of Asia Minor, lead to the conjecture, that the commercial intercourse

<sup>1</sup> Chap. 8.

<sup>2</sup> The late Hr. Rettig, if I mistake not, has somewhere directed attention to the same inquiry.

<sup>3</sup> See Journal of a three years' residence in Abyssinia, by S. Gobat, p. 254. London, 1834.

<sup>4</sup> Apologet. c. 1. Obsessam vociferantur civitatem; in agris, in castellis, in insulis Christianos; omnem sexum, aetatem, conditionem, et *jam dignitatem* transgredi ad hoc nomen.

<sup>5</sup> Cap. 4.

between these districts of France and Asia Minor, an original seat of the Christian church, had led to the formation of a Christian colony in Gaul. For a long time the pagan superstition in the other parts of Gaul withstood the further spread of Christianity. Even so late as the middle of the third century, few Christian communities were to be found there. According to the narrative of the French historian, Gregory of Tours, seven missionaries came at that time to Gaul from Rome, and established communities in seven cities, over which they became bishops. One of these was that Dionysius, first bishop of the community at Paris, whom the later legends confounded with Dionysius the Areopagite, who was converted by the Apostle Paul at Athens. Gregory of Tours, who wrote near the end of the sixth century, in a time when so many fables were propagated respecting the origin of church communities, is, we allow, no credible witness; at the same time, there may be some truth lying at the ground of this account. One of these seven, Saturnin, founder of the community at Toulouse, becomes known to us by a much older document,—the relation of his martyrdom.

Irenæus, who became bishop of the community at Lyons some time after the above-mentioned persecution of 177, speaks of the spread of Christianity in *Germany*.<sup>1</sup> But we must here distinguish the different parts of Germany,—the districts in subjection to the Roman empire, and the still larger portion of free independent Germany. Very easily might it happen, that a seed of Christianity should find its way into the first of the countries just mentioned, on account of their connection with the province of Gaul. But the case was quite different with those hardy tribes that so fiercely maintained their ancient state of rudeness and freedom, and repelled everything from abroad. Irenæus, it is true, says elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> “Many tribes of the barbarians have the words of salvation written in their hearts, without paper and ink, by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>3</sup> He recognised, in the efficacious power of Christianity, its distinguishing nature, by virtue of which, it could reach men in every stage of cultivation, and by its divine energy penetrate to their hearts; but it is also certain, that

<sup>1</sup> Adv. Hærs. l. i. c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> L. iii. c. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Sine charta et atramento scriptam habentes per spiritum in cordibus suis salutem.

Christianity would nowhere long maintain itself with purity, in its distinguishing essence, unless it entered deep into the whole intellectual development of the people, and unless, along with the divine life proceeding from it, it gave an impulse, at the same time, to all human culture.

The same Irenæus is the first who speaks of the diffusion of Christianity in *Spain* (ἐν ταῖς Ἰσπανίαις.) The tradition, which we find already at the beginning of the fourth century in Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> that the Apostle Paul had preached the Gospel in Spain, cannot, it is true, be received as credible testimony; for in those times the propensity was but too strong to convert suppositions, inferences and conjectures, not always rightly formed, into facts; and so what St Paul himself writes (Romans xv. 24), concerning his intention, might easily give occasion to this report. But when the Roman bishop, Clemens, says,<sup>2</sup> that the Apostle Paul went as far as the bounds of the West (τέγμα τῆς δύσεως<sup>3</sup>) the expression can hardly be understood as referring to Rome; indeed, it most naturally applies only to Spain; and as Clemens was probably himself a disciple of the Apostle, it cannot possibly be supposed that he would be deceived in the same manner as might happen with those who came after him. It must be admitted, we find no room for a journey of the Apostle Paul to Spain, unless we suppose that he was set free from his imprisonment mentioned in the Acts, and after his release carried the purpose into effect which he had previously announced. But this we must of necessity suppose, if we acknowledge the genuineness of the second epistle to Timothy, and cannot bring ourselves to consent to very tortuous interpretations of single passages.

Of the extension of Christianity thus early also to *Britain*, Tertullian is a witness;<sup>4</sup> although in that quite rhetorically expressed passage, that the Gospel had penetrated already into those parts of Britain not subjected to the Roman dominion, the truth may be somewhat exaggerated. A later tradition, in Bede, of the eighth century, reports that Lucius, a British king, request-

<sup>1</sup> L. i. c. 10, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. i. v. 5.

<sup>3</sup> We cannot avoid once more protesting against all the forced interpretations of these words, which have been set forth of late. See my History of the Planting, etc. Vol. i. p. 455.

<sup>4</sup> Adv. Jud. c. 7.

ed the Roman bishop, Eleutherus, in the latter part of the second century, to send him some missionaries. But the peculiarity of the later British church is evidence against its origin from Rome; for in many ritual matters it departed from the usage of the Romish church, and agreed much more nearly with the churches of Asia Minor. It withstood for a long time the authority of the Romish papacy. This circumstance would seem to indicate that the Britons had received their Christianity, either immediately or through Gaul, from Asia Minor,—a thing quite possible and easy, by means of the commercial intercourse. The later Anglo-Saxons, who opposed the spirit of ecclesiastical independence among the Britons, and endeavoured to establish the church supremacy of Rome, were uniformly inclined to trace back the church establishments to a Roman origin; from which effort many false legends as well as this might have arisen.

We now pass over to the conflicts which the church within the Roman Empire had to sustain with the state.

### III. PERSECUTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

#### FIRST, THE CAUSES OF THEM.

It is quite important to a just understanding of the nature of these persecutions, to be rightly informed, in the first place, of their causes. Many have been surprised that the Romans, a people in other respects so tolerant, should exhibit so impatient and persecuting a spirit against the Christians; but whatever is said about the religious tolerance of the Romans, must be understood with considerable restriction. The ideas of man's universal rights, of universal religious freedom and liberty of conscience, were quite alien to the views of the whole ancient world. Nor could it be otherwise; since the idea of the state was the highest idea of ethics, and within that was included all actual realization of the highest good:—hence the development of all other goods pertaining to humanity was made dependent on this. Thus the *religious* element also was subordinated to the *political*. There were none but state religions and national gods. It was first and only Christianity that could overcome this principle of antiquity, release men from the bondage of the world, subvert *particularism* and the all-subjecting force of the political element, by its

own generalizing Theism, by the awakened consciousness of the oneness of God's image in all, by the idea of the kingdom of God as the highest good, comprehending all other goods in itself, which was substituted in place of the state as the realization of the highest good, whereby the state was necessitated to recognise a higher power over itself. Looked at from this point of view, which was the one actually taken by the ancient world, a defection from the religion of the state could not appear otherwise than as a crime against the state.<sup>1</sup>

Now all this must be especially true, in its application to the one-sided political principle which swallowed up every other interest, peculiar to the ancient Romanism. We recognise this principle in what Cicero lays down as a fundamental maxim of legislation.<sup>2</sup> No man shall have for himself particular gods of his own; no man shall worship by himself any new or foreign gods, unless they are recognised by the public laws (*nisi publice adscitos*.) Although the ancient laws in the times of the emperors were no longer so strictly observed, although foreign customs had been constantly gaining ground in Rome, and the ancient policy no less constantly declining, yet now there were many additional reasons to those which had previously existed, for guarding against the introduction of new religions. There prevailed, indeed, at this time, a sensitive dread of every thing with which a political aim could be connected, and the jealousy of despotism could be easily induced to suspect political aims, even where nothing of the kind was intended. Religion and religious associations seemed well calculated to serve as a cover for political plots and conspiracies. Hence the advice of Mæcenas to Augustus, in the well-known discourse reported by Dio Cassius, where, although the very words of Mæcenas may not be used, yet the historian expresses the prevailing views of the Roman state at this period.

<sup>1</sup> As Varro had before distinguished a *theologia philosophica et vera*, a *theologia pœtica et mythica*, and a *theologia civilis*, so Dio Chrysostom, who flourished in the first half of the second century (*orat. 12*), distinguishes three sources of religion; the universal religious consciousness, the *ἴμφυτος ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις ἰστίνοια*; poetry and morality left to propagate itself in freedom; and legislation, which constrains, threatens, and punishes,—*τὸ νομοθετικὸν, τὸ ἀναγκαιῶν, τὸ μετὰ ζημίας καὶ ποροστάξιαν*;—although he rightly fixes upon the first only, as the universal and original source, whence all the rest has been derived.

<sup>2</sup> *De legib. l. ii. c. 8.*

“Worship the gods in all respects according to the laws of your country, and compel all others to do the same. But hate and punish those who would introduce any thing whatever alien to our customs in this particular; not alone for the sake of the gods, because whoever despises them is incapable of reverence for any thing else; but because such persons, by introducing new divinities, mislead many to adopt also foreign laws. Hence conspiracies and secret combinations,—the last things to be borne in a monarchy. Suffer no man either to deny the gods,<sup>1</sup> or to practise sorcery.” The Roman civilian, Julius Paulus, cites, as one of the ruling principles of civil law in the Roman state, the following: “Whoever introduced new religions, the tendency and character of which were unknown, whereby the minds of men might be disturbed,<sup>2</sup> should, if belonging to the higher rank, be banished; if to the lower, punished with death.” It is easy to see, that Christianity, which produced so great, and to the Roman statesman so unaccountable an agitation in the minds of men, must fall into this class of *religiones novæ*. We have presented here, then, the two points of view, under which Christianity came necessarily into collision with the laws of the state. 1. *It induced Roman citizens to renounce the religion of the state, to the observance of which they were bound by the laws,—to refuse compliance with the “cærimonias Romanas.”* Hence many of the magistrates, who felt no *personal* antipathy to Christianity, explained to Christians, when arraigned before them, that they might comply, at least outwardly, with what the laws required; viz. observe the religious ceremonies prescribed by the state; that the state was concerned only with the outward act, and in case that were performed, they might believe and worship in their heart, whatever they chose; or that they might continue to worship their own God, provided only they would worship the Roman gods also. 2. *It introduced a new religion, not admitted by the laws of the state into the class of religiones licitæ.* Hence the common taunt of the pagans against the Christians, according to Tertullian; non licet esse vos —“You are not permitted by the laws;” and Celsus accuses them of secret compacts, contrary to the laws.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ἄθίον εἶναι, the very term applied to the Christians.

<sup>2</sup> De quibus animi hominum moventur.

<sup>3</sup> Ὡς συνθήκας κρύβδην παρὰ τὰ νομοσμίμια ποιοῦμένων. L. i. c. 1.



Without doubt the Romans did exercise a certain religious toleration ; but it was a toleration not to be separated from their polytheistic religious notions and their civil policy, and which, by its own nature, could not be applied to Christianity. They were in the habit of securing to the nations they had conquered the free exercise of their own religions,<sup>1</sup> inasmuch as they hoped by so doing to gain them over more completely to their interests, and also to make the gods of those nations their friends. The Romans, who were religiously inclined, attributed their sovereignty of the world to this policy of conciliating the gods of every nation.<sup>2</sup> Even without the limits of their own country, individuals of these nations were allowed the free exercise of their opinions ; and hence Rome, into which there was a constant influx of strangers from all quarters of the world, became the seat of every description of religion. “Men of a thousand nations,” says Dionysius of Halicarnassus,<sup>3</sup> “come to the city, and must worship the gods of their country, according to the prevailing laws at home.” It doubtless happened, that with certain modifications, many things taken from these foreign modes of worship, were introduced into the public worship of the Roman state ; but then a special decree of the senate was requisite, before any Roman citizen could be allowed to join in the observance of any such foreign rites. At this particular period, indeed, when the authority of all national religions was on the wane ; when the unsatisfied religious need required and sought some new thing ; and this was offered by the conflux of strangers from all countries into Rome ; it was frequently the case, that Romans adopted the forms of those foreign modes of worship, which did not as yet belong to the religions recognised by the state (to the religionibus publice adscitis) : but this was an irregularity, which such as possessed any portion of the old Roman spirit attributed to the corruptions of the times and the decline of ancient manners. Like many other evils, which could not be suppressed, it was left unnoticed. The change,

<sup>1</sup> See the words of Marcus Agrippa, in his plea for the religious freedom of the Jews : *Τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν, ἣν νῦν τὸ σύμπαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος δι' ἡμᾶς ἔχει ταύτῃ μετροῦμεν, τῷ ἐξεῖναι κατὰ χώραν ἐκάστοις τὰ οἰκίᾳ τιμῶσιν ἄγειν καὶ διαζῆν.* Joseph. Archæol. l. xvi. c. 2, § 4.

<sup>2</sup> See the Pagan's language in Minucius Felix, and in Aristides' Encom. Romæ.

<sup>3</sup> See Aristid. l. c. and Dionys. Halicarnass. Archæol. l. ii. c. 19.

moreover, might be the less striking, since those who had adopted the foreign rites observed at the same time the Roman ceremonies. Occasionally, however, when the evil threatened to get the upper hand, or when a zeal was awakened in behalf of the ancient manners and civic virtues, laws were passed for restraining profane rites (*ad coercendos profanos ritus*) and repressing the growth of foreign superstitions (the *valescere superstitiones externas*<sup>1</sup>), every religion, not Roman, being regarded as a *superstition* by the Roman statesman. With these views it is clear that the best emperors, who were seeking to restore the old life of the Roman State, must therefore be hostile to Christianity, which appeared to them only as a *superstitio externa*; while worse rulers, with nothing of the old Roman spirit, but at the same time not rising above the prejudices of a contracted nationality, might, from indifference to the old Roman policy in general, calmly look on when Christianity was making encroachments on all sides.

The Jews also had the free and undisturbed exercise of their religion secured to them by decrees of the senate and imperial edicts, and the God of the Jews was regarded by many as a powerful national God; they accused the people only of narrow-heartedness and intolerance, because they hostilely excluded the worship of other gods; or they found a reason for this in the jealous character of that Being himself, who would have no other gods beside him. Judaism was a *religio licita* for the Jews; and hence the Christians were reproached, as if they had contrived, by appearing as a Jewish sect, to slip in at first under the cover of a tolerated religion.<sup>2</sup> Yet for all this, the Jews were by no means allowed to propagate their religion among the *Roman* pagans;—the laws expressly forbade the latter, under severe penalties, to receive circumcision. It was the case, indeed, at this time, that the number of proselytes from the pagans was greatly multiplied. This the public authorities sometimes allowed to pass unnoticed; but occasionally severe laws were passed anew to repress the evil; as, for instance, by the senate

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus places together, in a proposition to the senate, the phrases "Publica circa bonas artes socordia, et quia externæ superstitiones valescant." *Annal.* l. xi. c. 15. A lady of rank is accused as *superstitiois rea*. *Annal.* l. xiii. c. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Sub umbraculo religionis saltem licitæ.*—Tertullian.

under the Emperor Tiberius,<sup>1</sup> by Antoninus Pius, by Septimius Severus.

The case was altogether different with Christianity. Here was no ancient, national form of worship, as in all the other religions. Christianity appeared rather as a defection from a *religio licita*,—an insurrection against a venerable national faith.<sup>2</sup> This is brought as a charge against the Christians, in the spirit of the prevailing mode of thinking, by Celsus.<sup>3</sup> “The Jews,” he says, “are a nation by themselves, and they observe the sacred institutions of their country,—whatever they may be,—and in so doing, act like other men. It is right for every people to reverence their ancient laws; but to desert them is a crime.” Hence the very common taunt thrown out against the Christians, that they were neither one thing nor the other, neither Jews nor pagans, but *genus tertium*. A religion for mankind must have appeared,—as viewed from that position of antiquity according to which every nation had its own particular religion,—a thing contrary to nature, threatening the dissolution of all existing order. “The man that can believe it possible,” says Celsus, “for Greeks and barbarians, in Asia, Europe, and Lybia, to agree in one code of religious laws, must be quite void of understanding.”<sup>4</sup> But what had been held impossible seemed more likely every day to be realized. It was now perceived that Christianity steadily made progress among people of every rank, and threatened to overthrow the religion of the state, together with the constitution of civil society, which seemed closely interwoven with the same. Nothing else remained, therefore, but to oppose the inward power, which men were unwilling to acknowledge, by outward force. As well the whole shape and form of the Christian worship, as the *idea* of a religion for mankind, stood in direct contradiction with the point of religious development hitherto attained. It excited suspicion

<sup>1</sup> The *senatus consultum de sacris Ægyptiis Judaicisque pellendis*. Tacit. *Annal.* l. ii. c. 85.

<sup>2</sup> A religion proceeding from an *ιστασιακίνας προς τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων*. c. Cels. l. iii. c. 7. For keeping the Christians united together *ἀξίόχρως ὑπόθεσις ἢ στάσις*. l. iii. c. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Δεῖν πάντας ἀνθρώπους κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ζῆν, οὐκ ἂν μεμφθέντας ἐπὶ τούτῳ· Χριστιανούς δὲ τὰ πάτρια καταλιπόντας καὶ οὐχ' ἐν τι τυγχάνοντας ἕθνος ὡς Ἰουδαῖοι, ἐγκτήτως προστίθεσθαι τῇ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ διδασκαλίᾳ*. l. v. c. 25.

<sup>4</sup> His words are: *Ὁ τούτο οἴμενος οἶδεν οὐδέν*. l. viii. c. 72.

to observe that the Christians had nothing of all that which men were accustomed to find in every other form of worship ; nothing of all that which the Jews had in common with the pagans. So Celsus calls it the countersign of a secret compact, of an invisible order, that the Christians alone would have no altars, images, or temples.<sup>1</sup> Again, the intimate brotherly union which prevailed among the Christians, the circumstance that every one among them, in every town where fellow-believers dwelt, immediately found friends, who were dearer to him than all the friends of this world—this was something that men could not comprehend.<sup>2</sup> The Roman police were utterly unable to fathom the nature of the bond which so united the Christians with one another. The jealousy of despotism could everywhere easily see or fear political aims. To the Roman statesman, who had no conception of the rights of conscience, the unbending will, which could be forced by no fear, and by no tortures, to yield obedience to the laws of the state in reference to religion, to perform the prescribed ceremonies, appeared a blind obstinacy, *inflexibilis obstinatio*, as men called it. But such an unconquerable wilfulness must have presented itself to those rulers, who were accustomed to servile obedience, as something extremely dangerous ; and many would sooner pardon in the Christians their defection from the worship of the gods, than their want of reverence for the emperors, in declining to take any part in those idolatrous demonstrations of homage which pagan flattery had invented, such as sprinkling their images with incense, and swearing by their genius. “ I will assuredly,” said Tertullian, “ call the emperor my lord—but in the common acceptation—but when I am not forced to call him lord in the place of God. In other respects I am free of him ; for I have only one Lord—the Almighty and eternal God—the same who is also the emperor’s Lord. How should he wish to be the *lord*, who is the *father* of his country ?”<sup>3</sup> What a contrast to this free, high-hearted spirit of the Christians is offered in the sort of language with which the supercilious and self-conceited philosopher, Celsus, addresses them :

<sup>1</sup> Πιστὸν ἀφανῶς καὶ ἀπορήτου κοινωνίας σύνθημα. L. viii. c. 17.

<sup>2</sup> See the language of the Pagan in Minucius Felix, cited above, at page 104.

<sup>3</sup> Dicam plane imperatorem dominum, sed more communi, sed quando non cogor, ut dominum Dei vice dicam. Cæterum liber sum illi, dominus enim meus unus est, Deus omnipotens et æternus, idem qui et ipsius. Qui pater patriæ est, quomodo dominus est ? Apologet. c. 34.

“ Why should it be a wrong thing, then, to acquire favour with the rulers among men,<sup>1</sup> since these have been exalted to the control over the things of this world, not without a divine providence? And when it is required of you to swear by the emperor among men, there is nothing so mischievous in this; for whatever you receive in life, you receive from him.”<sup>2</sup> Whenever on the anniversary of the emperor’s accession to the throne, or at the celebration of a triumph, public festivals were appointed, in which all were expected to participate, the Christians alone kept away, to avoid that which was calculated to wound their religious or moral feelings, which was uncongenial with the temper of mind inspired by their faith. It cannot be denied that, in this case, many went to an extreme, and shrunk from joining even in such demonstrations of respect and of joy as contained in them nothing that was repugnant to Christian faith and decorum, because they were associated in their minds with the pagan religion and manners,—such, for example, as the illumination of their dwellings, and the decorating them with festoons of laurel.<sup>3</sup> On one occasion a certain sum of money was distributed by the emperor as a gratuity among the soldiers. All presented themselves, as was customary, with garlands on their heads, for the purpose of receiving their portion; but one Christian soldier came with the garland in his hand, because he held the practice of crowning to be a pagan rite.<sup>4</sup> Such acts were, indeed, but overdoings of individuals or of a party;—where, however, the earnest temper at bottom might deserve respect;—and the majority were far from approving such excess of zeal: but the mistake of *individuals* was easily laid to the charge of all. Hence the accusation, so dangerous in those times, of high treason (*crimen majestatis*), which was brought against the Christians. Men called them “irreverent to the Cæsars, enemies of the Cæsars, of the Roman people” (*irreligiosos in Cæsares,*

<sup>1</sup> Τοὺς ἐν ἀνθρώποις δυνάστας καὶ βασιλείας ἐξουμενίζεσθαι.

<sup>2</sup> Δίδονται γὰρ τούτῳ τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς, καὶ ὅτι ἂν λαμβάνῃς ἐν τῷ βίῳ, παρὰ τούτου λαμβάνεις. c. Cels. l. viii. c. 63 et 67.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, in his book, *de idololatria*, complains because so many Christians had no hesitation to take a share in such festivities. Christ, he observes, had said, Let your works shine, at *nunc lucent tabernæ et januæ nostræ, plures jam invenies ethnicorum fores sine lucernis et laureis, quam Christianorum.* *De idololatria*, c. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian wrote his book, “*de corona militis*,” in defence of this soldier against the accusations he met with from his fellow-believers.

hostes Cæsarum, hostes populi Romani.) In like manner, when only a minor party among the Christians regarded the occupation of a soldier as incompatible with the nature of Christian love and of the Christian calling, it was converted into an accusation against all, and against Christianity generally. “Does not the emperor punish you justly?” says Celsus; “for should all do like you, he would be left alone,—there would be none to defend him; the rudest barbarians would make themselves masters of the world, and every trace, as well of your own religion itself, as of true wisdom, would be obliterated from the human race; for believe not that your supreme God would come down from heaven and fight for us.”<sup>1</sup>

If the Christians were accused generally of morosely withdrawing themselves from the world, and from the courtesies of civil and social life, this charge was grounded partly in the relation itself of Christianity to paganism, as that relation was present to each one's own consciousness; but in part also to a certain one-sided tendency, growing in the first place out of the development of the Christian life in its opposition to the pagan world. So the Christians were represented as men dead to the world, and useless for all affairs of life;<sup>2</sup> dumb in public—loquacious among themselves; and it was asked, what would become of the business of life, if all were like them?

Of this kind were the causes by which the Roman state was moved to persecute the Christians; but all persecutions did not proceed from the state. *The Christians were often victims of the popular rage.* The populace saw in them the enemies of their gods; and this was the same thing as to have no religion at all. The deniers of the gods, the atheists (*ἄθεοι*), was the common name by which the Christians were designated among the people; and of such men the vilest and most improbable stories could easily gain belief:—that in their conclaves they were accustomed to abandon themselves to unnatural lust; that they killed and devoured children;—accusations which we find circulated, in the most diverse periods, against religious sects that have once become objects of the fanatic hatred of the populace.

<sup>1</sup> L. viii. c. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Homines infructuosi in negotio, in publico muti, in angulis garruli.* See the words of the Pagan in Minucius Felix.

The reports of disaffected slaves, or of those from whom torture had wrung the confession desired, were next employed to support these absurd charges, and to justify the rage of the populace. If in hot climates the long absence of rain brought on a drought; if in Egypt the Nile failed to irrigate the fields; if in Rome the Tiber overflowed its banks; if a contagious disease was raging; if an earthquake, a famine, or any other public calamity occurred, the popular rage was easily turned against the Christians. "We may ascribe this," was the cry, "to the anger of the gods on account of the spread of Christianity." Thus it had become a proverb in North Africa, according to Augustine, "If there is no rain, tax it on the Christians."<sup>1</sup> And what wonder is it that the people so judged, when one who claimed to be a philosopher, when a Porphyry assigned as the cause why no stop could be put to a contagious and desolating sickness, that by reason of the spread of Christianity, Esculapius' influence on the earth was over.

There was, besides, no want of *individuals* who were ready to excite the popular rage against the Christians; priests, artisans, and others, who, like Demetrius in the Acts, drew their gains from idolatry; magicians, who beheld their juggling tricks exposed, sanctimonious Cynics, who found their hypocrisy unmasked by the Christians. When, in the time of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, the magician whose life has been written by Lucian, Alexander of Abonoteichus, observed that his tricks had ceased to create any sensation in the cities, he exclaimed, "The Pontus is filled with atheists and Christians;" and called on the people to stone them, if they did not wish to draw down on themselves the anger of the gods. He would never exhibit his arts before the people until he had first proclaimed, "If any Atheist, Christian, or Epicurean, has slipped in here as a spy, let him be gone!" An appeal to popular violence seems at this time to have been considered the most convenient course, by the advocates of religion among the pagans.<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr knew that Crescens,—one of the common Pseudo-cynics of the period, who were sanctimonious demagogues,—attempted to stir up the people against the Christians; and that he had threatened Justin's own life, because he had stripped him of his disguise.

<sup>1</sup> Non pluit Deus, duc ad Christianos.

<sup>2</sup> See the Timocles in Lucian's Jupiter Tragœd.

From these remarks on the causes of the persecutions, the conclusion is obvious, *that until Christianity had been received, by express laws of the State, into the class of lawful religions, (religiones licitæ), the Christians could not enjoy any general and certain tranquillity in the exercise of their religion; within the Roman empire they were constantly exposed to the rage of the populace, and to the malice of individuals.* We shall now proceed to consider the ever-changing situation of the Christian church, under the governments of the several emperors who were so differently affected towards it.

#### IV. SITUATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH UNDER THE SEVERAL EMPERORS.

It is related by Tertullian,<sup>1</sup> of the emperor Tiberius, that he was moved by Pilate's report concerning the miracles of Christ and his resurrection, to propose to the senate, that Christ should be received among the gods of Rome; but that the senate set aside the proposition, lest they might yield somewhat of their ancient prerogative of deciding all matters relating to "new religions," upon their own movement (*e motu proprio*); that the emperor, however, did not wholly desist from his object, but went so far at least, as to threaten with severe penalties all such as should accuse the Christians on the ground of their religion. But an author so wanting in critical judgment as Tertullian, cannot possibly be received as a credible witness for a story which wears on its face all the marks of untruth. Should the account be considered as an exaggerated one, but as still having some slight measure of truth at its foundation, even such an hypothesis could not be maintained; though it amounted to no more than this, that the emperor once proposed to grant to the Christians a free toleration. It is neither credible, on the ground of Pilate's character, that what he saw in Christ left on him any such lasting impression as this account assumes; nor is it probable that any such effect would have been produced by his report on the mind of Tiberius. Certainly it would not be in keeping with the servile character of the senate under Tiberius, for them to act, as they must have acted, according to this account; and as there

<sup>1</sup> Apologet. c. 5 et 21.



were no accusers as yet of a Christian sect, there was no occasion for passing a law against such accusers. In fact, the succeeding history shews that no such previous law of Tiberius could have existed. Probably Tertullian had allowed himself to be deceived by some spurious document.

At first, the Christians were confounded with the Jews; consequently, the order issued under the emperor Claudius, in the year 53, for the banishment of the turbulent Jews, would involve the Christians also, if there were any at that time in Rome, and if Christianity made its first converts there among Jews, who continued to observe the Jewish customs. Suetonius says, "the emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, who were constantly raising disturbances, at the instigation of Chrestus."<sup>1</sup> We could suppose, that some factious Jew then living, of this name, one of the numerous class of Jewish freedmen in Rome, was intended. But as no individual so universally known as the Chrestus of Suetonius seems to have been considered by that writer, is elsewhere mentioned; and as the name of Christus (Χριστός) was frequently pronounced Chrestus (Χρηστός) by the pagans; it is quite probable that Suetonius, who wrote half a century after the event, throwing together what he had heard about the political expectations of a Messiah among the Jews, and the obscure and confused accounts which may have reached him respecting Christ, was thus led to express himself in a manner so vague and indefinite.

Christianity meanwhile had been continually making progress among the pagans in the Roman empire; and the worship of God, shaped according to the principles of the Apostle Paul, rendered it no longer possible to mistake the Christians for a Jewish sect. Such was the case particularly with the Roman communities, as the persecution, soon to be mentioned, shews; for this could not have arisen, if the Christians, as men who were descended from Jews, and observed the Mosaic laws, had been held to be simply a sect of that people. They must have already drawn on themselves, in the capital of the world, the fanatical hatred of the populace, as the *tertium genus*, neither one thing nor the other. Already had the popular feeling given currency to those monstrous reports above noticed, of unnatural crimes to which the secret

<sup>1</sup> Impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit.

sect of these enemies of the gods abandoned themselves.<sup>1</sup> It was not the principles of the civil law of the empire,—it was this popular hate, which furnished the occasion for this first persecution of the Christians in Rome. But its immediate cause was something wholly accidental; and that precisely so reckless a monster as Nero must be the first persecutor of the Christians, was likewise owing immediately to a concurrence of accidental circumstances. Yet there was something intrinsically significant in the fact, that the individual by whom the renunciation of everything on the side of the divine and moral was most completely carried out, that the impersonation of creaturely will revolting against all higher order, must give the first impulse to the persecution of Christianity.

The moving cause which led Nero, in the year 64, to vent his fury against the Christians, was originally nothing else than a wish to divert from himself the suspicion of being the author of the conflagration of Rome, and to fix the guilt on others; and as the Christians were already become objects of popular hatred, and the fanatic mob were prepared to believe them capable of any shameful crime that might be charged upon them, such an accusation, if brought against the Christians, would be most easily credited.<sup>2</sup> He could make himself popular by the sufferings inflicted on a class of men hated by the people, and at the same time secure a new gratification for his satanic cruelty. All being seized whom the popular hate had stigmatized as Christians, and therefore profligate men,<sup>3</sup> it might easily happen that some who were not really Christians would be included in the number.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We believe the passage in Tacitus (Annal. l. xv. c. 44), "per flagitia invisos, quos vulgus Christianos appellabat," must have reference to these reports.

<sup>2</sup> Abolendo rumori subdidit reos, says Tacitus of Nero.

<sup>3</sup> Quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat, says Tacitus.

<sup>4</sup> In the interpretation of Tacitus' account of this transaction, several points may be doubtful. When he says, *Primo correpti, qui fatebantur*, the question arises, what did they confess?—that they had set the fire, or that they were Christians? When he says, *Deinde iudicio eorum multitudo ingens haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis convicti sunt*, the question occurs, does the latter refer to all, to those that "confessed," as well as the rest,—so that, by Tacitus, all are pronounced free from the alleged crime of being the authors of the conflagration; or do the words refer only to the *multitudo ingens*, so that the first-named class, *qui fatebantur*, were designated as being really guilty of setting fire to the city? If the latter be the case, and if the *fateri* is to be referred to the *incendium*, and this account deserves confidence throughout, we must conceive here of persons actually employed by Nero for the perpetration of the

Those arrested as Christians were now, by the emperor's commands, executed in the most cruel manner. Some were crucified; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to be torn in pieces by dogs; others, again, had their garments smeared over with some combustible material, and were then set on fire to illuminate the public gardens at night.

This persecution was not, indeed, in its immediate effects, a general one; but fell exclusively on the Christians in Rome, accused as the incendiaries of the city. Yet what had occurred in the capital could not fail of being attended with serious consequences affecting the situation of the Christians—whose religion, moreover, was an unlawful one—throughout all the provinces.

The impression which this first and truly horrible persecution, by a man who presented so noticeable a contrast with the great historical phenomenon of Christianity, left behind it, endured for a long time on the minds of the Christians. Nor was it altogether without truth, when the image of the Antichrist,—the representative of that last reaction of the power of ungodliness against the divine government and against Christianity,—was transferred to so colossal an exhibition of self-will rebelling against all holy restraints, and even passing over to the side of the unnatural,<sup>1</sup> as was presented in the character of Nero. It may often be observed, that the impression left by a man in whom an important principle, connected with the history of the world, has manifested itself, or from whom a great power of destruction has gone forth, is not so immediately effaced, nor room allowed for the thought that such a person has really ceased to exist; as we see in the examples of the Emperor Frederic II. and of Napoleon. So it was in the case of this monstrous exhibition of the power of evil. The rumour prevailed among the heathen people, that Nero was not dead, but had retired to some place of secrecy, from which he would again make his appearance,<sup>2</sup>—a rumour

deed; not Christians, but such as the people designated by the name of Christians—hated, abominable men. These, perhaps with the hope of bettering their fate, may then have denounced many others as Christians, among whom may have been some who really were, and others who were not such.

<sup>1</sup> A characteristic trait of Nero, as described by Tacitus—"incredibilium cupitor." *Annal.* l. xv. c. 42.

<sup>2</sup> The words of Tacitus are: *Vario super exitu ejus rumore eoque pluribus vivere eum fingentibus credentibusque.* *Hist.* l. ii. c. 8.

which several adventurers and impostors took advantage of for their own ends. Now this rumour assumed also a Christian dress, and it ran, that Nero had retired beyond the Euphrates, and would return as the Antichrist,<sup>1</sup> to finish what he had already begun, the destruction of that Babylon, the capital of the world.

Since the despotic Domitian, who ascended the imperial throne in 81, was in the practice of encouraging informers, and of removing out of the way, under various pretexts, those persons who had excited his suspicions or his cupidity, the charge of embracing Christianity would, in this reign, be the most common one after that of high treason (*crimen majestatis*.)<sup>2</sup> In consequence of such accusations, many were condemned to death, or to the confiscation of their property and banishment to an island.<sup>3</sup>

The emperor, moreover, was secretly informed that two individuals were living in Palestine, of the race of David and Jesus, who were engaged in seditious undertakings. The seditious tendency of the Jewish expectations of a Messiah were already well known, and the language of the Christians, in speaking of the kingdom of Christ, was often misunderstood.<sup>4</sup> He caused the individuals who had been accused to be brought before him, and convinced himself that they were poor, innocent countrymen, quite incapable of engaging in any political schemes; he therefore allowed them to return in peace to their homes.<sup>5</sup> But from this, certainly, it cannot be inferred, that the emperor revoked those measures which had been adopted against the Christians generally, and which had another motive.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Pseudo-Sibyline books: *Εἴτ' ἀνακάμψει ἰσάζων Θεῶν αὐτόν.*

<sup>2</sup> The words of Dio Cassius, l. lxxvii. c. 14: "Ἐγκλημα ἀθιότητος, ὑφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι εἰς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἤθη ἰξοκίλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν. The uniting of the charge of *ἀθιότης* with that of an inclination to Jewish customs, may have allusion to Christianity, if *ἀθιότης* is not to be understood as barely referring to the denial of the gods of the state religion. At all events, the charge of *ἀθιότης*, if applied to the embracing of Judaism, which was at least the worship of a well-known national god, and for the Jews a lawful religion, could, a fortiori, be brought against the conversion to Christianity.

<sup>3</sup> Besides Dio Cassius, another historian cited in the chronicle of Eusebius, namely, Bruttius, says that many suffered martyrdom under the reign of this emperor.

<sup>4</sup> For evidence of this, see Justin Martyr (*Apolog.* l. ii. c. 58.) *'Ακούσαντες βασιλίαν προσδοκῶντας ἡμᾶς, ἀκρίτως ἀνθρώπων λίγιν ἡμᾶς ὑπειλήφατε.*

<sup>5</sup> Hegesippus in Euseb. l. iii. c. 19 and 20.

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian certainly expresses himself in too general a manner, when he says (*Απο-*

The emperor Nerva, who assumed the government in the year 96, was, by the natural justice and philanthropy of his character, an enemy to that whole system of information and sycophancy which had been the occasion of so much evil in the time of his predecessors. This of itself was favourable to the Christians, inasmuch as the crime of passing over to their religion had been one of the most common subjects of accusation. Nerva set at liberty those who had been condemned on charges of this nature, and recalled such as had been banished; he caused all the slaves and freedmen, who had appeared as accusers of their masters, to be executed. He forbade generally the accusations of slaves against their masters to be received. All this must have operated favourably on the Christians, as the complaints brought against them proceeded frequently from ill-disposed slaves. Accusations on such accounts as had furnished the matter of the great number of condemnations under the preceding reign, were in general no longer to be allowed; and among these Christianity was probably included.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is true, the complaints against the Christians must, during the short reign of Nerva, have been suspended; yet no lasting tranquillity was secured to them, since their religion was not recognised by any public act as a *religio licita*; and we may easily conceive, that if Christianity, during these few years, could be diffused without opposition, the fury of its enemies, which had been held in check, would break forth with fresh violence on this emperor's death.

These consequences ensued under the reign of Trajan, after the year 99; since this emperor, a statesman in the Roman sense, could not overlook the encroachments on all sides of a religious community so entirely repugnant in its character to the Roman spirit. And the law issued by him against close associations (the *Hetæriæ*), for the purpose of suppressing the factious element in many districts, might easily be turned against the Christians, who formed a party so closely united together. It was at this time (A.D. 110) the younger Pliny, whose noble suscepti-

loget. c. 5), that Domitian made but one attempt to persecute the Christians, but that he desisted from his purpose, and recalled those that had been banished.

<sup>1</sup> Dio Cassius mentions, in connection with the *crimen majestatis*, the charge of *ἀσέβεια*, also of the *ἰουδαϊκὸς βίος*, although certainly by *ἀσέβεια*, we are not to understand the *ἀθεϊότης*, or Christianity.

bility to all purely human feelings shines forth so amiably in his letters, came, as proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus, into countries over which many Christians were dispersed. A great number of them were arraigned before his tribunal. He was thrown into embarrassment, as he had never before taken a share in such transactions; as there was no settled law on the matter, except the general principles of the civil law of the empire, relating to "religiones novæ et peregrinæ," and as the number of the accused was so great; "for many," he writes to the emperor, "of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes, would be involved in the danger; for the contagion of this superstition has seized not only cities, but also the villages and open country." The temples were deserted, the ordinary rites of worship could not for a long time be celebrated, and victims for sacrifice were rarely purchased.<sup>1</sup> Pliny, like a lover of justice, did not allow himself to prejudge the case, but took all pains to inform himself as to the character of the Christian sect. He questioned such as had for many years been separated from the Christian community, and apostates are usually little inclined to speak well of the society to which they formerly belonged. Following the brutal custom of Roman justice, which paid no regard to man's universal rights, he applied torture to two female slaves, who held the office of deaconesses in the Christian communities, for the purpose of extorting from them the truth. And after all, he could learn only that the Christians were in the custom of meeting together on a certain day (Sunday); that they then united in a hymn of praise to their God, Christ; and that they bound one another,<sup>2</sup> not to the commission of crimes,<sup>3</sup> but to refrain from theft, from adultery; to be faithful in performing their promises, to withhold from none the property intrusted to their keeping;<sup>4</sup> that after this they separated, and met again in the evening at a simple

<sup>1</sup> Plin. l. x. ep. 97. Prope jam desolata templa, sacra solennia diu intermissa, victimæ, quarum adhuc rarissimus emtor inveniebatur.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to the baptismal vow, the sacramentum militiæ Christianæ, to which there is frequent reference in the practical homilies.

<sup>3</sup> A plain contradiction of those popular rumours respecting the objects had in view in the secret assemblies among the Christians.

<sup>4</sup> Whoever by such a sin violated his baptismal vow, was excluded from the fellowship of the Church.

and innocent meal.<sup>1</sup> But these latter assemblies had been discontinued in compliance with the emperor's edict against the *Hetæriæ*.

If we compare Pliny with his friend Tacitus, so far as it concerns their relation to Christianity, the former distinguishes himself at once by the greater freedom and impartiality of his judgment. Tacitus, without entering into any further investigation of the facts, allows himself to be swayed by his prejudices against everything not Roman, against a religion coming from the Jews, the founder of which had been executed by the order of a Roman governor, a religion which found so many adherents among people of the lower class; he is carried away by the popular reports which fell in with those prejudices. He reckons Christianity among the many new and bad customs, which from all quarters of the world flowed together and found sympathy in the great capital, Rome.<sup>2</sup> He sees in it nothing but an *exitiabilis superstitio*,—in the Christians, only *homines per flagitiis invisos*,—men hateful for their crimes, and who deserved the severest punishments.<sup>3</sup> Pliny does not allow himself to be hurried at once to a conclusion by his own prejudices or prevailing rumours. He considers it his duty to enter into a careful investigation of the case before he decides. The result of his inquiry was favourable to the Christians, in so far as the judgment was based on purely moral grounds, and the general right of mankind to freedom in the worship of God was recognised. But Pliny shares in common with Tacitus the partial and contracted views of the Roman statesman, which prevented him from taking that elevated stand. He sees in a religion which absorbs the whole interest of men, and makes them forget everything else, nothing but a *superstitio prava*,<sup>4</sup> or as we might express it, by converting the phrase into modern language, a misty pietism. He requires, inasmuch as he looks upon religion as a matter of the state, unconditional obedience to the laws of the empire. With the character of the reli-

<sup>1</sup> Plainly in contradiction of the popular rumours respecting those unnatural repasts of the Christians, the *epulis Thyestæis*.

<sup>2</sup> Quo cuncta undique atrocias aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque.

<sup>3</sup> Sontes et novissima exempla meritos.

<sup>4</sup> Not *exitiabilis*, because he was obliged to acknowledge that the Christians were blameless in their lives.

gion he has nothing to do. Whatever that might be, defiance of the imperial laws must be severely punished.<sup>1</sup>

The Christians must deny their faith, invoke the gods, offer incense and pour out libations before the image of the emperor, together with the images of the gods, and curse Christ. If they declined so to do, and, after having been thrice called upon by the governor to abjure their faith, continued steadfastly to confess that they were Christians, and would remain so, Pliny condemned them to death, as obstinate confessors of a *religio illicita*, who dared publicly defy the laws of the empire. They who complied with the governor's terms were pardoned.

It is no matter of wonder, considering the rapid and powerful spread of Christianity in this country, if the faith of many, who had come over to the religion during the peaceful times of Nerva, was of no such nature as to stand the trial of persecution. Sudden and extensive conversions of this kind are not apt to prove the most thorough. So was it in the present case; many who had embraced Christianity, or were on the point of embracing it, drew back at the threatening prospect of death, and the consequences of this change were visible in the increase of the numbers who participated in the public religious ceremonies.

In observing the effect of his measures, Pliny fell into the same mistake into which statesmen, crafty in all other things, have often fallen, with regard to concerns which stand related to what is highest and most free in human nature. The happy issue which for the moment seemed to attend the course he had chosen, led him to hope that by degrees the new sect might easily be suppressed, if the same method should continue to be pursued; if severity were suitably blended with mildness; if the obstinate were punished to terrify the others, while such as were disposed to retract were not driven to desperation by the refusal of pardon.

In submitting the report of these transactions to the Emperor Trajan,<sup>2</sup> he requested his advice particularly on the following questions:—Whether a distinction was to be made of different

<sup>1</sup> His words are: *Neque enim dubitabam, quaecunque esset, quod faterentur, pervicaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri.*

<sup>2</sup> L. x. ep. 97. This report of Pliny, which we have followed thus far, bears the indubitable marks of genuineness on its face. No one but the Roman statesman could *so* write on the affair.



ages, or the young and tender were to be treated precisely in the same way with the more mature? <sup>1</sup> Whether any time was to be allowed for repentance, or every person who had once been a Christian was in every case to be punished? Whether the Christians were liable to punishment simply as such, or only on account of other offences? It is plain, from the judicial proceedings of Pliny above described, how most of these questions ought, according to his own view of the case, to be answered; and the emperor approved of these proceedings; moreover, in deciding the questions submitted to his authority, he went on the same principles. The Christians, he did not place in the same class with ordinary criminals, for whom the governors in the provinces caused search to be made by the police.<sup>2</sup> They were not to be sought after; but when information was lodged against them, and they were arraigned before the tribunal, they must be punished. In *what way* the emperor does not explain; he even admits that on this point no certain rule of general application could be given.<sup>3</sup> It appears, however, that the punishment was generally understood to be death. Moreover, Trajan accorded pardon to such as manifested repentance.

As early a Christian writer as Tertullian found that this decision involved a contradiction. If the emperor considered the Christians as guilty, he ought to have directed that, like all other criminals, they should be sought out and delivered over to punishment; if he regarded them as innocent, punishment was in all cases alike unjust. Without doubt, a correct judgment when the matter is considered in its purely moral aspect; but this was not the view of it taken by the emperor. He stood in the position of a *politician* and a *judge*, governed by the laws of the Roman State. He was of the opinion, that open contempt of the "Roman ceremonies," open resistance to the laws of the empire, could not be suffered in any case to go unpunished, even though no act was connected with it of a *morally* punishable nature.<sup>4</sup> Thus the emperor believed himself *obliged* to proceed, whenever such

<sup>1</sup> This question was probably occasioned by the fact that *many children and youth* (see above) were found among the Christians.

<sup>2</sup> The *σιηνάρχους*, *Curiosos*.

<sup>3</sup> Neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habeat, constitui potest.

<sup>4</sup> Like Pliny; see his language cited on page 135, note 1.

unlawful conduct attracted public attention; but he wished, as far as possible, to ignore it, so that *indulgence* might be exercised to the full extent compatible with due regard for the laws. Agreeing with Pliny, that Christianity was but a fanatic delusion, *he* too probably imagined, that if severity were tempered with clemency, if too much notice were not to be taken of the matter, and if open offences were neither suffered to go unpunished nor prosecuted with rigour, the hot enthusiasm would easily cool to indifference, and the cause gradually expire of its own accord. If Christianity had possessed no higher principle, the result would have justified the emperor's opinion.

The change produced by the rescript of Trajan was this: Christianity, which hitherto had *tacitly* passed for an "unlawful religion" (a *religio illicita*), was now condemned as such by an *express law*.<sup>1</sup> It was the emperor's design that the Christians should be subjected only to legal trials; but the impulse had been now given to a movement to which no limits could be fixed. With the political opposition associated itself the religious, which exercises a vastly greater power on men's passions. The open war of paganism with the spiritual might that threatened its destruction was lighted up. The fanatical rage of the populace imagined it had found a point of union and support in the laws, and the Christians were laid bare to their assaults. These commenced in the first years of the government of Hadrian, who was elevated to the imperial throne in 117. There were governors

<sup>1</sup> According to a document preserved in the chronicle of Johannes Malalas (l. xi. p. 273, ed. Niebuhr), Tiberianus, Præfect of Palestina prima, had informed the emperor, that the Christians offered themselves in crowds, and that nothing could be accomplished by the effusion of blood. Moved by this information, the emperor issued a new edict, forbidding the execution of the Christians. Against the authenticity of the writing here communicated, we would not adduce the name "Galileans," which is applied to the Christians in no other document of *this period*. There might have been some particular local reason for the employment of this name. But when Tiberian says, that he had not become tired of destroying the Christians, this assuredly does not agree very well with the above cited rescript of Trajan, which expressly commands that the Christians should *not be sought after*. And the statement that the Christians hastened to surrender themselves hardly agrees with the times. It was the more violent persecutions which first called forth such an enthusiastic tendency. Neither can we regard the report of the martyrdom of the bishop Ignatius of Antioch as a document belonging to this period. In this narrative we do not recognise the Emperor Trajan, and therefore feel ourselves compelled to entertain doubts with regard to everything reported in this account; as, for example, that Christians were already, in the reign of this emperor, thrown to wild beasts.

who looked on the shedding of human blood with indifference, and who were very ready to sacrifice persecuted men to the popular fury, in order to gain for themselves the good-will of their provinces, or who also shared in the fanaticism of the people. They might the more easily believe they could pursue this course with impunity, or even with the emperor's approbation, because they knew he was ardently attached to the sacred customs (the *sacra*) of his country. When, in the year 124, he made a tour through Greece, and procured himself to be initiated into all the Hellenic mysteries, the enemies of Christianity thought it a favourable opportunity to begin their persecutions of the hated sect. The two learned Christians, Quadratus and Aristides, were hence induced to present, each of them, to the emperor, an apology in behalf of their companions in the faith. But a still greater influence than could possibly have come from such apologetic writings, was doubtless produced on an emperor who loved justice and social order, by the representations of Serrenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia Minor, who complained of the disorderly attacks of the populace on the Christians. In consequence of this complaint, the emperor issued a rescript to his successor in office, Minucius Fundanus.<sup>1</sup>

Hadrian declared himself decidedly against a practice whereby the innocent might be disturbed, and opportunity would be given to false accusers of extorting money by threatening to bring before the tribunal such as were suspected of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> No

<sup>1</sup> The genuineness of the rescript is proved, not only by its being cited in an apology which the bishop Melito of Sardis addressed to the second successor of this emperor (Euseb. l. iv. c. 26), but still more clearly by *its contents*; for it cannot be supposed that a Christian would have been contented with saying so little to the advantage of his fellow-believers. That Hadrian treated the Christians with gentleness, appears evident from the praise bestowed on him by some Christian, who probably wrote not long after this time, in the fifth book of the Pseudo-Sibyllines; Ἀργυρόκρανος ἀνὴρ, τῷ δ' ἴσσιταί τ' οὐνομα πόντου, ἴσσαι καὶ πανάριστος ἀνὴρ καὶ πάντα νοήσει.

<sup>2</sup> I am of the opinion that Rufinus had before him the Latin original, but that Eusebius, as usual, has not translated with sufficient accuracy. Eusebius says (l. vi. c. 9); ἵνα μὴ τοῖς συκοφάνταις χρηγία κακουργίας παρασχιθῆ. Rufinus, ne calumniatoribus latrocinandi tribuatur occasio. It is not easy to see how it could ever occur to Rufinus to translate the general term, κακουργία, into the special one, latrocinatio, when the context furnished no occasion-whatsoever for such a change; while, on the other hand, it is easy to see how Eusebius might loosely employ a general term to express the special one of the original. Latrocinari is here synonymous with concutere elsewhere. Tertullian's words to the Governor Scapula, when the latter began to appear as a perse-

accusations against Christians were to be received but such as were in the legal form; the Christians were no longer to be arrested on mere popular clamour. When legally brought to trial, and convicted of doing contrary to the laws,<sup>1</sup> they were to be punished according to their deserts; but a severe punishment was also to be inflicted on false accusers. Similar rescripts were sent by the emperor to many other provinces.<sup>2</sup> If by "doing contrary to the laws" in this rescript, were meant criminal conduct, or any infraction of civil order, without reference to religion, we should be obliged to consider it as a proper edict of toleration, whereby Christianity was received into the class of "lawful religions;" but had this been the emperor's intention, he would certainly have explained more distinctly what was meant by acts contrary to the laws. After the rescript of Trajan, a particular declaration, distinctly expressed, was required, unless the silence itself was to be permitted to operate to the disadvantage of the Christians.<sup>3</sup> Hadrian's rescript was properly directed only against the attacks of the excited populace on such as were reported to be Christians; it only required a legal form of trial, which had been also the will of Trajan. At best, the vague expressions of the rescript might be turned to the advantage of the Christians, by those who were so disposed.<sup>4</sup> It was not so much his regard for Christianity, or the Christian people, as his love of justice, that led the emperor to the adoption of these measures; for Hadrian, as we have already remarked, was a strict and zealous

cutor, may serve to explain the sense: *Parce provinciæ, quæ visa intentione tua obnoxia facta est concussionibus et militum et inimicorum suorum cujusque.*

<sup>1</sup> *Eos adversum leges quicquam agere.*

<sup>2</sup> According to Melito of Sardis. See Euseb. l. iv. c. 26.

<sup>3</sup> If Melito of Sardis (l. c.) says afterwards to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, that his predecessors had honoured Christianity together with other modes of worship, *πρὸς ταῖς ἄλλαις θεησεκείαις ἐτίμησαν*, very little can be inferred from this; for whoever claimed an emperor's protection for Christianity, would naturally make the most of what had been done, or seemed to have been done, for the Christians, by his predecessors.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian (*ad Scapulam*, c. 5) cites the examples of two magistrates who took advantage of this rescript, to procure the acquittal of Christians. Vespronius Candidus dismissed a Christian who had been arraigned before him, because it was contrary to good order to follow the clamour of the multitude (*quasi tumultuosum civibus satisfacere*.) Another, Pudens, observing from the protocol (*elogium*) with which a Christian was sent over to him, that he had been seized in a disorderly manner and with threats (*concussione ejus intellecta*), dismissed him, with the remark, that, in conformity with the laws, he could not hear men where there was no certain legal accuser.

follower of the old Roman, and, it may be added, the old Grecian religions, and looked upon the sacred rights of foreigners with disdain.<sup>1</sup> This temper of mind shines out through the remarkable letter which the emperor wrote to the Consul Servianus.<sup>2</sup> It is true, Christianity in itself forms no part of the subject of this letter, but is only introduced by the way. He is speaking simply of the multifarious and restless activity of the Alexandrians, of their *polypragmatic* character, and of the peculiar religious *syncretism*, which had sprung up in that common centre of the commerce of the world. A vein of sarcasm runs through the whole. "Those who worship Serapis," says Hadrian, "are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are worshippers of Serapis. There is no ruler of a synagogue, no Samaritan, no presbyter of the Christians, who is not an astrologer, a soothsayer. The patriarch of the Jews himself, when he comes to Egypt, is forced by one party to worship Serapis, by the other Christ.<sup>3</sup> They have but one God, who is none. Him, Christians, Jews, and all races, worship alike."<sup>4</sup> He touches on Christianity merely as one element in this mixture of religions. The picture floating before his mind is rather the general aspect of Alexandrian life, or such exhibitions of it as might be presented, for example, in Gnostic sects, which started into existence there as purely Christian communities. At the same time, it is impossible not to perceive from this description, how *very* far Hadrian was from respecting Christianity, or *monotheistic* religion generally.

The account, therefore, appears incredible, which we have from a historian belonging to the early part of the fourth century, Ælius Lampridius,<sup>5</sup> that the emperor had it in view to place Christ among the Roman gods, and hence caused to be erected in all the cities, temples without images, which were called "Ha-

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Ælius Spartian. vita Hadriani, c. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Flavii Vopisci Saturninus, c. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Illi, qui Serapim colunt, Christiani sunt, et devoti sunt Serapi, qui se Christi episcopos dicunt. Nemo illic archisynagogus Judæorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum presbyter non mathematicus, non haruspex, non aliptes. Compare this with Juvenal's description of the braggart disposition, the boastful pretension to clear understanding of all matters, which characterized the class whom he calls "Græculi." Sat. iii. v. 75.

<sup>4</sup> Unus illis Deus nullus est. Hunc Christiani, hunc Judæi, hunc omnes venerantur et gentes.

<sup>5</sup> Alex. Sever. c. 24.

drian's temples" (*templa Hadriani*);<sup>1</sup> but that he was prevented, by the representations of the priests, from carrying out his design. This report probably sprung from the same source with that of so many other fictitious legends,—the desire of accounting for something, the true cause of which was unknown; in the present case, from the desire of explaining the object of these temples, which had been left unfinished. United with this, was the exaggerated opinion, resting on a few misapprehended facts, of the emperor's favourable disposition towards Christianity. On so slender a foundation, men thought themselves warranted to transfer to this emperor a mode of thinking which they found in others who came after him,—as, for instance, in Alexander Severus.

Under this government, so favourable to the Christians in the Roman empire, they suffered a serious persecution in another quarter. A certain Barcochba,—who pretended to be the Messiah, and under whom, as their leader, the Jews once more revolted against the Romans,—endeavoured to prevail on the Christians in Palestine to renounce their faith, and join in the insurrection. Failing of his purpose, he caused those that fell into his hands to be executed in the most cruel manner.

After the death of Hadrian, A.D. 138, the rescripts issued by him lost their power; at the same time, under the government of his successor, Antoninus Pius, various public calamities, famine, an inundation of the Tiber, earthquakes in Asia Minor and in the island of Rhodes, ravaging fires at Rome, Antioch, and Carthage, rekindled the popular fury against the Christians to greater violence than ever.<sup>2</sup> The mild and philanthropic emperor could not approve of such injurious treatment of a part of his subjects. In different rescripts, addressed to Grecian states, he declared himself wholly opposed to these violent proceedings. The indulgence shewn by this emperor to the Christians would appear to have been carried to a still greater length, might we regard as genuine a rescript ascribed in all probability to him (not to his successor, Marcus Aurelius),—the rescript to the Assembly of Deputies in Asia Minor (*πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν τῆς Ἀσίας*); for in this he declares expressly, that the Christians were to be punished only when convicted of political crimes; that, on the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> Ἀδριανίαια, mentioned already in Arstid. orat. sacr. i.

<sup>2</sup> Julii Capitolini vita Antonini Pii, c. 9.

whoever accused them on the score of their religion should be liable himself to prosecution. But the author of this rescript speaks rather the language of a Christian than of a pagan emperor, especially of one whose distinguishing praise was his "singular and scrupulous regard for the public ceremonies" (*in-signis erga cærimonias publicas cura et religio. Fabretti marmor.*) The succeeding history, moreover, does not notice the existence of such an edict.<sup>1</sup>

Under the reign of the succeeding emperor, Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher, A.D. 161, many public calamities occurred, particularly a destructive pestilence, whose ravages gradually extended from Ethiopia through the entire Roman empire as far as Gaul. Such events could not fail to produce the same injurious impression of hostility to the enemies of the gods, on the feelings of the multitude. It was during this time, the magician Alexander stirred up the zeal of the people for their gods, promising them miraculous aid from these higher powers, and exasperating their hatred against the Christians. If the persecutions of this reign, however, had sprung only from the popular fury, and if Aurelius had been similarly disposed with his predecessors, this fury might have been restrained also under the influence of his administration. But, on the contrary, we now see the higher authorities of the state leagued together with the people in the cause of oppression. In Asia Minor, the Christians were persecuted with such extreme violence, that Melito, bishop of Sardis, who appeared as their advocate before the emperor, said,<sup>2</sup> "The race of God's worshippers in this country are persecuted as they never were before, by *new edicts*; for the shameless sycophants, greedy of others' possessions,—since they are furnished by these edicts with an opportunity of so doing,—plunder their innocent victims day and night. And let it be right, if it is done by your command, since a just emperor will never resolve on any unjust measure; and we will cheerfully bear the honourable lot of such a death. Yet we would submit this single petition, that you would inform yourself re-

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, it is true, says that Melito of Sardis refers to this rescript in his apology addressed to the succeeding emperor. But it is remarkable that Melito, in the fragment introduced by Eusebius, *fails* to quote *this* rescript, though it would have been far more favourable to the Christians than the edict he actually cites.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. iv. c. 26.

specting the people who excite this contention, and impartially decide whether they deserve punishment and death, or deliverance and peace. But if this resolve, and this new edict,—an edict which ought not so to be issued even against hostile barbarians,—comes from yourself, we pray you the more not to leave us exposed to such public robbery.”

These words of Melito, in which he shews no less of Christian dignity than of Christian prudence, lead us to several reflections. Already, after the edict of Trajan, *Christians once accused might be punished with death*; and this edict had never been officially revoked, though the clemency of the last emperors may have operated to prevent its being rigorously executed. But Melito says, that a new and terrible edict had been issued by the proconsul, *inviting men to lodge informations against the Christians*. This is the more extraordinary, as it happens to be under the government of an emperor who was by no means inclined to the disorderly practice of information,<sup>1</sup> and as it appears to have been the policy of Aurelius, in other cases, to diminish the penalties affixed to crimes by the laws.<sup>2</sup> And we can hardly suppose the proconsul would venture to issue a new edict on his own responsibility. Indeed, Melito himself seems not to have believed otherwise, than that the edict proceeded from the emperor. His expressions of doubt were necessary, to enable him, with due respect for the imperial authority, to invite a repeal of the obnoxious edict.

Perhaps by glancing at the philosophical and religious system of Marcus Aurelius, considered in its relation to Christianity, we shall be prepared to understand better his views and conduct with regard to it. The Stoic philosophy was not calculated to make him a friend to the Christians. What he esteemed as the highest attainment, was that composure in view of death, which proceeded from cool reflection, from conviction on scientific grounds—the resignation of the sage, ready to surrender even personal existence to the annihilation demanded by the iron law of the universal whole. But a thing altogether unintelligible to him was the enthusiasm, springing out of a living faith, and a well-assured hope, grounded on that faith, with which the Christians met death. A conviction which by arguments of reason could not be communi-

<sup>1</sup> Julii Capitolini vita, c. 11.

<sup>2</sup> L. c. c. 24.



cated to all, appeared to him as nothing but fanaticism; and the way in which many Christians, really under fanatical excitement, even courted death, might confirm him in these views. He, too, like Pliny and Trajan, could see nothing in disobedience to the laws of the empire on matters of religion but blind obstinacy.

Let us quote the emperor's own language respecting the Christians, as we find it in his *Meditations*.<sup>1</sup> "The soul," he says, "when it must depart from the body, should be ready to be extinguished, to be dispersed, or to subsist a while longer with the body. But this readiness must proceed from its own judgment, and not from mere obstinacy,<sup>2</sup> as with the Christians; it must be arrived at with reflection and dignity, so that you could even convince another without declamation." Judging the Christians from this point of view, though he found them guilty in other respects of nothing immoral, though he could hardly credit the popular rumours which had been so often refuted, yet he might still regard them as enthusiasts, dangerous to social order; and when he observed how Christianity, under the least mild governments, was continually making encroachments on all sides, he might consider himself called upon to check its further progress by energetic measures.

We must see in Marcus Aurelius, not barely the Roman statesman and the Stoic philosopher, but also the man of a child-like piety of disposition, for which he was indebted, as he tells us himself,<sup>3</sup> to the influence of a pious mother on his education; and assuredly, he had received in this way something of more substantial worth than an abstract religion of reason could have given him. To the question (often proposed to the Christians), where have you seen the gods, or whence know you their *existence*, that you so reverence them? he answers: "In the first place, they make themselves visible even to the eye of sense;"—where we may suppose he had in mind either those visible deities, the heavenly bodies, or, what is more probable, appearances of the gods in visions and dreams. "But again, I have never seen my own soul, and yet I respect it. So, too, I come to know the existence of the gods, because I constantly experience the effects of their

<sup>1</sup> L. xi. c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Μὴ κατὰ ψιλὴν παράταξιν, ἀτραγῶδως, perversitas, obstinatio.

<sup>3</sup> Παρὰ τῆς μητρὸς τὸ θεοσεβείν.

power, and hence I reverence them.”<sup>1</sup> And certainly there was truth lying at the ground of those experiences, although Marcus Aurelius knew not the “unknown God” from whom they came, and to whom they were designed to lead him, as the God of revelation; as, for example, when he says, on a retrospect of the divine providence which had guided him along from childhood, “So far as it depended on the gods, on the influences coming from them, on their aids and suggestions, I might have attained already to a life in harmony with nature; but if I still fall short of this mark, it is my own fault, and must be ascribed to my neglect of following the admonitions, I might almost say, the express instructions, of the gods.”<sup>2</sup> We find traces in his writings of an honest self-examination; we see how very far he was from confounding *himself* with the ideal of the wise man; how the sense of his own deficiency disposed him to gentleness towards others. It is true, such kind of self-knowledge which, for others, led the way to Christianity, could not conduct him thither, because he was skilful in interpreting those inner experiences by his Stoic doctrine of fatalism, which made the bad necessary, no less than the good, to the realization of the harmony of the universe. And in this view, also, he found comfort in a stoical resignation; for says he, “When you see others sin, reflect that you also sin in various ways, and are just such as they. And though you abstain from many sinful actions, yet you have within the inclination to commit them, though you may be restrained from indulging it, by fear, by vanity, or some similar motive.”<sup>3</sup> He belonged to the class of those who, like the Platonists above mentioned, were seeking for a middle way between superstition and infidelity. He desired a cheerful piety, without superstition. He believed honestly, as appears evident from the passages above cited, in the reality of the gods, and of their appearances. With other devout pagans of his time, he was convinced that the gods revealed in dreams, sent to those that honoured them, the knowledge of remedies for bodily disease, and imagined that he had experienced such assistance himself in several cases of sickness.<sup>4</sup> When the pestilence already mentioned was raging in Italy, he looked upon it as a warning to restore the ancient worship in its minutest particulars. He sum-

<sup>1</sup> L. xii. c. 28.<sup>2</sup> L. i. c. 17.<sup>3</sup> L. xi. c. 18.<sup>4</sup> L. i. c. 17

moned priests from all quarters to Rome, and even put off his expedition against the Marcomannians, for the purpose of celebrating the religious solemnities by which he hoped that the evil might be averted.<sup>1</sup> The multitude of victims which he caused to be sacrificed in the preparation for that war, provoked ridicule, even from many of the pagans.<sup>2</sup>

It may easily be explained, then, how an emperor, with the love of justice, and the gentleness which we see expressed in the actions and writings of Marcus Aurelius, could yet, from a political and a religious interest, become a persecutor of the Christians. We have a law from him, which condemns to banishment on an island, those “that do any thing whereby a superstitious fear of the deity could be insinuated into men’s excitable minds.”<sup>3</sup> That this law was pointed at the Christians cannot, indeed, be *asserted*; inasmuch as there were, under this government, an unusual number of magicians and popular impostors, by whose practices such a law may have been called forth. But it may easily be conceived, that Marcus Aurelius, like Celsus, who wrote at that time against the Christians, would not scruple to place the latter in the same class with the others. This prince was inclined to pardon such as confessed their crimes and shewed signs of penitence, even in cases where he could have punished without being severe.<sup>4</sup> But the Christians could not be induced to acknowledge they had done wrong; they rather persisted in that which was forbidden by the laws. It was perhaps for this reason the emperor directed that every means should be employed to constrain them to a renunciation of their faith; and only in the last extremity, when they could not be forced to submit, was the punishment of death to be inflicted. But an ill-advised humanity, aiming to spare the effusion of human blood, might easily become the occasion of much cruelty.

Bringing together what offers itself to our notice as peculiar in the character of the persecutions of this time, we find two things particularly worthy of remark: *first*, that *search* was made for

<sup>1</sup> Jul. Capitol. c. 13 et 21.

<sup>2</sup> Hence the epigram, οἱ λευκοὶ βόες Μάρκα τῷ Καίσαρι; ἄν σὺ νικήσης, ἡμῖς ἀπωλόμιστα. Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxv. c. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Relegandum ad insulam qui aliquid fecerit, quo leves hominum animi superstitione numinis terreantur, in the Pandects.

<sup>4</sup> See the example in Capitolinus, cap. 13.

the Christians by express command ; although, indeed, such search was often anticipated by the popular fury. We have seen above, that, according to Trajan's rescript, the Christians were expressly distinguished from those criminals for whom it was the duty of the provincial authorities to make search. Now, on the contrary, diligent search was made for them ; and they were often obliged to conceal themselves to save their lives, as appears from the several accounts of the persecutions, and from the assertions of Celsus.<sup>1</sup> *Next*, the practice hitherto had been this : *when the Christians accused, after repeated summons, persisted in refusing to deny their faith, they were executed without torture.* Now it was attempted to force them to a denial by tortures. An edict which agrees in all respects with this practice, is still extant, under the name of the Emperor *Aurelian*,<sup>2</sup> and as in style and contents it bears every mark of authenticity, may, doubtless, be the edict against the Christians, originally addressed by this emperor (Aurelius) to the presidents of the provinces. It runs thus : " We have heard that the laws are violated by those who in our times call themselves Christians. Let them be arrested ; and unless they offer to the gods, let them be punished with divers tortures ; yet so that justice may be mingled with severity, and that the punishment may cease, as soon as the end is gained of extirpating the transgressors." The last clause is altogether in the character of Marcus Aurelius. The governors were to keep steadily in view the one object, which was to put down Christianity in its collision with the State religion, and to bring men back to the worship of the Roman gods. They were not to act by the promptings of blind passion ; but even such a clause was plainly insufficient to place a check on cruel and arbitrary measures.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Celsus, speaking of the Christians, that not without reason they do every thing in concealment : " Ἀτι διαβούμενοι τὴν ἰσηρημένην αὐτοῖς δίκην τοῦ θανάτου. L. i. c. 1. " Ἦτοι φεύγοντες καὶ κρυπτόμενοι ἢ ἀλισκόμενοι καὶ ἀπολλύμενοι. L. viii. c. 41. ' Ἰμῶν δὲ κἄν πλανᾶται τις ἔτι λανθάνων, ἀλλὰ ζητεῖται πρὸς θανάτου δίκην. L. viii. c. 69.

<sup>2</sup> A name which, as Pagi and Ruinart rightly conjectured, probably stands for *Aurelius*.

<sup>3</sup> The edict, which is preserved to us in the *actis Symphoriani*, of which we shall afterwards speak, reads in the original as follows : " Aurelianus Imperator omnibus administratoribus suis atque rectoribus. Comperimus ab his, qui se temporibus nostris Christianos dicunt, legum præcepta violari. Hos comprehensos, nisi diis nostris sacrificaverint, diversis punite cruciatibus, quatenus habeat districtio prolata justitiam et in reseccandis criminibus ultio terminata jam finem." Certainly no unprejudiced person

We proceed now, under the guidance of authentic records, to take a nearer view of the manner in which these persecutions were conducted in the provinces, and of the behaviour of the Christians under them.

We have first to notice that which befel the Church of Smyrna, in 167, and in which the aged and venerable Bishop Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, gave up his life. Of this persecution we have a detailed account in a circular-letter addressed by the Church of Smyrna to other Christian churches.<sup>1</sup> The proconsul of Asia Minor at that time does not appear to have been personally hostile to the Christians; but the heathen populace, with whom the lower class of Jews had united themselves, were fiercely hot against them. The proconsul yielded to the popular violence and to the demands of the law. He endeavoured to move the Christians by threats, by displaying before them the instruments of torture, and the savage animals to which they were to be thrown, to deny their faith; if they remained firm, he condemned them to death. In one respect, he certainly evinced too ready a compliance with the ferocious will of the people. He chose deaths

can suppose this edict to be spurious, as there was no imaginable end to be gained by a forgery, as it is conceived wholly in the spirit of Pagan statesmen, and expressed in the official language of the times. If it belonged to the age of Aurelian, whose name it bears, the martyr in whose history it stands must have perished in that reign. But it can hardly be assumed that the persecution under this emperor proceeded so far as to the effusion of Christian blood (see beyond.) The manner, too, in which the Christians are spoken of, as a sect by no means old, suits better to the time of M. Aurelius than that of Aurelian, when the Christian sect had now been so long known. The charge brought against the Christians, that by the exercise of their religion they violated the laws of the empire, would hardly be so stated in the time of Aurelian, since Christianity had at that time been already for the space of fifteen years admitted into the class of "religiones licitæ." No doubt, therefore, Aurelius is the proper reading, instead of Aurelianus, such names being frequently confounded with each other. But Lucius Aurelius Commodus is out of the question, since he was well disposed towards the Christians. So it can only be M. Aurelius Antoninus. What Gieseler has said against this hypothesis, in the second vol. of his Church History (2te Auflage, S. 134), does not suffice, to say the least, to invalidate the above reasoning. The language of the concluding clause is somewhat singular, it is true, for the age of the Antonines; yet I find nothing in particular in it which is quite foreign to the Latinity of that age; and it by no means seems so clear to me that the Emperor M. Aurelius would not have employed the words *rectores* (*rector provinciæ*, see Tacit. Annal. l. ii. c. 4), and *administratores*, to designate the various governors.

<sup>1</sup> By portions in Euseb. l. iv. c. 15. More complete in the collections of the Patres Apostolici.

that were painful and ignominious ; such as being thrown to wild beasts or perishing at the stake—punishments he was not compelled to resort to by the laws. Yet it must be allowed, that if the laws denounced death in general terms, as the penalty for perseverance in Christianity, it was considered right to assume, that such as were not Roman citizens ought to suffer a more painful death than those who were.<sup>1</sup>

Under the most agonizing torments, calculated to excite pity even in pagan bystanders, the Christians displayed great tranquillity and composure. “They made it evident to us all,” says the Church, “that in the midst of those sufferings, they were absent from the body ; or rather, that the Lord stood by them and walked in the midst of them ; and, staying themselves on the grace of Christ, they bid defiance to the torments of the world.” But even here the difference was shewn betwixt the momentary intoxication of enthusiasm, which, with a rash confidence in itself, courted and defied danger, and that calm, deliberate submission to God’s will, which first awaited his call, and then looked to him for the needed strength. A certain Phrygian, Quintus by name, of a nation peculiarly inclined by nature to fanatical extravagance, presented himself, in company with many others, whom he had wrought up by his discourses to the same pitch of enthusiastic zeal, uncalled for, before the proconsul’s tribunal, and declared himself a Christian. But when the magistrate pressed him, and wrought upon his fears by shewing him the wild beasts, he yielded, swore by the genius of the emperor, and sacrificed. After stating this fact, the Church adds, “We therefore praise not those who voluntarily surrender themselves ; for so are we not taught in the Gospel.”<sup>2</sup> Quite different from this was the behaviour of the venerable Bishop Polycarp, now ninety years of age. When he heard the shouts of the people, demanding his death, it was his

<sup>1</sup> To many of the crimes charged on the Christians by blind popular rumour, *such* capital punishments were assigned. Qui sacra impia nocturnave, ut quem obcantarent, fecerint faciendave curaverint, aut cruci suffiguntur, aut bestiis objiciuntur. Qui hominem immolaverint, sive ejus sanguine litaverint, fanum templumve polluerint, bestiis objiciuntur, vel si honestiores sint, capite puniuntur. Magicæ artis conscios summo supplicio affici placuit, id est, bestiis objici aut cruci suffigi, ipsi autem magi vivi exuruntur. Julius Paulus in sententiis receptis.

<sup>2</sup> Διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἰπαινοῦμεν τοὺς προσιόντας ἑαυτοῖς (where, if it is not bad Greek, the reading should be ἰκόντας), ἰπιδὴ οὐχ οὕτως διδάσκει τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

intention at first to remain quietly in the city, and await the issue which God might ordain for him. But, by the entreaties of the Church, he suffered himself to be persuaded to take refuge in a neighbouring villa. Here he spent the time, with a few friends, occupied, day and night, in praying for all the churches throughout the world. When search was made for him, he retreated to another villa; and directly after appeared the servants of the police, to whom his place of refuge had been betrayed by unworthy men, who enjoyed his confidence. The bishop himself, indeed, was gone; but they found two slaves, one of whom was put to the torture, and betrayed the place whither Polycarp had fled for refuge. As they were approaching, Polycarp, who was in the highest story of the dwelling, might have escaped to another house by the flat roof peculiar to the oriental style of building; but he said, "The will of the Lord be done." Descending to the officers of justice, he ordered whatever they chose to eat and drink to be placed before them, requesting them only to indulge him with one hour for quiet prayer. But the fulness of his heart hurried him through two hours, so that the pagans themselves were touched by his devotion.

The time being now come, they conveyed him to the city on an ass, where they were met by the chief officer of the police (*εἰσηναρχος*), coming, with his father, from the town. He took up Polycarp into his chariot, and, addressing him kindly, asked "what harm there could be in saying '*the emperor, our Lord,*' and in sacrificing." At first Polycarp was silent; but as they went on to urge him, he said mildly, "I shall not do as you advise me." When they perceived they could not persuade him, they grew angry. With opprobrious language, he was thrust out of the carriage so violently as to injure a bone of one of his legs. Without looking round, he proceeded on his way, cheerful and composed, as though nothing had happened. Having arrived before the proconsul, he was urged by the latter to have respect at least to his own old age, to swear by the genius of the emperor, and give proof of his penitence, by joining in the shout of the people, "Away with the godless!" Polycarp looked with a firm eye at the assembled crowd, pointing to them with his finger; then with a sigh, and his eyes uplifted to heaven, he said, "Away with the godless!" But when the proconsul urged him farther,

“Swear, curse Christ, and I release thee.” “Six-and-eighty years,” the old man replied, “have I served him, and he has done me nothing but good; and how could I curse him, my Lord and Saviour!” The proconsul still persisting to urge him, “Well,” said Polycarp, “if you would know what I am, I tell you frankly, I am a Christian. Would you know what the doctrine of Christianity is, appoint me an hour and hear me.” The proconsul, who shewed here how far he was from sharing in the fanatic spirit of the people, how gladly he would have saved the old man, if he could have appeased the multitude, said, “Do but persuade the people.” Polycarp replied, “To you I was bound to give account of myself; for our religion teaches us to pay due honour to the powers ordained of God, so far as it can be done without prejudice to our salvation. But those I regard as not worthy of hearing me defend myself before them.” The governor having once more threatened him in vain with the wild beasts and the stake, caused it to be proclaimed by the herald, in the circus, “Polycarp has declared himself to be a Christian!” With these words was pronounced the sentence of death. The heathen populace, with an infuriate shout, replied, “This is the teacher of atheism, the father of the Christians, the enemy of our gods, by whom so many have been turned from the worship of the gods, and from sacrifice.” The proconsul having yielded to the demands of the people, that Polycarp should die at the stake, Jews and pagans hastened together, to bring wood from the shops and the baths. As they were about to fasten him with nails to the stake of the pile, he said, “Leave me thus; he who has strengthened me to encounter the flames, will also enable me to stand firm at the stake.” Before the fire was lighted he prayed, “Lord, Almighty God, Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received from thee the knowledge of thyself; God of angels, and of the whole creation; of the human race, and of the just that live in thy presence; I praise thee that thou hast judged me worthy of this day and of this hour, to take part in the number of thy Witnesses, in the cup of thy Christ.”

What appeared the greatest thing, to this Church, was not the martyr's death of Polycarp in itself, but the Christian manner in which it was suffered. They expressed it as their conviction, that all had been so ordered, that he might exhibit what was the essen-



tial character of evangelical martyrdom ;<sup>1</sup> “for,” so they write, “he waited to be delivered up (did not press forward uncalled to the martyr’s death), imitating in this respect our Lord, and leaving an example for us to follow ; so that we should not look to that alone which may conduce to our own salvation, but also to that which may be serviceable to our neighbour. For this is the nature of true and genuine charity, to seek not merely our own salvation, but the salvation of all the brethren.”<sup>2</sup>

The death of the pious shepherd contributed also to the temporal advantage of his flock. The rage of fanaticism, after having obtained this victim, became somewhat cooled ; and the pro-consul, who was no personal enemy of the Christians, suspended all farther search, and refused to know that another Christian existed.

The second persecution under this emperor’s reign, of which we have any account, fell upon the churches of Lyons (Lugdunum), and of Vienna, in the year 177, and the source from which we derive our more exact knowledge of its details, is a letter from these Churches to those of Asia Minor.<sup>3</sup> The fanatic excitement of the populace in these cities was the same as at Smyrna, if not still higher ; but in addition to this, the superior magistrates seem to have been infected with the rage of the lower classes. The bursts of popular fury had gradually increased in violence ; the Christians were insulted and abused whenever they appeared abroad, and were plundered in their own houses. At length the better known were seized and conducted before the magistrates. Having avowed themselves Christians, they were thrown into prison ; for during the absence of the governor, or legate, they could not be brought at once to trial. The legate, on his arrival, immediately began the examination with tortures, not only for the purpose of forcing the Christians to abjure, but also of wringing from them a confession of the truth respecting those absurd stories of unnatural crimes, of which they were so generally

*Σχιδὸν γὰρ πάντα τὰ προάγοντα ἐγένιστο, ἵνα ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος ἄνωθεν ἐπιδείξῃ τὸ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον μαρτύριον.*

<sup>2</sup> *Περίμενον γὰρ, ἵνα παραδοθῆ, ὡς καὶ ὁ κύριος, ἵνα μιμηταὶ καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοῦ γενώμεθα, μὴ μόνον σκοποῦντες τὸ καθ’ ἑαυτοῦς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ κατὰ τοὺς πέλας, ἀγάπης γὰρ ἀληθοῦς καὶ βεβαΐας ἐστὶν μὴ μόνον ἑαυτὸν θύλειν σώζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς.*

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. l. v. c. 1.

accused. Vettius Epagathus, on learning that such charges were laid against his brethren, felt constrained to present himself at the legate's tribunal as a witness of their innocence. He demanded a hearing, since he wished to shew that nothing of a criminal nature was transacted in the Christian assemblies. The legate refused to listen, but only asked him if he too was a Christian. When he distinctly admitted that he was, he was imprisoned with the rest, as the Christian's advocate (*παράκλητος χριστιανῶν*.) Although the testimony of slaves against their masters was, by an ancient law,<sup>1</sup> made inadmissible in criminal causes,—a law,<sup>2</sup> it must be owned, often violated in the arbitrary proceedings of the times of the empire,<sup>3</sup>—yet fanaticism would allow no attention to be paid to the regular forms of justice. The testimony of slaves was welcome, if it served to establish the incredible charges laid to the account of the Christians. The torture must be applied to pagan slaves. Terror made them say what they were required to say,—that those abominations, of which blind rumour accused the Christians, were practised by their masters. Men now believed they had a right to indulge themselves in every cruelty. No kindred, no age nor sex was spared. In the firmness and composure of many Christians, under tortures the most refined, it was seen, say the Churches in their report of these proceedings, “how they were bedewed and invigorated by the spring of living water that flows from the heart of Christ; how nothing is dreadful where the love of the Father dwells; nothing painful where the glory of Christ prevails.” Pothinus, the aged bishop of the Church, a man of ninety years, infirm with old age and a sickness from which he was but just recovered, but inspired with the vigour of youth by his zeal to bear witness of the truth, was also dragged before the tribunal. The legate asked him, “Who is the God of the Christians?” He answered, “You shall come to the knowledge of him when you shew yourself worthy of it.” All who surrounded the tri-

<sup>1</sup> *Vetere senatusconsulto quæstio in caput Domini prohibebatur.* Tacit. Annal. l. ii. c. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Even Pliny seems to have paid no attention to this law, in conducting his investigations against the Christians.

<sup>3</sup> When Tiberius first allowed himself in this practice, he was in the habit, before he put the *quæstio per tormenta*, of giving the slaves their freedom, so as to observe the law in appearance—*callidus et novi juris repertor*, as Tacitus calls him for this reason.

bunal now strove with each other in venting their rage on the venerable old man. Scarcely breathing, he was cast into a dungeon, where he survived only two days. Even those who yielded and denied gained nothing by their inconstancy. They were now cast into prison, not indeed as Christians, but as guilty of those crimes with which the Christians were charged; and to justify the proceeding, advantage had doubtless been taken of the fact, that several, under the pains of torture, had acknowledged guilt. Numbers perished in the gloomy cells of the prisons, where means had been devised for adding to their torment, and even hunger and thirst employed to aggravate the sufferings of these imprisoned confessors. On the other hand, to use the language of the Church, "many who had endured so severe torments that it seemed impossible for them to be restored by the most careful assiduities, continued to live in their dungeon, destitute indeed of human aid, but strengthened and refreshed in soul and body by the Lord, so that they could encourage and comfort the rest. It so happened, 'by the grace of God who wills not the death of the sinner, but has joy in his repentance,' that the exhortations of these heroes of the faith had a powerful effect on many who had been induced to deny their religion, and the mother church had the great satisfaction of receiving once more alive from the prison those whom she had cast forth as dead."

The number of the prisoners being large, including several Roman citizens, who could not be sentenced in the province, it was thought best by the legate, with regard to them all, to send his report to Rome, and wait until the emperor's answer determined their fate. The imperial rescript was to this effect, that those who denied should be set free, and the rest beheaded. In this case it is evident that Marcus Aurelius possessed the same views as Trajan, and was far from giving credit to the current charges laid against the Christians.

The legate now summoned first before his tribunal all who, in the previous examinations, had been brought to abjure their faith, and were awaiting in prison the decision of their fate. Nothing else was expected than that they would stand by their denial, and thus obtain deliverance; but great were the rage and the consternation of the multitude at seeing many of these now stand forth and maintain a steadfast confession, thus passing sentence of death on

themselves; so that, in the language of the Church, none remained without but such as possessed none of the marks of faith, no anticipation of the Lord's bridal garment, no fear, but had already, by their conduct, dishonoured the way of truth. Those of the prisoners who possessed the rights of Roman citizenship the legate ordered to be executed with the sword; although, to gratify the fury of the populace, he caused one of these, Attalus, in violation of the laws, to undergo a variety of tortures, and at last to be thrown to the wild beasts; and not until after he had survived the whole was the sword of mercy allowed to put an end to his sufferings. The rest were thrown to the wild beasts. Two of these,—Ponticus, a youth of fifteen, and Blandina, a young woman,—whom they attempted first to intimidate by making them witness the sufferings of the others, and then to shake from their constancy by exhausting upon them all their means of torture, created universal astonishment at what God's power could effect in such weak and tender vessels. Although the intoxication of enthusiasm, suppressing the natural feelings, is capable of producing such extraordinary phenomena, yet the enthusiasm of these martyrs was distinguished by those true marks, a sobriety and a humility indicating the sense of weakness, and by love and gentleness. They declined the honours which the Christians were eager to bestow on them. Even when they were led back to prison, after having repeatedly undergone the most exquisite tortures, still they were by no means confident of victory, well foreseeing the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. They pointedly contradicted such as dignified them with the name of "martyrs." "This name," said they, "properly belongs only to the true and faithful Witness,<sup>1</sup> the First-born from the dead, the Prince of life; or, at least, only to those martyrs whose testimony Christ has sealed by their constancy to the end. We are but poor, humble confessors." With tears they besought the brethren fervently to pray for them, that they might attain to the glorious consummation. They received, with the kindest love, such as had fallen from the faith; they became their companions in prison, praying, with many tears, that the Lord would restore these dead once more to life. Even their persecutors were never mentioned by them with resentment; but they prayed

<sup>1</sup> *Μάρτυς*, Revel. i. 5.

that God would forgive those who had subjected them to such cruel sufferings. They left as a legacy to their brethren, not strife and war, but joy and peace, unanimity and love.

With the mutilation and burning of the dead bodies, the rage of the populace had finally reached its utmost height. The ashes, with all the fire had left, was cast into the neighbouring Rhone, that not a remnant of these enemies of the gods might pollute the earth. Neither by money, nor by entreaties, could the Christians succeed in obtaining possession of those so dear to them, for the purpose of interment. The blinded pagans imagined they could, in this way also, confound the hopes of the Christians. "We will now see," said they, "whether they will arise, and whether God can help them, and deliver them out of our hands." Yet so great was the number of the Christians, that even here men at last became weary of bloodshed, so that a branch of the Church survived this terrible persecution.

In places where but few Christians dwelt, they could more easily remain concealed, and the popular rage was not turned against them. In such districts the governors did not think it necessary to set on foot any inquiries for them, except in particular cases, when individuals had become notorious as enemies of the State religion. A case of this sort occurred about this time in the town of Autun,<sup>1</sup> at no great distance from Lyons. No one in the place was thinking of a persecution against the small number of obscure Christians who were to be found there, when an individual first drew upon himself the public attention. The noisy multitude were celebrating, with great display, a festival in honour of Cybele, whose worship, probably derived from Asia Minor through the same channel which Christianity afterwards found, was held here in the highest repute. An image of Cybele, in one of the usual sacred cars, was carried round in procession, accompanied by a vast crowd of the people. All fell upon their knees; but Symphorian, a young man of a respectable family and a Christian, who happened to be standing by, thought that he could not conscientiously unite in the ceremony, and when called upon to explain his conduct, he might easily take occasion to speak of the vanity of idol worship. As a violator of the public ceremony and a disturber of the peace, he was immediately seized

<sup>1</sup> Augustodunum, Ædua.

and conducted before the governor, Heraclius, a man of consular dignity. Said the governor to him, "You are a Christian. As far as I can see, you have escaped our notice, because so few of the followers of this sect happen to be among us." "I am a Christian," he replied; "I worship the true God, who reigns in heaven; but your idol I cannot worship; nay, if permitted, I will dash it in pieces on my own responsibility." Upon this, the governor declared him guilty of a double crime,—against the *religion*, and against the *laws* of the State; and as Symphorian could be moved neither by threats nor by promises to abandon his faith, he was sentenced to be beheaded. As they led him to the execution, his mother cried out to him, "My son, my son, have the living God in thy heart. Be steadfast. There is nothing fearful in that death which so surely conducts thee to life. Let thy heart be above, my son; look up to Him who dwells in heaven. To-day thy life is not taken from thee, but transfigured to a better. By a blessed exchange, my son, thou art this day passing to the life of heaven."<sup>1</sup>

According to a report widely diffused among the Christians after the beginning of the third century, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius was induced, by a wonderful event, to change the course of policy he had thus far adopted towards the Christians. While prosecuting the war with the Marcommanians and Quades, in 174, he, with his army, was thrown into a situation of extreme peril. The burning sun shone full in the faces of his soldiers, who were suffering under the torture of intolerable thirst; while, at the same time, under these unfavourable circumstances, they were threatened with an attack of the enemy. In this extremity, the twelfth legion, composed entirely of Christians, fell upon their knees. Their prayer was followed by a shower of rain, which allayed the thirst of the Roman soldiers, and by a storm, which frightened the barbarians. The Roman army obtained the victory; and the emperor, in commemoration of the event, gave those

<sup>1</sup> The story of the martyrdom of Symphorian is, in all the essential particulars, so simple, is so wholly free from the common exaggerations of later times, is so conformable to the circumstances of that period, that it is impossible to doubt that we have here a more than ordinarily genuine foundation, although the account is in places rhetorically overwrought. But all the particulars go to shew, that the event took place very near to the time of the persecution at Lyons and Vienna.

Christian soldiers the name of the "thundering legion." He ceased to persecute the Christians; and though he did not receive Christianity immediately into the class of "lawful religions," yet he published an edict which threatened with severe penalties such as accused the Christians merely on the score of their religion.<sup>1</sup>

In this account, truth and falsehood are mixed together. In the first place, it cannot be true that the emperor was led to put a stop to the persecution of the Christians by any event of this time; for the bloody persecution at Lyons did not take place till three years afterwards. Again, the "thundering legion," or "the twelfth of the Roman legions," had borne this name from the time of the Emperor Augustus.<sup>2</sup> The fact at bottom, namely, that the Roman army, about that time, was rescued from a threatening danger by some such remarkable providence, is undeniable. The heathen themselves acknowledged it to be the work of Heaven; they ascribed it, however, not to the Christian's God, nor to their prayers, but to their own gods, to their Jupiter, and to the prayers of the emperor, or of the pagan army; to say nothing of the blind superstition which attributed the storm to the spells of an Egyptian necromancer.<sup>3</sup> The emperor, it is said, stretched forth his hands, in supplication to Jupiter, with the words, "This hand, which has never yet shed human blood, I raise to thee." There were paintings in which he was represented in the attitude of prayer, and the army catching the rain in their helmets.<sup>4</sup> The emperor has expressed his own conviction of the matter upon a medal, where Jupiter is exhibited launching his bolts on the barbarians, who lie stretched upon the ground;<sup>5</sup> and perhaps, also, at the close of the first Book of his Monologues, where he mentions, among the things for which he was indebted, not to himself, but to the gods and his good fortune, what had happened

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian. Apologet. c. 5; ad Scapulam, c. 4. Euseb. l. v. c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dio Cassius, in his catalogue of the legions existing from the time of this emperor, mentions (l. lv. c. 23): Τὸ δωδέκιστον (στρατόπεδον) τὸ ἐν Καππαδοκίᾳ, τὸ κεραινοφόρον. As late as the fifth century, we find mention in the Notitia dignitatum imperii Romani, Sect. 27, of the præfectura legionis duodecimæ fulmineæ Melitenæ, under the dux Armeniæ. The province of Melitene was on the borders of Armenia, towards Cappadocia.

<sup>3</sup> Dio Cass. l. lxxi. § 8.

<sup>4</sup> Themist. orat. 15: Τίς ἡ βασιλικωτάτη τῶν ἀρετῶν.

<sup>5</sup> In Eckhel numism. iii. 64.

among the Quades.<sup>1</sup> It is certain, therefore, that this remarkable event can have had no influence in changing the disposition of the emperor towards the Christians. But it by no means follows that the latter are to be charged with making up a false story. The matter admits of a natural explanation. It is not impossible that, in the thundering legion, there were Christians; perhaps a large number of them; for it is certain that it was but *a party* among them who condemned the military profession. And although it was difficult for Christians at all times, and especially under an emperor so unfavourably disposed, to avoid participating, while connected with a Roman army, in the rites of paganism, yet they might succeed in doing so under particular circumstances. The Christian soldiers, then, resorted, as they were ever wont to do on like occasions, to prayer. The deliverance which ensued they regarded as an answer to their prayers; and, on their return home, they mentioned it to their brethren in the faith. These, naturally, would not fail to remind the heathen how much they were indebted to the people whom they so violently persecuted. Claudius Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, might have heard the story, soon after the event itself, from the Christian soldiers belonging to this legion, which had returned to its winter quarters in Cappadocia; and he introduced it, either in an apology addressed to this emperor, or in other apologetical works.<sup>2</sup> Tertullian refers to a letter of the emperor, addressed probably to the Roman Senate, in which he owns that the deliverance was due to the Christian soldiers. But this letter, if it contained, in so many words, a statement of this sort, must, as appears evident from the above remarks, have been either a spuri-

<sup>1</sup> Τὰ ἐν Κουάδοις πρὸς τῷ γενοῦσα. Some suppose, it is true, that M. Aurelius here simply designates the place where this was written. But as a notice of this sort occurs nowhere else except in the third book, these words might rather refer, perhaps, to *events in certain places*, the remembrance of which was associated with the preceding meditations.

<sup>2</sup> Where Eusebius represents Apollinaris as affirming that the legion received the name *fulminea* from this event, the suspicion naturally arises, that he read too hastily; since it is difficult to suppose, that a contemporary who lived in the vicinity of the winter quarters of that legion, could have committed so gross a mistake. Perhaps Apollinaris merely said, the emperor might now rightly call the legion by the name *fulminea*, or something of that sort. There is no difficulty in supposing that some such expression lay at the foundation of Eusebius' words, I. v. c. 5. Ἐξ ἐκείνου τὴν δι' εὐχῆς τὸ παρὰ-δοξον πεποιηκυῖαν λεγιῶνα οἰκίσαι τῷ γεγονότι πρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως εὐληθέσαι προσηγήσαν.



ous or interpolated one. It may be a question, however, whether the letter contained any distinct affirmation of this sort,—whether the emperor may not have spoken simply of *soldiers*, and Tertullian explained it according to *his own* belief of *Christian* soldiers. He expresses himself, at any rate, with some degree of hesitation.<sup>1</sup> How the Christians might possibly sometimes interpret the religious profession of the heathen according to the principles of their own faith, is shewn by another account of this event, which we find in Tertullian. It is in these words: “ Marcus Aurelius, in the German expedition also, obtained, through the prayers offered to God by Christian soldiers, showers of rain during that time of thirst. When has not the land been delivered from drought by our genuclations and fasts?<sup>2</sup> In such cases, the very people, when they cried to the God of gods, who alone is mighty, gave our God the glory, under the name of Jupiter.”

It is the less necessary to search after any *single* cause for the cessation of the persecution, since it not only belongs to the nature of the passion, that rage will finally expend itself; but it is also true, in the present case, that only a few years after the last bloody persecution in France, the government passed into different hands, and thus brought about an entire change of measures. The depravity of the contemptible Commodus, who succeeded to his father, A.D. 180, was made to subserve the interests of the Christians, by procuring for them a season of respite and tranquillity, after their long sufferings under M. Aurelius; for it cannot be supposed that a man like Commodus was capable of appreciating, in the slightest degree, the worth of Christianity. A certain Marcia,<sup>3</sup> who stood with him in a forbidden connection, was, for some unknown reason, friendly to the Christians, and enlisted in their favour also the brutal emperor. It is not impossible, that the indulgent law cited above from Tertullian, proceeded from this sovereign, who was disposed to befriend the Christians, and was afterwards wrongly transferred to the last years of his predecessor. Under the government of this emperor, events did occur, in which it was supposed the effects of such a law might

<sup>1</sup> Christianorum *forte* militum.

<sup>2</sup> Days of prayer and fasting were commonly united by the Christians.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ιστορεῖται δὲ αὕτη πολλά τι ὑπὲρ τῶν Χριστιανῶν σπουδάσαι καὶ πολλὰ αὐτοῦς ἐνηργητέοναι, ἅτι καὶ παρὰ τῆ Κομμόδου πᾶν δυναμένη. Dio Cass. l. lxxii. c. 4.

be traced. But it may be a question, whether it was not too hasty a conclusion, to infer from these events the existence of the law; whether it did not arise out of a misconception. At all events, it seems quite improbable that accusations against Christians would continue to be received as before, that Christians, when accused, would be condemned to death by Trajan's law, while their accusers, at the same time, were also capitally punished! An example will, perhaps, set the whole matter in its true light.<sup>1</sup> Apollonius, a Roman senator, was accused before the city præfect of being a Christian. His accuser was immediately sentenced to death, and executed. But Apollonius, who boldly confessed his faith before the senate, was also beheaded by a decree of that body. Now Jerome, who, in this case, would hardly be misled by a wrong interpretation of Eusebius, but spoke rather from a correct knowledge of the facts, says that the accuser was a slave of Apollonius; and the ignominious character of his punishment, death by breaking the limbs (the *suffringi crura*), confirms this account. The accuser, then, as it would seem, was punished, not as the accuser of a Christian, but as a servant faithless to his master. From too broad a conclusion drawn from cases of this description, it is quite possible the tradition of the favourable law, referred to above, may have derived its origin.

Since this emperor, then, had probably made no change, by an express edict, in the situation of the Christians; since the old laws had never been distinctly repealed, but everything depended on the altered tone of the emperor himself; it follows, that the Christians must have been placed in very precarious circumstances. They were exposed still, as much as they ever were, to be perse-

<sup>1</sup> We must allow this matter gives occasion to many doubts. We must assent to the remark of Gieseler, so far as this, viz. that of course, either accusations proceeding from slaves against their masters were not received at all, or if they were received, the person from whom they proceeded might be punished as a criminal. Now Jerome (*de v. i. c. 42*) does not, indeed, say that the slave was executed. The account in Eusebius (*l. v. c. 21*) might be one, then, mixed up with false reports, relating, as it did, to an event in the West. He may have been deceived by Greek *acta martyris*, in which the false story of the condemnation of this slave had been fabricated out of the rumour of the law above mentioned against accusers of Christians. On the other side, the following considerations should be duly weighed: The narrative of Jerome, in conformity with its purpose, may have been incomplete, and therefore may furnish no evidence against the truth of what Eusebius has added. We are not obliged to presuppose that the judges, especially where the question related to the death of a slave, acted in perfect consistency with justice.

cuted by individual governors, inimically disposed. Thus Arrius Montanus, proconsul of Asia Minor, began to wreak his vengeance on them; but a vast multitude of Christians immediately presented themselves before the tribunal, with a view to intimidate the proconsul by their numbers,—a proceeding which might easily have been attended with the desired effect, under a government where the persecutions did not proceed from the imperial throne, but from the will of individuals. In fact, the proconsul was intimidated; and contenting himself with condemning to death a few out of the multitude, he said to the rest,<sup>1</sup> “If you want to die, ye wretched men, you have precipices from which you can throw yourselves, or ropes.”<sup>2</sup> Irenæus, who wrote under the reign of this emperor, remarks, that Christians were to be found in the imperial court, that they enjoyed the same privileges which belonged to all throughout the Roman empire, and were suffered to go unmolested, by land or by sea, wherever they chose.<sup>3</sup> Yet the same Irenæus observes, that the Church, at all times, not excepting his own, sends many martyrs to their heavenly Father.<sup>4</sup> The apparent contradiction is explained by what has been said.

The political disorders which followed after the assassination of Commodus, in A.D. 192; the civil wars betwixt Pescennius Niger in the East, Claudius Albinus in Gaul, and Septimius Severus, who finally obtained the sovereign power in Rome, would, like all other public calamities, be attended with injurious effects on the situation of the Christians. Clement of Alexandria, who wrote soon after the death of Commodus, says, “Many martyrs are daily burned, crucified, beheaded, before our eyes.”<sup>5</sup> When Septimius Severus obtained the victory, and found himself in secure possession of the sovereignty, he manifested, it is true, a favourable dis-

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian. ad Scapulam, c. 5: ὦ δειλοί, εἰ θέλτε ἀποθνήσκειν, κρημνούς ἢ βράχους ἔχετε.

<sup>2</sup> In the second century, three proconsuls are known under this name; the Antoninus Pius, who was afterwards Emperor, his grandfather, and a third under the Emperor Commodus. *Æl. Lamprid. vita Commodi*, c. 6 et 7. We most naturally think of the one who was Tertullian's contemporary; for if he meant another, he would probably have given some intimation that he was speaking of an older man. This proconsul, as we learn from Lampridius, stood in high estimation with the people. Perhaps it was his eagerness to acquire this that led him to persecute the Christians.

<sup>3</sup> L. iv. c. Hæres. c. 30: *Hi, qui in regali aula sunt fideles.*

<sup>4</sup> L. iv. c. 33, v. 9.

<sup>5</sup> L. ii. *stromat.* p. 414.

position towards the Christians; and Tertullian's account may doubtless be correct, that he was induced to this by an incident of a personal nature, having been restored to health through the skill of Proculus,<sup>1</sup> a Christian slave, whom he received into his family, and retained constantly by his side. He knew that men and women of the highest rank in Rome, senators and their wives, were Christians; and protected them from the popular indignation.<sup>2</sup> But as the old laws remained still in force, violent persecutions could break out in particular provinces; and we know, from several of the works of Tertullian which were composed in these times, that one actually took place in proconsular Africa. The festivities in honour of the emperor, where the absence of the Christians excited public attention, might easily have been the occasion of it.<sup>3</sup>

If, in this reign, the law against "close associations" was renewed,<sup>4</sup> this circumstance must have operated, as under the

<sup>1</sup> Thus we are informed by Tertullian, in his work addressed to Scapula, c. 4: *Proculum Christianum, qui Torpacion cognominabatur, Euodiae procuratorem, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requisivit et in palatio suo habuit usque ad mortem ejus.* In respect to the right understanding of these words, it may be disputed whether the term *Euodiae* (which moreover is written in different ways) is a proper name or not, and how the word *procurator* should be taken. It might mean "an overseer of the causeways;" yet probably it is a slave or freed man from the mansion of some Roman lady, who held under her the office of steward or bailiff. Through his connection with this noble woman, Septimius Severus, before he became emperor, may have come in contact with this man, and the latter offered his services to heal him in some sickness. The oil, in this case, has some connection probably with the charisma of healing, according to Mark vi. 13, and James v. 14. The inadvertent, and where he had no particular interest in doubting, credulous Tertullian is, indeed, not a witness of any great weight; but the circumstantiality with which he speaks of this matter, as one generally known, might point to something which had a true foundation. He appeals to the fact that Caracalla, the son of Severus, was very well acquainted with this Proculus; that Caracalla himself was *lacte Christiano educatus*, whether it was that he had a Christian for his nurse, or had spent his childhood amidst Christians in the service of the imperial household. With this may be compared what *Ælius Lampridius* says in the life of this emperor (c. 1), namely, that the playmates of Caracalla, when he was seven years old, had, contrary to his father's will, led him to embrace Judaism (*ob Judaicam religionem gravius verberatus*), and in connection with the last, should be kept in mind what we quoted recently from *Celsus*, that Christianity was propagated among the children. But although Septimius Severus may have had Christians among the members of his household, yet it by no means follows that he was himself favourable either to Christianity or its followers.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian says of Septimius Severus (in the passage just referred to), *Clarissimas feminas et clarissimos viros sciens hujus sectae esse, non modo non læsit, verum et testimonio exornavit et populo furenti in nos palam restitit.*

<sup>3</sup> See above. p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> As may be inferred from the fact that he issued a rescript directing that those "qui

government of Trajan, to the disadvantage of those whose union had always been declared to be a *collegium illicitum*. Finally, Severus, in the year 202, passed a law which forbade, under severe penalties, a change either to Judaism or to Christianity.<sup>1</sup> That he held it necessary to enact such a prohibition, which was in truth involved in the earlier laws, shews how little these laws were then regarded. It may be a question, too, how the matter of this law of Severus is to be interpreted. If the emperor forbade the change to Christianity (*Christianos fieri*), merely in the sense in which he forbade the change to Judaism (*Judæos fieri*), it would seem to be implied, that he held it necessary only to *check* the *farther* inroads, as well of Christianity as of Judaism, but had no wish to disturb those who were already Christians in the practice of their religion: and such a tacit recognition of Christianity must certainly be regarded as an advantage gained by the Christian party in the empire. But, as may be inferred from what we have already said, the situation of the Christians, in this case, was quite different from that of the Jews. In the case of Judaism, it was naturally assumed in the prohibition, *Judæos fieri*, that *the Jews, as a nation*, were to remain unmolested in their right to the free exercise of their own religion; and in the criminality of the act, *Judæos fieri*, this law pronounced the criminality of all other Roman citizens who had heretofore passed over to Judaism. But in the case of the Christians, no such distinction as this could be made; so that, as it concerned them, the law would pronounce all to be criminal, *without exception*, who had ever become Christians. We should possess the words of the law itself, however, in order to decide with any certainty as to its true meaning.

At all events, so explicit a declaration from an emperor who had thus far shewn himself personally favourable to the Christians, could only operate to render their circumstances still more distressing. In many districts the persecution was so fierce, that it was looked upon as a sign of the speedy appearance of the Antichrist.<sup>2</sup> In Egypt and in proconsular Africa this seems to

*illicitum collegium coisse dicantur,*" should be accused before the *Præfectus urbi*. Vid. Digest. l. xii. tit. xii. 1, § 14.

<sup>1</sup> *Ælii Spartiani Severus*, c. 17; *Judæos fieri sub gravi pœna vetuit. Item etiam de Christianis sanxit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Euseb. l. vi. c. 7.*

have been particularly the case; yet these persecutions were certainly not general.

At a period somewhat earlier, the threat of lodging an information with the magistrates had already been employed to extort money from the Christians;<sup>1</sup> and many had bargained, at a certain price, with informers or greedy policemen, for the privilege of not being disturbed in the exercise of their religion.<sup>2</sup> But as, under this government the laws against the Christians continued to be neither strictly nor universally carried into effect, such proceedings became more common, doubtless, than in earlier persecutions. And it was now the case that entire communities purchased freedom from disturbance in this way.<sup>3</sup> Many bishops thought that, by this course, they consulted best for the interest of their churches.<sup>4</sup> But such measures would be opposed, not only by such as cherished a fanatic longing after martyrdom, but also on the score of prudence, and of zeal for the dignity and purity of the Christian name. On the score of prudence, because it was only individuals, after all, who could be satisfied thus; and the rage or cupidity of others would only be excited the more;<sup>5</sup> on the score of interest for the honour and purity of the Christian name, because Christians became associated, by this course, with those who purchased immunity with bribes from the punishment due for unlawful or nefarious crimes or pursuits.<sup>6</sup> When the advocates of this course pleaded, in their defence, that men ought to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's, Tertullian answered them thus: "He who would extort money from me in this way demands nothing

<sup>1</sup> The *concutere Christianos*.—*Quid dicit ille concussor? Da mihi pecuniam, certe ne cum tradat.* Tertullian. *de fuga in persecutione*, c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Tu pacisceris cum delatore vel milite vel furunculo aliquo præside, sub tunica et sinu, quod ajunt, ut furtivo, quem coram toto mundo Christus emit, imo et manumisit,* says the high-hearted Tertullian, as the opponent of such transactions, l. c.

<sup>3</sup> *Parum est, si unus aut alius ita eruitur. Massaliter totæ ecclesiæ tributum sibi irrogaverunt.* Tertullian. l. c. c. 13.

<sup>4</sup> To this Tertullian sarcastically alludes: *Ut regno suo securi frui possent, sub obtentu pacem procurandi.*

<sup>5</sup> *Neque enim statim et a populo eris tutus, si officia militaria redemeris,* says Tertullian, l. c. c. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian says, with reference to this (l. c. c. 13): *Nescio dolendum an erubescendum sit, cum in matricibus beneficiariorum et curiosorum inter tabernarios et lanios et fures balnearum et aleones et lenones Christiani quoque vectigales continentur.*

for the emperor, but rather acts against him, since, for the sake of gold, he lets the Christians go free, who are guilty by the laws."<sup>1</sup> It appears to him remarkable that, at a period when so many new regulations were devising for the improvement of the revenue, when so many new taxes were introduced, it had never occurred to any one to propose the free profession of Christianity, at a certain rate, fixed by law. Thus, owing to the great number of the Christians, of which all were aware, the public revenue would be greatly increased.<sup>2</sup>

The situation of the Christians continued to be the same under the government of the insane Caracalla, although the cruel emperor himself was the occasion of no new persecutions. Everything depended on the accidental temper of the different governors. Many of these were active in devising expedients for saving, without open violation of the laws, the lives of those Christians who were arraigned before their tribunals.<sup>3</sup> Others were furious, from personal hatred, or to flatter the people. Others, again, were contented to proceed according to the letter of the law enacted by Trajan. In a letter to one of the persecutors of the Christians, the proconsul Scapula, Tertullian remarks, that if he would use the sword only *against the Christians according to the original laws*, and as was still done by the governor of Mauritania, and by the governor of Leon, in Spain, he might dis-

<sup>1</sup> Miles me vel delator vel inimicus concutit, nihil Cæsari exigens; imo contra faciens, cum Christianum, legibus humanis reum, mercede dimittit. Tertullian. l. c. c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Tanta quotidie ærario augendo prospiciuntur remedia censuum, vectigalium, collationum, stipendiorum, nec unquam usque adhuc ex Christianis tale aliquid prospectum est, sub aliquam redemptionem capitis et sectæ redigendis, cum tantæ multitudinis nemini ignotæ fructus ingens meti posset. l. c. c. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian relates, that a præses even went so far as to furnish the Christians himself with the means of so answering the questions of the judge as to get discharged. Another released at once a Christian who had been brought before him, declaring it contrary to the laws to yield to the demands of his fellow-citizens,—i. e. if we take tumultuosum as neuter; or perhaps the correct reading may be, he discharged the individual as a factious person, who must settle the matter with his fellow-citizens; viz. do what would satisfy them,—dimisit quasi tumultuosum, civibus suis satisfacere (ut—satisfaceret.) A third subjected a Christian to slight torture; and as he yielded at once, dismissed him without requiring anything more of him, expressing at the same time his regret to the assistant judges that he had anything to do with such business. Another tore in pieces the elogium or writ, when a Christian, seized by violence, was brought before him, declaring that secundum mandatum,—the law of Trajan,—he would listen to no complaint in the absence of the accusers. See Tertullian. ad Scapulam, c. 4.

charge every lawful duty of his office, without resorting to cruelty. Trajan's law, then, was not always the governing rule.

We will now select a few individual examples which may serve to illustrate the character of the persecutions of this time.<sup>1</sup> In the year 200, some Christians belonging to the city of Scillita in Numidia, were brought before the tribunal of the proconsul Saturninus. He said to them, "You may obtain pardon of our emperors (Severus and Caracalla), if in good earnest you will return to our gods." One of them, Speratus, replied, "We have injured no man; we have spoken ill of none; for all the evil you have brought upon us, we have only thanked you. We give praise for it all to our true Lord and King." The proconsul replied, "We also are devout; we swear by the genius of the emperor our master, and we pray for his welfare, as you too must do." Hereupon Speratus: "I know of no genius of the ruler of this earth; but I serve my God in heaven, whom no man hath seen nor can see. I have defrauded no man of his dues. I have never failed to pay the custom upon all which I purchase, for I acknowledge the emperor as my lord; but I can *worship* none but my Lord, the King of kings, the Lord of all nations." Upon this the proconsul ordered the Christians to be conducted back to their prison until the next day. When they appeared again, he addressed them once more, and granted them a space of three days for reflection. But Speratus answered in the name of the rest, "I am a Christian, and we *all* are Christians; we abandon not our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do with us as you please." Having thus confessed themselves Christians, and refused to pay due honour to the emperor, they were sentenced to decapitation. On receiving their sentence they thanked God, and at the place of execution they again kneeled and gave thanks.

Some few years afterwards, three young men, Revocatus, Saturninus, and Secundulus, and two young women, Perpetua and Felicitas, were arrested at Carthage, all of them being still catechumens. The story of their imprisonment and of their sufferings presents us with many a fine trait of the power of Christian faith, combined with Christian tenderness of feeling. Perpetua, two and twenty years of age, who was a mother, with her child

<sup>1</sup> The documents from which we take them are in Ruinart. *Acta Martyrum*, the *Acta Martyrum Scillitanorum*, and *Acta Perpetuæ et Felicitatis*.



at the breast, had to struggle not alone with the natural feelings which shrunk from death, and with the weakness of her sex. The hardest conflict which she had before her was with those purely human feelings, grounded in the sacred ties of nature; feelings which Christianity recognises in all their rights, and makes even more profound and tender, but yet causes to be sacrificed to the One Thing for which all else must be yielded. The mother of Perpetua was a Christian, but her aged father was still a pagan. His daughter was dear to him, but he dreaded also the disgrace connected with her sufferings as a Christian. When she was first brought to the police-office, her aged father came and urged her to recant. Pointing to a vessel that lay on the ground, she said, "Can I call this vessel anything else than what it is? No. Neither can I say to you anything else, than that I am a Christian." In the meantime she was baptized; for the clergy usually found no difficulty in purchasing, at least from the overseers of the prisons, admission to the Christians in confinement, for the purpose of administering to them the offices of religion; although, in the present case, even this was perhaps unnecessary, as the prisoners were not as yet placed under a rigorous guard. Perpetua said, "The Spirit bade me pray for nothing at my baptism but patience." After a few days they were thrown into the dungeon. "I was tempted," said she, "for I had never been in such darkness before. O what a dreadful day! The excessive heat occasioned by the multitude of prisoners, the rough treatment we experienced from the soldiers, and, finally, anxiety for my child, made me miserable." The deacons, who administered to them the communion in the dungeon, purchased for the Christian prisoners a better apartment, where they were separated from other criminals. Perpetua now took the child to herself in the dungeon, and placed it at her breast; she recommended it to her mother; she comforted her friends; and felt cheered herself by the possession of her babe. "The dungeon," said she, "became a palace to me."

The report reached her aged father that they were about to be tried. He hastened to her and said, "My daughter, pity my grey hairs, pity thy father, if I am still worthy to be called thy father. If I have brought thee up to this bloom of thy age, if I have preferred thee above all thy brothers, expose me not to such

shame among men. Look upon thy son, who, if thou diest, cannot long survive. Let that lofty spirit give way, lest thou plunge us all into ruin. For if thou diest thus, not one of us will ever have courage again to speak a free word." Whilst saying this, he kissed her hands, threw himself at her feet, and called her, with tears, not his daughter, but his mistress. "My father's grey hairs," said the daughter, "pained me, when I considered that he alone of my family would not rejoice that I must suffer." She replied to him, "What shall happen when I come before the tribunal depends on the will of God; for know, we stand not in our own strength, but only by the power of God." On the arrival of this decisive hour, her aged father also appeared, that he might for the last time try his utmost to overcome the resolution of his daughter. Said the governor to Perpetua, "Have pity on thy father's grey hairs, have pity on thy helpless child. Offer sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor." She answered, "That I cannot do." "Art thou a Christian?" "Yes," she replied, "I am a Christian." Her fate was now decided. They were all condemned together to serve, at the approaching festival, on the anniversary of the young Geta's nomination,<sup>1</sup> as a cruel sport for the people and soldiers in a fight of wild beasts. They returned back rejoicing to the dungeon. But Perpetua did not suppress the tender feelings of the mother. Her first act was to send a request to her aged father that she might have the child, whom she wished to give the breast; but he refused to part with it. As to Felicitas, on her return to the dungeon, she was seized with the pains of labour. The jailer said to her, "If thy present sufferings are so great, what wilt thou do when thou art thrown to the wild beasts? This thou didst not consider when thou refusedst to sacrifice." She answered, "I *now* suffer *myself* all that I suffer; but then there will be *another* who shall suffer for *me*, because I also will suffer for him." A custom which had come down from the times of human sacrifices, under the bloody Baal-worship of the Carthaginians, still prevailed, of dressing those criminals who were condemned to die by wild beasts in priestly raiment. It was therefore proposed, in the present case, that the men should be clothed as the priests of Saturn, and the women as the priestesses of Ceres. Nobly did their free Christian

<sup>1</sup> Natales Cæsaris.

spirit protest against such a proceeding. "We have come here," said they, "of our own will, that we may not suffer our freedom to be taken from us. We have given up our lives, that we may not be forced to such abominations." The pagans themselves acknowledged the justice of their demand, and yielded.

After they had been torn by the wild beasts, and were about to receive the merciful stroke which was to end their sufferings, they took leave of each other, for the last time, with the mutual kiss of Christian love.

A more quiet season for the Christian Church began with the reign of the ignoble Heliogabalus, A.D. 219. But we have already explained the singular phenomenon, that the worst princes proved to be the most favourably disposed towards the Christians. Heliogabalus was not a follower of the old religion of the state, but even devoted to a foreign superstition which united with itself the most abominable excesses, the Syrian worship of the Sun. This worship he wished to make predominant in the Roman empire, and to blend with it all other religions. To this end he tolerated Christianity as he did other foreign religions. Had he ever proceeded to the execution of his plan, he would assuredly have met with the most determined opposition from the Christians.<sup>1</sup>

From an entirely different source proceeded the favourable disposition of the noble-minded and devout Alexander Severus (from the year 222 to 235), an emperor wholly unlike to his abandoned predecessor. This excellent prince possessed a ready sympathy with all that is good, and a reverence for everything connected with religion. He was attached to that religious eclecticism, the grounds of whose origin we have earlier explained. But he distinguished himself from others of the same principles by giving Christianity a place in his system. In Christ he recognised a Divine Being equal with the other gods; and in the domestic chapel (the Larareum) where he was used to offer his morning devotions among the images of those men whom he regarded as beings of a superior order—of Apollonius of Tyana, of Orpheus—stood also the bust of Christ. It is said that it was his intention to cause Christ to be enrolled among the Roman deities. The words of our Saviour, which this emperor was constantly re-

<sup>1</sup> *Æl. Lamprid. vit. c. 3, 6, 7.*

peating, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise,"—a maxim which, taken alone, is but little suited, it must be confessed, to mark the distinguishing character of Christianity,—he caused to be engraven on the walls of his palace and on public monuments. When the mother of this emperor, Julia Mammæa, resided at Antioch, she sent for Origen, the great teacher of the Alexandrian Church; and we may be certain that this father, who, more than any other, knew how to make Christianity intelligible to a foreign mode of thinking, availed himself of this opportunity to do this in the case of Mammæa, who exercised a great influence over the feelings of her son. The declarations of this emperor on several occasions are based on the recognition of Christianity as a *religio licita*, and of the Christian Church as a lawfully existing corporation; as, for example, when, in recommending a new mode of appointment to the civil offices of the state, he referred for a model to the regulations in Christian Churches; and when in a dispute betwixt the guild of cooks and the Christian Church in Rome, respecting a lot of land which the latter had appropriated, he decided in favour of the Church; saying, "It was better that God should be worshipped, in whatever manner, on that spot, than that it should be given up to the cooks." In view of this so favourable disposition of Alexander Severus towards the Christians, and of the declarations which imply a tacit recognition of Christianity as a *religio licita*; it is the more singular that he should still omit taking the decisive step, by which he would have given to the Christian Church the greatest, the most certain, and the most lasting advantage—that of adopting Christianity, by an express law of the empire, among the tolerated religions. It is evident from this fact how difficult it was for a Roman emperor to effect a change in anything that related to the public religion of the state. In fact, it was under the reign of Severus that the civilian, whose authority stands so high in the Roman law, Domitius Ulpian, collected together in the seventh of his ten books, *De officio proconsulis*,<sup>1</sup> the rescripts of the emperors against the Christians.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of which the fragments are to be found in the Digests, l. i. tit. xiv. c. 4, and the following.

<sup>2</sup> *Lactant. institut. l. v. c. 11*: Ut doceret, quibus oportet eos pœnis affici, qui se cultores Dei confiterentur.

The rude Thracian, Maximinus, who in the year 235 raised himself to the imperial throne, after the assassination of the excellent Alexander Severus, hated the Christians on account of the friendly relations in which they stood with his predecessor, and persecuted in particular those bishops who had been on terms of intimacy with him.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, several of the provinces, as Cappadocia and Pontus, were visited with destructive earthquakes, which re-enchanted the popular hatred against the Christians. The fury of the people, under such an emperor, had free scope; and it was, moreover, encouraged by hostile governors. The persecutions were confined, indeed, to single provinces, so that the Christians could save themselves by flying from one province to another. But although the persecutions were less violent than in other times, they made the greater impression, because they fell on those who, during the long interval of peace, had become unused to violence.<sup>2</sup>

A more favourable period for the Christians returned again with the accession of Philip the Arabian, in the year 244. It is said that this emperor was himself a Christian.<sup>3</sup> We have a circumstantial account which states, that on the vigils of Easter, the night after Easter Sunday, he presented himself for the purpose of joining in the worship of a Christian assembly; that he was met at the door by the bishop of the Church,<sup>4</sup> and told that, on account of his past crimes,<sup>5</sup> he could obtain no admittance there until he had submitted to the penance of the Church; and that the emperor actually consented to comply with the terms prescribed. But this story does not harmonize with all we otherwise know respecting the emperor Philip; for in no part of his public life, not even on his coins, has he left the least trace of his Christianity; but he everywhere appears as a follower of the pagan religion of the state. Origen, who was on terms of corre-

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. l. vi. c. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Vid. ep. Firmiliani Casareens. 75 apud Cypr. and Orig. Commentar. in Matth. T. iii. p. 857. Ed. de la Rue.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, in his Church History, makes use of the expression *κατίχησι λόγος*. But in the Chronicle he calls him distinctly the first Christian emperor.

<sup>4</sup> According to the later tradition of Babylas, bishop of Antioch.

<sup>5</sup> The assassination of his predecessor, Gordianus, was doubtless one of the crimes here meant.

spondence with the imperial family,<sup>1</sup> and who wrote, during this reign, his work against Celsus, gives us to understand, indeed, that the Christians now enjoyed a season of quiet ; but we find in this writer no intimation of the fact that the ruler of the Roman empire was a Christian, when assuredly he had occasion to mention it, if it was true. The only possible way of explaining this would be to say, that the emperor, led by political motives, kept his conversion to Christianity a secret. But then again, this statement could not be reconciled with the other, namely, that he had visited a Christian assembly, especially on such an occasion, or that he had submitted to the penance of the Church. We find, indeed, the first traces of the tradition respecting the conversion of this emperor to Christianity in an author of no less credit than Dionysius of Alexandria, who wrote under the reign of Valerian, the second in succession after Philip. He says of Valerian, that “ he shewed more good-will towards the Christians than even those emperors who were held to be Christians themselves.”<sup>2</sup> By *those emperors* we can conceive no others to be meant than the present Philip and Alexander Severus. Probably, then, the well-informed Dionysius placed them both in the same class. Philip, like Alexander Severus, might have included Christianity in his system of religious eclecticism ; and the exaggerated legend made of him a Christian. But the assassination of his predecessor, and many other actions of which he was known to be guilty, seemed inconsistent with his Christianity ; to solve the contradiction, the legend added this figment of the occurrence at the Easter vigils.

But instead of dwelling longer upon this exaggerated story, we will cite, before we pass to new trials of the Christian Church, the remarkable words of that great ecclesiastical teacher and writer of those times—Origen—respecting the trials which the Church had already encountered, and respecting her then external condition and future prospects. In relation to the earlier persecutions, he remarks,<sup>3</sup> “ As the Christians, who had been commanded not to defend themselves against their enemies by outward force, ob-

<sup>1</sup> He had written letters to the emperor, and to his wife, Severa, which have not been preserved.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. vii. c. 10.

<sup>3</sup> L. iii. c. 8.

served the mild and philanthropic injunctions ; what they could not have gained, had they been ever so powerful, in case they had been permitted to wage war, *that they received from the God who constantly fought for them*, and who, from time to time, constrained to peace *those* who had arrayed themselves against the Christians, and would have exterminated them from the earth ; for in order to remind them, when they saw some few of their brethren exposed to sufferings on account of their religion, that they should be the bolder and despise death, a few now and then, *so few*, that they may easily *be numbered*, have died for the Christian religion ;<sup>1</sup> while God has always prevented a war of extermination against the whole body of Christians, since it was his pleasure that they should remain, and that the whole earth should be filled with this saving and most holy doctrine. And yet, on the other hand, in order that the weaker brethren might breathe freely, delivered from their fear of death, God has taken care of the faithful, scattering, by his mere will, all the assaults of their enemies, so that neither emperor, nor governor, nor the populace, has been able to rage against them longer." In reference to his own times, he observes, "The number of the Christians God has caused continually to increase, and some addition is made to it every day ; he has, moreover, *given them already the free exercise of their religion* ;<sup>2</sup> although a thousand obstacles still hinder the spread of the doctrines of Jesus in the world. But since it was God who willed that the doctrines of Jesus should become a blessing also to the heathen, the machinations of men against the Christians have all been turned to shame, and the more emperor, governor, and the populace *have endeavoured to destroy the Christians, the more powerful have they become.*"<sup>3</sup> He says, that among the multitude who became Christians, might be found men of wealth and of high stations in the government, as also rich and noble women ;<sup>4</sup> that the teacher of a Christian church might now, indeed, obtain honour and respect, but that the contempt which he met with from others exceeded the respect which he

<sup>1</sup> Ὀλίγοι κατὰ καιροὺς καὶ σφόδρα ἐπαρτήθηται ὑπὲρ τῆς Χριστιανῶν θειοσιβίας τιθέντας.

<sup>2</sup> Ἦδη δὲ καὶ παρρησίαν ἐπιδίδωκεν. L. vii. c. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Τοσοῦτον πλείους ἐγένοντο καὶ κατίσχυον σφόδρα. L. c.

<sup>4</sup> Τινὲς τῶν ἐν ἀξιώμασι, καὶ γυναῖκα τὰ ἄλλα καὶ εὐγενῆ. L. iii. c. 9.

enjoyed from his brethren in the faith.<sup>1</sup> He says, moreover, that those absurd accusations against the Christians were still believed by many, who carried their prejudice so far as even to avoid speaking with them.<sup>2</sup> He writes, that by the divine will, the persecutions against the Christians had long since ceased; but he adds, with a glance to the future, that this time of tranquillity would, in its turn, certainly come to an end, when the calumniators of Christianity had once more diffused abroad the opinion, that the cause of the many disturbances (in the latter part of this emperor's reign) was the great multitude of the Christians, who had so increased their numbers, because they were no longer persecuted.<sup>3</sup> Thus he foresaw, that the persecutions had not yet come to an end; and the opinion that the decline of the state religion and the unceasing progress of Christianity was bringing calamity upon the Roman empire, would, sooner or later, bring on another persecution of the Christians. "If God," says he, "grants liberty to the tempter, and gives him the power to persecute us, we shall be persecuted. But if it is God's will that we should *not* be exposed to these sufferings, we shall, in some wonderful way, enjoy tranquillity, even in the midst of a world that hates us; and we trust in Him who has said, Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. And in truth, he has overcome the world. In so far, then, as He who has overcome the world, wills that we should overcome it, since he has received from the Father power to overcome the world, we rely upon *his* victory.<sup>4</sup> But if it is His pleasure that we should again strive and battle for the faith, then let the enemy come, and we will say to him, 'We can do all things through him that strengthens us, Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

<sup>1</sup> Καὶ νῦν δὲ πλείων ἐστὶν ἢ παρὰ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀδοξία τῆς παρὰ τοῖς ὁμοδόξοις νομιζομένης διόξης καὶ οὐ πᾶσιν (an allusion to the parties existing among the Christians.) L. c.

<sup>2</sup> L. vi. c. 28. Origen says, that Jews had spread abroad those reports about the murder of children, &c. against the Christians.

<sup>3</sup> Καὶ εἰκὸς παύσασθαι τὸ ὡς πρὸς τὸν βίον τοῦτον τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγγινόμενον ἀδείας, ἵπᾶν πάλιν οἱ παντὶ τρόπῳ διαβάλλοντες τὸν λόγον, τὴν αἰτίαν τὴν ἐπὶ τούτου νῦν στάσιως ἐν πλήθει τῶν πιστευόντων νομίσασιν εἶναι. L. iii. c. 15.

<sup>4</sup> I render the passage (l. viii. c. 70) according to what seems to me to be a necessary correction of the text: Διότι εἰς ἕσσαν νικῆσαι (instead of ε) ἡμᾶς (this I insert) αὐτὸν βούλεται, λαβὼν ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον, θάρρῶμεν (δι I omit) τῇ ἐκείνου νίκῃ.



Although Origen was too sensible and sagacious to place great confidence in the peaceful times which the Christian Church then enjoyed,—though he saw that new struggles must be undergone, yet he was firmly persuaded that the day was coming when Christianity, by virtue of its intrinsic, divine power, would come forth victorious out of them all, and gain the dominion over entire humanity. As Celsus had said, that in case all behaved like the Christians, the emperor would be left without an army, the Roman empire would fall a prey to the wildest barbarians, and consequently all culture become extinct; to this Origen replied, “If, as Celsus says, all did as I do, then the barbarians also would receive the divine word, and become the most moral and gentle of men. All other religions would cease from the earth, and Christianity alone be supreme, *which indeed is destined one day to have the supremacy, since the divine truth is continually bringing more souls under its sway.*<sup>1</sup> The conviction which Origen here expresses, that Christianity, by its own intrinsic power, would, in addition to its other conquests, subdue all the rudeness of the savage stock of human nature, and bestow all true culture on the barbarians,—this conviction was nothing new, but from the beginning given with the Christian consciousness itself. The Apostle Paul describes Christianity as a power that should reach as well to Scythians as to Greeks, and impart the same divine life to both these national stocks, binding them together in one divine family; and Justin Martyr testifies, that no barbarian or Nomadic race was to be found, in which prayers did not ascend to God in the name of the crucified.<sup>2</sup> But the really new,—wherein we perceive the change which the onward progress of history, during the course of this century, had produced in the mode of thinking among Christians, and in their anticipations of the future development of God's kingdom,—was, that Origen confidently avows the expectation, that Christianity, *working out-*

<sup>1</sup> Δηλονότι καὶ οἱ βάρβαροι, τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ προσελθόντες νομιμώτατοι ἔσονται καὶ πᾶσα μὲν θρησκεία καταλυθήσεται, μόνη δὲ ἡ Χριστιανῶν κρατήσῃ· ἥτις καὶ μόνη ποτὶ κρατήσῃ, τοῦ λόγου αἰὲ πλείονας νευομένου ψυχᾶς. L. viii. c. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Dial. c. Tryph. f. 345, ed. Colon: Οὐδὲ ἔν γὰρ ἕλως ἐστὶ τὸ γένος ἀνθρώπων, εἴτε βαρβάρων, εἴτε ἑλλήνων, εἴτε ἀπλῶς ὀφτινιῶν ὀνόματι προσαγορευομένων ἢ Ἀμαζοῦσιον ἢ αἰοίκων καλουμένων ἢ ἐν σκηναῖς κτηνοτρόφων οἰκούντων, ἐν οἷς μὴ διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ σταυρωθέντος Ἰησοῦ εὐχαὶ καὶ εὐχαριστίαι τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γίνονται.

ward from within, would overcome and suppress every other religion, and gain the dominion of the world. Such an anticipation was foreign to the thoughts of the *older* teachers of the Church. They could conceive of the Pagan state in no other relation than one of constant hostility to Christianity, and expected the triumph of the Church only as the result of a supernatural interposition, at the second coming of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

What the sagacious Origen had foretold, with regard to impending persecutions, was soon verified. Indeed, at the very time he was inditing these words at Cæsarea in Palestine, they had already begun to be verified in another district of the empire. When the enthusiastic followers of the old religion observed the encroachments which, during this long season of peace, Christianity had made on every side, threatening the destruction of all they held dearest, the fanatic spirit would be excited in them to so much the greater degree of violence. And so it was, that even before the change of rulers, a certain individual made his appearance in Alexandria, who imagined that he had been called by a revelation of the gods,<sup>2</sup> to arouse the people to war in defence of their ancient sanctuaries against the enemies of the gods; and by his means the fury of the extremely excitable populace of that city was kindled against the Christians. They had already suffered much from this quarter.

It had repeatedly been the case before, that a government favourable to the Christians was immediately succeeded by another under which they were oppressed—the reign of Antoninus Pius, for example, by that of Marcus Aurelius—of Marcus Aurelius by that of Maximinus the Thracian. So it proved once more, when, in 249, Decius Trajan conquered Philip the Arabian, and placed himself on the throne of the Cæsars. It would be natural for an emperor, zealously devoted to the pagan religion, who succeeded to a government which had been lenient towards the Christians, to consider himself bound to re-enforce the ancient laws, now fallen into desuetude, and to carry them into more rigorous execution

<sup>1</sup> This is expressed by Justin Martyr, in the Dial. c. Tryph. f. 358, where he says of the ἀρχοντες—"Οἱ οὐ παύσονται θανατοῦντες καὶ διώκοντες τοὺς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁμολογούντας, ἕως πάλιν παρῆ καὶ καταλύσῃ πάντας.

<sup>2</sup> Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in a letter to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, cited in Eusebius (l. vi. c. 41), calls him, 'Ο κακῶν τῆ πόλει ταύτῃ μάντις καὶ ποιητής.

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 Decius  
 Trajan  
 249

against the religion which, during the preceding reign, had become so much more widely diffused. In many parts of the empire the Christians had now enjoyed undisturbed peace for a period of thirty years; in several districts for a still longer time. A persecution, following after so many years of tranquillity, could not fail to prove a sifting process for the churches, where many had forgotten the conflict with the world to which they were called as Christians, and the virtues which they should maintain in this conflict. It was in this light, as such a process for the sifting and cleansing of the churches, now asleep and become worldly under the long enjoyment of quiet, that this new persecution was regarded by the Bishop Cyprian of Carthage. It was thus he expressed himself before the Christians under his spiritual guidance, soon after the first storm of the persecution was over:<sup>1</sup> "If," said he, "the cause of the disease is understood, the cure of the afflicted party is already found. The Lord would prove his people; and because the divinely-prescribed regimen of life had become disturbed in the long season of peace, a divine judgment was sent to re-establish our fallen, and, I might almost say, slumbering faith. Our sins deserve more; but our gracious Lord has so ordered it, that all which has occurred seems rather like a trial than a persecution. Forgetting what believers did in the times of the apostles, and what they should always be doing, Christians laboured, with insatiable desire, to increase their earthly possessions. Many of the bishops who, by precept and example, should have guided others, neglected their divine calling, to engage in the management of worldly concerns." Such being the condition of things in many of the churches, it may be easily understood that a persecution, which was now so unusual an occurrence, and which, in the present case, became, after the first outbreak, so extremely violent, must have produced a powerful impression.

It was certainly the design of the emperor *to suppress Christianity entirely*. In the year 250 he ordered rigorous search to be made for all suspected of refusing compliance with the national worship, and the Christians were to be required to conform to the ceremonies of the Roman religion. In case they declined, threats, and afterwards tortures, were to be employed to compel submission. If they remained firm, it was resolved to inflict, particularly on

<sup>1</sup> In his sermo de lapsis.

the bishops, whom the emperor hated most bitterly, the punishment of death. There was a disposition, however, to try first the effect of commands, threats, persuasions, and the milder forms of chastisement. By degrees, recourse was had to more violent measures; and gradually the persecution extended from the capital of the empire—where the presence of an emperor known to be hostile to the Christians made it the most severe at the beginning—into the provinces. Wherever the imperial edict was carried into execution, the first step was publicly to appoint a day against which all the Christians of a place were to present themselves before the magistrate, renounce their religion, and offer at the altar. In the case of those who before the end of the time fled their country, nothing further was done, except that their goods were confiscated, and themselves forbidden to return under penalty of death. But if they were unwilling to make so immediate a sacrifice of their earthly goods for the heavenly treasure—if they waited, in the expectation that some expedient might perhaps yet be found whereby both could be retained, then, unless they had voluntarily presented themselves by the day appointed, the examination was commenced before the magistrate, assisted by five of the principal citizens.<sup>1</sup> After repeated tortures, those who remained firm were cast into prison, where the additional sufferings of hunger and thirst were employed to overcome their resolution. The extreme penalty of death appears to have been resorted to less frequently. Many magistrates, whose avarice exceeded their zeal for the laws, or who were really desirous of sparing the Christians, gladly let them off, even without sacrificing, provided they bought a certificate or libel, as it was called, attesting that they had satisfactorily complied with the requisitions of the edict.<sup>2</sup> Some Christians pursued a bolder course; and instead of providing such certificates, maintained, without appearing before the authorities, that their names were entered on the magistrate's protocol along with those by whom the edict had been obeyed (*acta facientes*.)<sup>3</sup> Many

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian. ep. 40. *Quinque primores illi, qui edicto nuper magistratibus fuerant copulati, ut fidem nostram subruerent.* The expression *edicto* renders it not probable, to say the least, that this regulation was confined to Carthage alone.

<sup>2</sup> Those who procured such a certificate were styled *libellatici*.

<sup>3</sup> Cyprian. ep. 31. *Qui acta fecissent, licet præsentes, cum fierent, non affuissent—ut sic scriberetur mandando.*

erred through ignorance, supposing themselves guilty of no violation of religious constancy, when they did nothing contrary to their professed faith, either by sacrificing or burning incense, but only allowed others to report that they had done so. But this proceeding the Church always condemned as a tacit abjuration.<sup>1</sup>

The effect produced by this sanguinary edict among the Christians in large cities, such as Alexandria and Carthage, may best be described in the words of the Alexandrian bishop, *Dionysius*.<sup>2</sup> "All," says he, "were thrown into consternation by the terrible decree; and of the more reputable citizens,<sup>3</sup> many presented themselves immediately of their own accord; some private individuals, impelled by their fears; others, such as were invested with some public office, and were forced to do it by their employment;<sup>4</sup> while others still were conducted forward by their relations and friends. As each was called by name, they approached the unholy offering; some pale and trembling, as if they were going not to *sacrifice*, but to be themselves sacrificed to the gods, so that the populace who thronged around derided them; and it was plain to all, that they were equally afraid to sacrifice and to die. Others advanced with more alacrity, carrying their boldness so far as to avow they never had been Christians. In all of these was verified the saying of our Lord, 'how hardly can a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven.' As to the rest, some followed the example of these two classes of the more reputable; others betook themselves to flight, and others were arrested; of these last a part held out, indeed, till the manacles were fastened on, and some even suffered themselves to be imprisoned for several days; but they abjured before they were summoned to appear

<sup>1</sup> The Roman clergy, in their letter to Cyprian, say: Non est immunis a scelere, qui ut fieret imperavit, nec est alienus a crimine, cujus consensu licet non a se admissum crimen tamen publice legitur.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. vi. c. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Οἱ περιφανίστεροι, the personæ insignes, on whom the attention of the pagans was always first directed, and who, above all others, were exposed to danger.

<sup>4</sup> Among the personæ insignes, a distinction was made between the ιδιωτεύοντες, who appeared voluntarily before the civil authorities, and complied with the edict, and the δημοσιεύοντες, οἱ ὑπὸ τῶν πράξεων ἡγόντες, who were obliged by their official duties to appear in the places of public resort, and were therefore under the necessity of deciding immediately, whether they would obey the edict, or render themselves liable to the penalty by their disobedience publicly expressed.

at the tribunal. Others endured their tortures to a certain point, but finally gave in. Yet the firm and ever blessed pillars of the Lord, who through him were made strong, and endured, with a power and steadfastness worthy of, and corresponding to, the strength of their faith, became wonderful witnesses of his kingdom." Among these Dionysius mentions a boy of fifteen years, Dioscurus by name, who, by his apt replies and constancy under torture, forced the admiration of the governor himself, who finally dismissed him, declaring that on account of his minority, he was willing to allow him time for better reflection.

If the number of the wavering, or of those who fell in the conflict, was great, yet were there also many glorious exhibitions of the power of faith and of Christian devotedness. At Carthage we find a certain Numidicus, who, for his exemplary conduct in the persecution, was, by bishop Cyprian, made a presbyter. This man, after having inspired many with courage to suffer martyrdom, and seen his own wife perish at the stake, had himself, when half-burned and covered under a heap of stones, been left for dead. His daughter went to search under the stones for the body of her father, in order to bury it. Great was her joy at finding him still giving signs of life, and when her filial assiduities finally succeeded in completely restoring him. A woman had been brought to the altar by her husband, where she was forced to offer, by some one holding her hand. But she exclaimed, "I did it not,—it was you that did it;" and she was thereupon condemned to exile.<sup>1</sup> In the dungeon at Carthage we find confessors of Christ, whom their persecutors had endeavoured for eight days, by heat, hunger, and thirst, to force to abjuration, and who now saw death by starvation staring them in the face.<sup>2</sup> Certain confessors at Rome, who had already been confined for a year, wrote to the bishop Cyprian in the following terms:<sup>3</sup> "What more glorious and blessed lot can, by God's grace, fall to man, than, amidst tortures and the fear of death itself, to confess God the Lord—than, with lacerated bodies, and a spirit departing, but yet free, to confess Christ the Son of God—than to become fellow-sufferers with Christ, in the name of Christ? If we have not yet shed our blood, we are ready to shed it. Pray then, beloved Cyprian, that

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian. ep. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 21. Luciani ap. Cyprian.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 26.

the Lord would daily confirm and strengthen each one of us, more and more, with the power of his might, and that he, as the best of leaders, would finally conduct his soldiers, whom he has disciplined and proved in the dangerous camp, to the field of battle which is before us, armed with those divine weapons which never can be conquered."<sup>1</sup>

The hatred of the emperor was particularly directed against the bishops, and perhaps the punishment of death was expressly intended for them alone. At the very outset of the persecution the Roman bishop Fabianus suffered martyrdom. Several of the bishops withdrew from their communities till the first tempest of the persecution was over. This course might be an act of weakness, if the fear of death, threatened first to themselves, impelled them to it. But they might also be actuated by loftier motives: they might look upon it as their duty, since their presence served merely to exasperate the pagans, to contribute, by their temporary absence, to the preservation of the peace of their flocks, and moreover, so far as was consistent with steadfastness to the faith and the discharge of their pastoral duties, to secure their own lives for the future services of their communities and of the Church. But such a step was ever liable to different interpretations; and the bishops, particularly those in the large capital towns, on whom all eyes were turned, exposed themselves to many an accusation. Even the bishop Cyprian could not escape these censures, when, moved by the cry of these furious pagan people, who demanded his death, he withdrew for a period into a place of concealment.<sup>2</sup> His later conduct at least shews that he knew how to overcome the fear of death; and the frankness and peace of conscience with which, in a letter to the Roman Church, he explains his conduct, clear him from all reproach.<sup>3</sup> "Immediately," he writes, "on the first commencement of the troubles, when the people, with furious clamours, had frequently demanded my death, I retired for a while, not so much out of regard for my own safety as for the public peace of the brethren,

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. vi. 11.

<sup>2</sup> The Roman clergy, in their letter to the *Clerus* at Carthage, express themselves with some doubt on the matter: "They had learned Cyprianum secessisse certa ex causa, quod utique recte fecerit, propterea quod sit persona insignis." Ep. ii.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 14.

lest the disturbances which had begun might be increased by my obstinate presence." This conduct was in accordance with the principles which he recommended to others in all similar cases.<sup>1</sup> "Thus our Lord," he says, "commanded that, in times of persecution, we should give way and fly; he prescribed this rule, and followed it himself. For, as the crown of martyrdom comes from the grace of God, and can only be gained when the hour for receiving it is arrived, he who retires for a season while he still remains true to Christ, denies not the faith, but abides his time." There was some difference, it must be allowed, between the case of all other Christians and of one who had the office of a pastor to administer, and duties to fulfil towards souls which were committed to his care. But Cyprian waived none of these obligations. He could truly say, that although absent in the body, yet in spirit he was constantly present with his flock, and, by counsel and act, endeavoured to guide them according to the precepts of the Lord.<sup>2</sup> The letters which he sent from his retirement by means of certain ecclesiastics, through whom he maintained a constant correspondence with his people, shew how truly he could say this of himself—how vigilantly he laboured to maintain the discipline and order of his Church, and to provide in every way for the wants of the poor, who were hindered by the persecution from pursuing their ordinary employments, and for the relief of the prisoners. The same principles of Christian prudence which moved him to avoid a momentary danger were also exhibited in his exhortations to his flock, which, while they enforced the duty of Christian constancy, warned against every approach to fanatical extravagance. "I beg of you," he writes to his clergy,<sup>3</sup> "to use all prudence and care for the preservation of quiet; and if our brethren, in their love, are anxious to visit those worthy confessors whom divine grace has already honoured by a glorious beginning, yet this must be done with caution, and not in crowds, lest the suspicion of the heathen should be excited—lest our access to them should be wholly prohibited, and, in our eagerness for too much, we should lose the whole. Be careful then that, for the greater safety, this matter be managed with due moderation; so that even the presbyters who administer the communion to the prisoners in their dungeon, may severally take their turns,

<sup>1</sup> De lapsis.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 14.<sup>3</sup> Ep. 4.



as well as those deacons who go to assist ; for by this alternation of persons and change of visitors the thing will be rendered less obvious. Indeed we must in all things, with meekness and humility, as becomes the servants of God, accommodate ourselves to the times, and seek for the preservation of peace and the best good of the people." He advised his church to regard this persecution as an admonition to the duty of prayer.<sup>1</sup> "Let each of us," he says, "pray to God, not for himself alone, but for all the brethren, according to the example which our Lord has given us, where we are taught to pray, not as individuals, each for himself, but as a common brotherhood, all for all. When the Lord shall see us humble and peaceful, united among ourselves, and made better by our present sufferings, he will deliver us from the persecutions of our enemies."

From a comparison of the letters of Cyprian which belong to this period, with those of Dionysius of Alexandria, we may conclude, that the persecution became gradually more severe ; a fact to be accounted for, however, without supposing that any new edict was issued by the emperor Decius. As so many had wavered on the first menace of the magistrate, it was the more confidently hoped that the Christians might be altogether suppressed, without resorting to extremities, if they were but deprived of their bishops, who constantly inflamed their zeal for the faith. The management of the whole matter had, at first, been intrusted to the city and local magistrates in the several provinces ; persons who, from their acquaintance with the individual citizens, best knew how to approach them, and who could find out those means which were adapted to operate most effectually upon each individual, according to his particular character and his particular connections. The severest punishments at first were imprisonment and exile. But when it was seen that the hope which had been excited by the first successful result was disappointed, the proconsuls took the matter into their own hands ; and the proceedings against those whose constancy had been the cause of this disappointment became more violent, in order that they might be forced, at least, to yield like the rest. Hunger and thirst, the more refined and cruel methods of torture, in some cases the punishment of death, inflicted even upon such as were not connected with the sacred

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 7.

office, were now employed. But it was natural that, in course of time, men would grow tired of their fury, and the excited passions become cool again. The change, moreover, which took place in the provincial governments, when the old proconsuls and presidents, with the beginning of the year 251, laid down their office, might, for a time, have been favourable for the Christians. Finally, the attention of Decius himself was more withdrawn from his persecutions of the Christians, by political events of greater importance to him, the insurrection in Macedonia, and the Gothic war. In this last war, towards the close of the year, he lost his life. The calm which the Christians enjoyed in consequence of this change continued under the reign of Gallus and Volusianus, through a part of the following year, 252. But a destructive pestilence, which had broke out in the preceding reign, and was now gradually spreading its ravages through the whole Roman empire, besides drought and famine in several of the provinces, excited, as usual, the fury of the populace against the Christians.<sup>1</sup> An imperial edict appeared, requiring all Roman subjects to sacrifice to the gods, in order to obtain deliverance from so great a public calamity.<sup>2</sup> The public attention was again arrested, by observing how many withdrew from these solemnities because they were Christians. Hence arose new persecutions, to increase the number of sacrifices, and to sustain everywhere the declining interests of the ancient religion.

On the approach of these new trials, the bishop Cyprian wrote a letter of encouragement to the African Church of the Thibaritans,<sup>3</sup> in which he thus addresses them:—"Let no one, my dearest brethren, when he observes how our people are scattered by the fear of persecution, be disturbed because he no longer sees the brethren together, nor hears the bishops preach. We, who may not shed others' blood, but must be ready to pour out our own, cannot, at such a time, all meet in the same place together. Wherever it may happen, in these days, that a brother is separated awhile from the Church, in body, not in spirit, by the necessity of the times, let him not be moved by the fearful circum-

<sup>1</sup> See Cyprian's Apology for the Christians against the charges of Demetrianus.

<sup>2</sup> Cypriani ep. 55 ad Corrul. Sacrificia, quæ edicto proposito celebrare populus jubebatur.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 56.

stances of such a flight, nor appalled at the solitude of the desert, which he may be obliged to make his refuge. *He* is not alone, who has Christ for a companion in his flight; he is not alone, who, preserving the temple of God inviolate, is not without God, wherever he may be. And if robber or wild beast fall upon the fugitive in the desert or on the mountains; if hunger, thirst, or cold destroy him; or if his flight lead him over the sea, and the storm and waves overwhelm him; still Christ is present, to witness the conduct of his soldier, wherever he fights.”

The bishops of the metropolis, under the eye of the emperor, became naturally the first mark for persecution; for how could it be expected to put down the Christians in the provinces, if their bishops were tolerated in *Rome*? Cornelius who, at the hazard of his life, entered on his office while Decius was yet emperor, was first banished, then condemned to death. Lucius, who had the Christian courage to succeed him in the office during these perilous times, became his follower also, soon afterwards, in banishment and in martyrdom.

Yet the wars and the insurrections which occupied the attention of Gallus, prevented him from prosecuting with vigour any general persecutions in the provinces; and these events, which terminated, in the summer of the year 253, with his assassination, at length restored tranquillity and peace to the Christians throughout the empire.

The Emperor Valerian, in the first year of his reign, treated the Christians with unusual clemency; indeed, he is said to have had many of them about him in his own palace.<sup>1</sup> But if, at first, he gave himself no concern about the affairs of religion, and let things take their course, without any intention, however, of leaving the old state religion to perish, yet the ever increasing multitude of the Christians, whose influence reached even into his own court, may have been used as an argument to convince him of the necessity of some stricter measures. It was manifestly his object at first, when, in 257, he suffered himself to be induced to alter his conduct towards the Christians, to check the advance of Christianity without bloodshed. The churches were only to be deprived of their teachers and pastors, and particularly of their bishops. Next, the assembling of the churches was prohibited. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> See the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, in Eusebius, l. vii. c. 10.

trial was made, whether the end could be accomplished without the effusion of blood.

The forms of procedure, in the first persecution under this emperor, are most clearly presented in the protocols or minutes of examination, in the cases of the bishops Cyprian and Dionysius. The proconsul Paternus summoned Cyprian before his tribunal, and thus addressed him:—"The emperors Valerian and Gallienus have sent me a rescript, in which they command, that all who do not observe the Roman religion shall immediately adopt the Roman ceremonies. I ask, therefore, what are you? what do you answer?" *Cyprian*.—"I am a Christian and a bishop. I know of no other god than the true and only God, who created the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that they contain. This God we Christians serve; to him we pray, day and night, for ourselves, for all men, and for the welfare of the emperors themselves." *The Proconsul*.—"Do you persist, then, in this resolution?" *Cyprian*.—"A good resolution, grounded on the knowledge of God, cannot be altered." Upon this, the proconsul, in compliance with the imperial edict, pronounced upon him the sentence of banishment; and, at the same time, having explained to him that the rescript had reference not only to the bishops but also to the presbyters, proceeded thus: "I desire, therefore, to know of you, who the presbyters are who dwell in this city." *Cyprian*.—"Your laws have justly forbidden against informing; therefore I cannot inform you; but in the places where they preside, you will be able to find them." *Proconsul*.—"The question relates to this place. To-day I am prosecuting the investigation here, in the place where we are." *Cyprian*.—"As our doctrine forbids a man to inform against himself, and it is likewise contrary to your own rules, so neither can *they* inform against themselves; but if you seek for them, you will find them." The proconsul dismissed him with the declaration, that the assembling of the Christians, in whatsoever place, and the visiting of Christian cemeteries, were forbidden under pain of death.

The design at present was only to separate the bishops completely from their churches; but spiritual ties are not to be sundered by any earthly power. We soon find not only bishops and clergy, who continued to be the special objects of persecutions, but also the laity, even women and children, subjected to the

scourge, and then condemned to imprisonment, or to labour in the mines. They had probably been seized at the graves, or in the forbidden assemblies. The bishop Cyprian was active in providing, from his place of exile at Curubis, for their bodily and spiritual wants, and in proving his sympathy by words and deeds of love. On sending them, for their support, and for the relief of their sufferings, a large sum of money, taken from his own income and the treasury of the Church, he thus addressed them:<sup>1</sup> "In the mines, the body is refreshed not by beds and pillows, but by the comforts and joys of Christ. Your limbs, wearied with labour, recline upon the earth; but with Christ, it is no punishment to lie there. If the outward man is defiled, the inner man is but the more purified by the Spirit from above. Your bread is scanty; but man lives not by bread alone, but by every word of God. You are in want of clothing, to defend you from the cold; but he who has put on Christ, is provided with clothing and ornament enough. Even in the fact, my dearest brethren, that you cannot now celebrate the communion of the Lord's supper, your faith may still be conscious of no want. You celebrate the most glorious communion; you present God the costliest offering, since the holy Scriptures declare, that to God the most acceptable sacrifice is a broken and a contrite heart. You present yourselves to God as a pure and holy offering."—"Your example," he writes to the clergy, "has been followed by a large portion of the Church, who have confessed and been crowned with you. United to you by ties of the strongest love, they would not be separated from their shepherds by dungeons and mines. Even young maidens and boys are with you. What power do you now possess of a victorious conscience; what triumph in your hearts; when you can walk through the mines, with imprisoned body, but a heart conscious of the mastery over itself; when you know that Christ is with you, rejoicing over the patience of his servants, who, in his own footsteps, and by his own way, are entering into the kingdom of eternity!"

The emperor must soon have learned that nothing could be accomplished by such measures. This local separation could not tear the bishops from their connection with their flocks. By letters, by ecclesiastics, whose travels preserved the means of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 77.

correspondence, they still acted upon the churches as if they were in the midst of them, and their state of exile only made them dearer to their people. Wherever they were banished, a little church gathered round them; so that in many countries where the seed of the Gospel had never been scattered, it was by such exiles, whose life as well as lips bore testimony to their faith, the kingdom of God was first introduced. Thus the bishop Dionysius, who had been banished to a remote district of Lybia, could say of his exile:<sup>1</sup> "We were at first persecuted and stoned; but soon, not a few of the pagans forsook their idols, and turned to God. It was by us that the first seed of the divine word was conveyed to that spot; and, as if God had conducted us thither for this sole purpose, he brought us back again after we had fulfilled the commission."

Valerian thought it necessary, therefore, to employ more vigorous and severe measures to effect a total suppression of Christianity. In the following year, 258, appeared the edict. "Bishops, presbyters, and deacons, were to be put to death immediately by the sword; senators and knights were to forfeit their rank and their property, and if they still remained Christians, to suffer the like punishment; women of condition, after being deprived of their property, were to be banished. Those Christians who were in the service of the palace,"—slaves and freedmen are, without doubt, particularly intended here—"who had formerly made profession of Christianity, or now made such profession, should be treated as the emperor's property, and after being chained,<sup>2</sup> distributed to labour on the various imperial estates."<sup>3</sup> From this

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. l. vii. c. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, according to one reading, branded also.

<sup>3</sup> The rescript of the emperor to the senate, in the original, is extant in Cyprian, ep. 82, ad Successum: Ut episcopi et presbyteri et diacones in continenti animadvertantur; senatores vero, egregii viri et (the second et is doubtless surreptitious,—the egregii viri are the equites themselves, as the senatores are the clarissimi), equites Romani dignitate amissa, etiam bonis spoliuntur, et si, ademptis facultatibus, Christiani esse perseveraverint, capite quoque mulcentur; matronæ vero, ademptis bonis, in exilium relegentur; Cæsariani autem quicumque vel prius confessi fuerant, vel nunc confessi fuerint, confiscentur et vincti in Cæsarianas possessiones descripti mittantur. Instead of descripti (distributed), another text has scripti, or inscripti—*branded*. That as early as the persecution of Decian, Christians were branded on the forehead, may be gathered from a passage in Pontius' Life of Cyprian: Tot confessores frontium notatorum secunda inscriptione signatos. The prima inscriptio, namely, the inscriptio crucis, *χαρὰν*-

rescript, it is evident the emperor had it especially in view, *to deprive the Christians of their spiritual heads, and to check the progress of Christianity in the higher classes.* Unnecessary cruelty did not enter into his design; but yet, the people and the governors did not always stop here, as we may learn from certain martyr legends of the time, against the authenticity of which no valid objection can be urged.

The Roman bishop Sixtus, and four deacons of his church, were the first who suffered martyrdom in consequence of this rescript, on the sixth of August 258.

In the provinces, the new governors had provisionally recalled from exile those who had been banished under their predecessors, and were now causing them to await in retirement—where they were obliged to remain—the decision of their fate by the new rescript expected from Rome. Cyprian resided at a secluded villa in the neighbourhood of Carthage, until he heard he was to be conveyed to Utica, there to suffer the sentence of the proconsul, who for the present happened to be residing in that place. It was his choice to give his last testimony, by word and by suffering, like a faithful shepherd, in the presence of his flock; he therefore yielded to the persuasions of his friends, and withdrew himself for a while, until the proconsul should return. From the place of his concealment, he addressed the last letter to his church.<sup>1</sup> “I have allowed myself,” he says, “to be persuaded to retire for a short time, since it becomes the bishop to confess the Lord in the place where he presides over the Church of the Lord, so that the whole Church may be honoured by the confession of their bishop. For whatever proceeds from the lips of the confessing bishop, in the moment of confession, comes, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, from the mouths of all. Let me then, in this secret retirement, await the return of the proconsul to Carthage, that I may learn from him the commands of the emperor in relation to the laity and the bishops among the Christians, and speak whatever it may please the Lord, in that hour, to cause me to speak. But do you, my dearest brethren, in conformity with the directions which, according to the doctrine of

*τῆς, σφραγίς τοῦ σταυροῦ*, was that received at baptism. Yet the position of the words would better correspond, perhaps, with the common reading.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 83.

the Lord, you have often received from me, study to preserve quiet. Let no one of you lead the brethren into tumults, nor voluntarily give himself up to the heathen. The only time for any one to speak is after he has been apprehended; in that hour the *Lord*, who dwells in us, speaks in us." At length the proconsul returned; and when, on the fourteenth of September, the fatal sentence was pronounced by him, the last words of Cyprian were, "God be thanked."<sup>1</sup>

This persecution ended with the reign of its author, when Valerian, by the unfortunate issue of the war, became, in the year 259, a prisoner in the hands of the Persians, and his son Gallienus, who had already been associated with him in the government, obtained the sole authority. With regard to all public affairs, and so, consequently, to the maintenance of the national worship, this prince was more indifferent than his father. He immediately published an edict, by which he secured the Christians in the free exercise of their religion, and commanded the cemeteries, as well as other buildings and lands belonging to the churches, which had been confiscated in the preceding reign, to be restored. He thus recognised *the Christian Church as a legally existing corporation*; for no other, according to the Roman laws, could hold common property.

But as Macrianus had usurped the imperial authority in the East and in Egypt, it was not till after his overthrow, in the year 261, that the edict of toleration by Gallienus could go into effect in these provinces.<sup>2</sup> Hence, while the Christians of the West were already in the enjoyment of repose, the persecutions might still be going on in these provinces, under the laws of Valerian. A remarkable example, which occurred at this period in Palestine, is mentioned by Eusebius.<sup>3</sup> *Marius*, a Christian soldier of Cæsarea Stratonis, was about to be invested with the office of centurion. Just as he was to receive the centurion's staff (the *vitis*), another soldier, the next claimant to the office, stepped forward and declared that, according to the ancient laws, *Marius* was

<sup>1</sup> He was condemned as inimicus Diis Romanis et sacris legibus.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius (l. vii. c. 13) has not preserved the original edict of this emperor; but the rescript by which the same edict, after the defeat of Macrianus, was applied also to Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> L. vii. c. 15.



incapable of holding rank in the Roman army, because he was a Christian, and did not sacrifice to the gods and to the emperor. Upon this a delay of three hours was granted to Marius, within which time he must decide whether he preferred to remain a Christian. Meanwhile the Bishop Theotecnus led him into the church. On the one hand, he pointed to the sword which the centurion wore at his side, and on the other, to a volume of the Gospels which he held up before him. He was to choose between the two; the military office, and the Gospel. Without hesitation, Marius raised his right hand, seized the sacred volume. "Now," said the bishop, "hold fast on God, and may you obtain what you have chosen. So depart in peace." He bravely confessed, and was beheaded.

By the law of Gallienus an essential change, prolific of consequences, would necessarily be produced in the situation of the Christians. The important step at which many an emperor, still more favourably disposed to Christianity than Gallienus, had hesitated, was now taken. Christianity was become a *religio licita*; and the religious party that threatened destruction to the old state religion, and all the institutions connected with it, had now for once attained a legal existence. Many a prince who, at an earlier period, in accordance with the existing laws, would have had no scruples in persecuting the Christians, would now, doubtless, be shy of attacking a corporation, once established by law. This was shewn directly in the case of the second successor of Gallienus, Lucius Domitius Aurelian, who became emperor in 270. Sprung from a low rank, and educated in pagan superstition, he could be hardly otherwise than hostilely disposed towards the Christians from the first; for he was not only devoted, with singular fanaticism, to the Oriental worship of the Sun,—which, doubtless, would not have prevented him, however, from shewing toleration to various other foreign rites (*sacra*),—but he was also in every respect a blind devotee to the old religion. The well-being of the state seemed to him closely connected with the proper administration of the ancient rites (*sacra*.) When, on an occasion of threatening danger from a war with German tribes, certain persons in the Roman Senate moved that, according to the ancient practice, the Sibylline books should be opened and consulted for advice, other senators replied, that there was no

need of having recourse to them; the emperor's power was so great, that it was unnecessary to consult the gods. The matter remained for the present, and was not called up again till afterwards. But the emperor, who perhaps had been informed of these proceedings in the Roman Senate, expressed his displeasure, and wrote to them, "I am surprised that you have hesitated so long about consulting the Sibylline books, as if you were conducting your deliberations in a Christian church, and not in the temple of all the gods."<sup>1</sup> He called upon them to support him in every way by the ceremonies of religion; since it was no disgrace to conquer with the assistance of the gods. He declared himself ready to defray all expenses which might be incurred in offering every description of sacrifice, and to *furnish captives for that purpose from all nations. Human sacrifices, then, must have been included.*<sup>2</sup> We may presume, therefore, that this emperor was not averse to the shedding of the blood of the Christians in honour of his gods. He was inclined, by natural temperament, to harsh and violent measures. Yet, in the first years of his reign, he engaged in no persecution of the Christians. He even shewed by his conduct on one occasion, in the third year, that he recognised the Christian Church as a lawfully existing corporation; for a dispute having arisen among the Christians of Antioch as to the individual who should be their bishop, the Church applied to the emperor himself, and submitted it to his arbitration, whether the bishop Paul of Samosata, long since deposed on account of his doctrinal opinions, but who had found a patroness in Queen Zenobia, now vanquished by Aurelian, should not at last be *compelled* to resign his office? The emperor decided, that the one should be bishop who was recognised as such by the bishop of Rome, his own residence. It was not till the year 275, when busied with warlike enterprises in Thrace, that with a view, perhaps, to shew his gratitude to the gods, who, in his opinion, had thus far so signally favoured him, and to conciliate their good-will for the future, he resolved to dismiss all farther scruples, and proceed to severities against the Christians. But before he could carry his plan into effect, he was assassinated in a conspiracy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This language perhaps may have conveyed a suspicion that there were several Christians among the senators themselves, who had an influence on the deliberations.

<sup>2</sup> Flav. Vopisc. c. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius says, in his History of the Church, that Aurelian died as he was upon

For more than fifty years the Christian Church remained in this condition of peace and repose. Meanwhile, the number of Christians, in every rank of society, went on increasing. But without doubt, among the multitude who embraced Christianity at a time when it required no sacrifice to be a Christian, not a few were counterfeits, bringing over with them into the Christian Church the vices of paganism. The outward form of the Church underwent a change with the increased wealth of its members, and instead of the simple places of assembly, splendid churches began to be erected in the large cities. The Emperor Dioclesian, who, from the year 284, was the sole ruler, but soon after 286 shared the sovereignty with Maximian Herculius, seemed, at least to outward appearance, no otherwise than favourable to the Christians; for the stories of persecutions in the earlier years of this emperor are at variance with the records of authentic history, and altogether unworthy of credit. Christians held offices of trust in the imperial palace. They were to be found among the principal eunuchs and officers of the bed-chamber (*cubiculariis*); although it could not be fairly presumed, it is true, from this circumstance alone, that the emperor was governed by any special regard for the Christians,—since from an early period Christians had been members of the Cæsarian household (*Cæsariani*),—and if but one individual were such, his zeal and prudence might have a great influence in bringing the majority of his associates to embrace Christianity, or in causing that none but Christians should be chosen to these offices.

The chief chamberlain (*præpositus cubiculariorum*) Lucianus was probably one of this class, a man in high favour with his prince, and to whom Theonas, bishop of Alexandria, imparted much wise counsel as to the management of his office, in a letter which has come down to our times.<sup>1</sup> He exhorts him to assume nothing to

the point of subscribing an edict against the Christians. In the book, *De mortibus persecutorum*, it is said the edict had already been issued, but could not reach the more distant provinces until after the death of the emperor. Others represent the persecution as having already begun. But it is most probable that the report of Eusebius, who says the least, contains the truth, and the rest was added through exaggeration.

<sup>1</sup> This letter was first published in the 3d vol. of D'Archery's *Spicilegium*, f. 297, and again reprinted in Galland's *Bibl. patr.* T. iv. It cannot be certainly ascertained, it must be allowed, *who* the emperor was that is spoken of in this letter, nor *who* the bishop Theonas was, by whom it was written. It states how Christianity was glorified

himself, because many in the palace of the emperor had been brought through him to the knowledge of the truth; but rather to thank God who had used him as the instrument of so good a work, and given him great authority with the emperor, in order that by his means the reputation of the Christian name might be promoted. If he recommends to him the greater zeal and prudence, inasmuch as the emperor, though not a Christian himself,<sup>1</sup> yet entrusted to Christians, as his most faithful servants, the care of his life and person, still we ought not to infer too much from an expression of this kind as to the emperor's favourable opinion of Christianity. The bishop allowed himself, without doubt, to transfer the judgment of his own mind to that of the emperor; indeed this would seem natural, from the fact that many who had entered into the service of the palace as pagans, had been converted by the influence of this Lucian. In case the charge over the imperial library should be committed to any one of the Christian chamberlains,<sup>2</sup> this, it was represented, would be a very important occurrence; the favoured individual was exhorted to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him, to render the emperor favourably disposed towards Christianity. He should not shew contempt for pagan literature, but let it be seen that he was a proficient in it; should praise it, and use it for the emperor's entertainment. Only at times he should introduce some notice of the sacred Scriptures, and endeavour to lead the emperor to remark their superiority. It might so happen in the course of conversation, that Christ would

by the persecutions,—how its diffusion was promoted by them, and, finally, how peace was granted to the Church by good princes. *Persecutionum procellis velut aurum in fornace expurgatum enituit et ejus veritas ac celsitudo magis semper ac magis splendent, ut jam, pace per bonum principem ecclesiis concessa, Christianorum opera etiam coram infidelibus luceant.* By this prince we might understand Constantine; but if he were intended, the immediately preceding persecution of Dioclesian would doubtless have been more distinctly noticed. If this had been written subsequently to the final triumph of Christianity, which followed the Dioclesian persecution, the author assuredly would not have employed so indistinct a phraseology as *Quia nos maleficos olim et omnibus flagitiis refertos nonnulli priores principes putaverunt.* On the other hand, these words suit well to the times of Dioclesian. Moreover, the situation of the emperor, which is here the subject of discourse, appears by no means such as would apply to the case of Constantine, especially after he had become master of the East. The expression, "*pacem concedere,*" is so general, that it might be properly applied to the tranquil situation which the Christians owed to Dioclesian.

<sup>1</sup> Princeps, nondum Christianæ religioni adscriptus.

<sup>2</sup> For the librarian was still a pagan.

be mentioned ; in that case, it might be gradually shewn that he is the only true God.<sup>1</sup> So important did it seem to the wise bishop to warn against an intemperate zeal, which, by aiming at too much at once, might occasion more injury than advantage.

To Roman statesmen the thought would naturally present itself, that the ancient political glory of the emperor stood intimately connected with the old national worship, and that it was impossible to restore the one without the other. Now, as it was Dioclesian's wish to bring back the ancient splendour of the Roman empire, it might appear to him necessary for this purpose to infuse life into the old religion, now fast going to decay, and to destroy that foreign faith which was constantly extending itself on every side, and threatening to acquire the sole dominion. In an inscription belonging to a somewhat later date, where the emperor boasts of having suppressed Christianity, it is brought as a charge against the Christians, that they were ruining the state.<sup>2</sup> In the edict whereby Galerius put an end to the persecution, of which he was himself the author, he declared that it had been the intention of the emperors to reform and correct everything according to the ancient laws and constitution of the Roman state.<sup>3</sup> We are not to believe, therefore, that the cause which held back this emperor from a persecution in which, on the grounds that have just been mentioned, he might have been induced to engage at a still earlier period, was any recognition of human rights and of the limits of the civil power in matters of conscience, to which the earlier Roman emperors had been strangers. How entirely foreign to the views of Dioclesian was a recognition of this kind, is evinced by the principles he avows in a law directed against the Manichæan sect, A.D. 296 ; though it may be admitted that he entertained towards this sect a peculiar aversion, on account of its having arisen among his enemies the Persians.<sup>4</sup> "The immortal gods have, by their providence,

<sup>1</sup> *Insurgere poterit Christi mentio. Explicabitur paulatim ejus sola divinitas. Omnia hæc cum Christi adjutorio provenire possent.*

<sup>2</sup> *Christiani, qui rem publicam evertabant.*

<sup>3</sup> *Nos quidem volueramus juxta leges veteres et publicam disciplinam Romanorum cuncta corrigere.*

<sup>4</sup> This edict, known already to Hilarius, author of the Commentary on the Epistles of St Paul, bears every internal mark of genuineness ; and no motive can be imagined, either in pagan or Christian, for fabricating it. The diffusion of that sect, at this earlier period, in Africa, which is pre-supposed in the edict, is a thing by no means impossible.

arranged and established what is right. Many wise and good men are agreed that this should be maintained unaltered. They ought not to be opposed. No new religion must presume to censure the old, since it is the greatest of crimes to overturn what has been once established by our ancestors, and what has supremacy in the state." Would not the principles here avowed necessarily make Dioclesian also an enemy and persecutor of Christianity?<sup>1</sup>

But if, during so long a period, he could never bring himself to the resolution of openly becoming such, some counteracting cause must have been at work on the other side. Beside the influence of the Christians more or less immediately about his person, he may have been induced to hesitate by reasons similar to those which, in the work, *De mortibus persecutorum*, he is said afterwards to have urged against the proposition of his son-in-law Galerius, in the conference at Nicomedia, soon to be more particularly noticed; namely, that the Christians, after a long period of time, had at length become a lawfully existing religious community; that they were widely diffused through every part of the empire; that there would be a profuse shedding of blood, and the public tranquillity might easily be disturbed; and, finally, that the effusion of blood had hitherto served rather to advance Christianity than to procure its subversion. Anxious as Dioclesian might be to raise up the old Roman religion, yet assuredly he would never have overcome these scruples if he had not been hurried on by some more powerful influence.

The pagans could not but see, that the time when their ancient ceremonies must cease, and the hated Christian become predominant, was fast approaching; and they must have expended every effort to prevent the decisive crisis. The pagan party, to which belonged statesmen, priests, self-styled philosophers, such as Hierocles,<sup>2</sup> needed only a powerful instrument to carry their schemes into execution. Such a one they found in Dioclesian's son-in-law, the Cæsar, Caius Galerius Maximian. This prince had raised himself from obscurity by his warlike talents. Educated in the blind superstition of paganism, he was devoted to

<sup>1</sup> *Neque reprehendi a nova vetus religio deberet. Maximi enim criminis est, retractare quæ semel ab antiquis tractata et definita sunt, statum et cursum tenent et possident.*

<sup>2</sup> Not the author of the Commentary on the Golden Verses.

his religion, and moreover made great account of sacrifices and divinations. Whenever he performed these ceremonies in time of war, where Christian officers were present, the latter were used to sign themselves with the cross, the symbol of Christ's victory over the kingdom of darkness, in order to protect themselves against the influence of those hostile (demoniacal) powers, whose agency, as they supposed, was visibly manifested in the pagan worship.

Now as the Christians saw in paganism, not a barely subjective notion, a work of human imagination or fraud, but a real outward power, hostile to Christianity ;<sup>1</sup> so the pagans beheld, *after their manner*, in Christianity, such a power in relation to the operations and appearances of their own gods ; and the pagan priest might say : the sign of the cross, hateful to the gods, keeps them from being present, and from manifesting themselves at the sacrifices and other rites consecrated to their service.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When the triumph of Christianity was already decided, and paganism no longer presented itself, as so formidable a power in life, to the Christian consciousness ; namely, in the fourth century,—another view of the matter could be admitted, and Eusebius of Cæsarea could say, that the pagan art of divination ought to be traced, not to the influence of the gods, nor even to demons, but to human fraud, which was sufficient to account for the whole. After having spoken of the deceptive arts of pagan priests and magicians, exposed in the times of the Emperor Constantine, he says : Ταῦτα δὴ τις καὶ πλείω τούτων ἔτι συνάγων, εἴποι ἂν μὴ Θεοὺς εἶναι, μηδὲ μὴν δαίμονας τοὺς τῶν κατὰ πολεῖς χρηστηρίων αἰτίους, πλάνην δὲ καὶ ἀπάτην ἀνδρῶν γοητῶν. Euseb. Præparat. evangel. l. iv. c. 2.

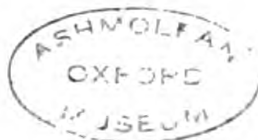
<sup>2</sup> This is the view of the matter which presents itself to us, particularly when we compare the following passages : Lactant. Institut. l. iv. c. 27 ; de mortibus persecutorum, c. 10 ; and Euseb. vit. Constantin. l. ii. c. 50. In the passage first mentioned, it is said : Cum Diis suis immolant, si assistat aliquis signatam frontem gerens, sacra nullo modo litant. Nec responsa potest consultus reddere vates. Et hæc sæpe causa præcipua justitiam persequendi malis regibus fuit. Aruspices conquerentes, profanos homines sacris interesse, egerunt principes suos in furorem. True, it might be said, the Christians had only transferred their own subjective point of view to the Pagans, and the legend respecting the origin of this persecution had thus arisen ; but we have no good reason whatever to call in question this explanation, derived from the very life of the times, and which answers to the views mutually conditioning each other, of both Christians and Pagans, with regard to the relation of their respective religious positions to one another. Thus the Christian's appeal to the testimony of their adversary, Porphyry, to shew that by the power of Christianity the influence of those demoniacal powers in paganism was hindered ; for Porphyry complains, that a pestilence in some city or other, could not be arrested, because the appearance and healing influence of Esculapius was scared away by the worship of Jesus. Porphyry's language, in his book against Christianity, is as follows : Νυνὶ δὲ θαυμάζουσιν, εἰ τοσούτων ἰσῶν κατείληφε

There were, up to this time, many Christians connected with the military service, both in the higher and lower ranks; and they as yet had never been compelled to do anything contrary to their conscience. This is evident, not only from Eusebius' narrative, but from a particular incident worthy of being noticed, which took place in 295.<sup>1</sup> At Teveste, in Numidia, a young man, Maximilianus, was brought before the proconsul, as a proper subject for military duty. Immediately as he came up, and was about to be measured, to see if his size tallied with the standard of the service, he exclaimed. "I cannot serve as a soldier; I cannot do what is wrong; I am a Christian." The proconsul took no notice of these words, but calmly ordered him to be measured. Being found of the standard height, said the proconsul to him, without noticing his confession of Christianity, "Take the badge of the service,<sup>2</sup> and be a soldier." The young man replied, "I shall take no such badge; I wear already the badge of Christ, my God." Hereupon said the proconsul, who was a pagan, with a sarcastic threat, "I shall presently send you to your Christ." "Would you but do that," said the youth, "you would confer on me the highest honour." Without further remark, the proconsul directed the leaden badge of the service to be hung round his neck. The young man resisted, and in the ardour of his youthful faith, exclaimed, "I accept not the badge of the service of this world; and if you hang it about me I shall break it off, for it is useless. I cannot wear this lead on my neck, after having once received the saving token of my Lord Jesus Christ, whom you know not, but who has suffered for our salvation." The proconsul endeavoured to explain to him that he might be a soldier and a Christian at the same time; that, in truth, Christians were to be found performing military service without scruple in the body-guard of all the four Cæsars, Dioclesian, Maximian Herculius, Constantius Chlorus, and Galerius. But as the youth of one-and-twenty years could not consent to yield up his own conviction

*τὴν πόλιν ἢ νόσος, Ἀσκληπείου μὲν ἐπιδημίας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν μηκέτ' οὔσης. Ἰησοῦ γὰρ τιμωμένου οὐδεμιᾶς τῆς θεῶν δημοσίας ὀφελείας ἤσθετο. Euseb. Præparat. evangel. l. v. c. 1.*

<sup>1</sup> The time can be definitely determined, since the mention of the consuls in the *actis Maximiliani*, a report drawn up by an eye-witness, furnishes a certain chronological datum.

<sup>2</sup> *Signaculum militiæ.*





to the example of others, he was sentenced to death ;<sup>1</sup> yet, in the sentence, nothing was said of his Christianity, but only his refusal to do military service assigned as the reason for his punishment.<sup>2</sup> Here, then, is good evidence that the soldiers also could still openly profess Christianity, and that, if they only did their duty in other respects, they were not compelled to take any part in the pagan ceremonies.

Only a few years elapsed, however, after this occurrence, when the case was altered. Religious and political motives induced Galerius, in the first place, to remove from the army all that refused to sacrifice. It was easy for him to bring it about, that an order should be sent to the army requiring every soldier to join in the sacrificial rites. Perhaps the celebration of the third lustrum since the elevation of Maximianus Herculius to the dignity of Cæsar and Augustus,<sup>3</sup> was chosen as a befitting occasion for issuing such an order to the army ; it being a festival usually celebrated with sacrifices and sacrificial banquets, in which all the soldiers were required to take a part. Many gave in their commissions,<sup>4</sup> and soldiers of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, quitted the service, that they might remain steadfast to their faith. Only a few were sentenced to death,—perhaps none except where some peculiar circumstances of the case furnished a pretext, at least in appearance, not only for dismissing them from the service as Christians, but also for punishing them as guilty of treason. Such as were not careful to express in moderate language and behaviour their honest indignation at the unrighteous demand, might easily be represented, according to the military code, as refractory subjects. We have an illustration of this in

<sup>1</sup> He received his sentence to death with an expression of thanks to God. To the Christians around he said, when he was led away from the midst of them to execution : “ My dearest brethren, strive with all your power that you may attain to the vision of the Lord, and that he may bestow on you also such a crown.” And he begged his father—who would not persuade him to do contrary to his conscience—regarding him with a joyful face, to present the new garment which he caused to be made for him on his entrance into the military service, to the soldier who was to execute the sentence of death on him.

<sup>2</sup> *Eo quod indevoto animo sacramentum militiæ recusaverit, gladio animadverti placuit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Dies natalis Cæsaris.*

<sup>4</sup> As Eusebius relates, l. viii. c. 4.

the case of Marcellus the centurion, who was connected with the army at Tingis (now Tangiers) in Africa.

While the legion was celebrating the festival in honour of the Caesar, after the pagan fashion, with sacrifices and banquetings, the centurion Marcellus rose up from the soldier's table, and throwing down his staff of office, his belt and arms, exclaimed, "From this moment I cease to serve your emperor as a soldier. I despise the worship of your gods of wood and stone, which are deaf and dumb idols. Since the service involves the obligation of sacrificing to the gods and to the emperors, I throw down my staff and belt, renounce the standards, and am a soldier no longer."<sup>1</sup> The two facts were now put together, that Marcellus had publicly cast off the badges of the service, and that he had indulged, before all the people, in abusive language towards the gods and the emperors. For this he was condemned to death.

These were the first premonitory signs of the persecution. Dioclesian, for several years, could not be induced to proceed any farther. At length, in the winter of the year 303, Galerius came to Nicomedia, in Bithynia, on a visit to his aged and infirm father-in-law, who was already meditating to retire from the government. On this occasion Galerius employed every art of persuasion, seconded by many zealous pagans among the state officers, to bring about a general persecution of the Christians. Dioclesian finally yielded; and one of the great pagan festivals, the Terminalia, which occurred on the 22d of February, was selected for the onslaught. At the first dawn of day, the magnificent church in that city, then the imperial residence, was broken open, the copies of the Bible found in it were burned, and the whole church abandoned to plunder and then to destruction. The next day was published an edict to the following effect: "All assembling of the Christians, for the purpose of religious worship, was forbidden; the Christian churches were to be demolished to their foundations; all manuscripts of the Bible should be burned; those who held places of honour and rank, must either renounce their faith or be degraded; in judicial proceedings, the torture might be used against all Christians of whatsoever rank; those belonging to the lower walks of private life were to be divested of their rights as citizens and freemen; Chris-

<sup>1</sup> Ecce, projicio vitem et cingulum, renuntio signis et militare recuso.

tian slaves were to be incapable of receiving their freedom, so long as they remained Christians." To what extent Christians in humble life were to lose the enjoyment of their rights was not clearly defined, but free scope left for applying the law to particular cases. It is rendered certain, by the edict in which the emperor Constantine afterwards annulled all the consequences which resulted from this persecution in the East, that in some instances free born Christians were made slaves, and put to the lowest and most degrading servile employments, for which they were the least suited by their former habits of life.<sup>1</sup>

A Christian of noble rank suffered himself to be hurried, by his inconsiderate zeal, into a violation of that precept of the Gospel which enjoins respect towards all in authority. He openly tore down the edict, and rending it contemptuously, exclaimed, "Victories announced again over the Goths and Sarmatians! The emperor treats the Christians, his own subjects, no better than the conquered Goths and Sarmatians." Welcome was the occasion thus furnished by the delinquent himself for condemning him to death, not as a Christian, but as a violator of the imperial majesty.

The impression produced by this edict must have been the more terrific, inasmuch as it became known, in many of the provinces, near the time of the Easter festival, and in several districts on the very day of Easter.<sup>2</sup> It is quite evident that the

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. vit. Constantin. l. ii. c. 32, et seq. To arrive at the fullest knowledge possible of what this edict contained, it is necessary to compare the two incomplete and inaccurate reports of it in Eusebius (hist. eccles. l. viii. c. 2), and in the book de Mortib. as also the translation of Rufinus. The prohibition of assemblies for religious worship is not expressly mentioned, indeed, in any one of these places; but from the nature of the case it is tacitly implied by the edict itself. But it is clear, also, from the credible and official records of the first period of the persecutions in Proconsular Africa, that such a prohibition was positively expressed. The most obscure is the passage in Eusebius, respecting the true meaning of which there has been no little dispute; *Τοὺς ἐν οἰκησῖαις εἰ ἔστι ἰσχυμένους ἐν τῇ τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ προθέσει, ἐλευθερίας στειροῦσθαι*. By *ἐν οἰκησῖαις*, nothing else can be understood, according to the usage of the language, than men of the labouring class, slaves. To bring meaning into the passage, therefore, we must look round for some other interpretation of the word *ἐλευθερία* than that which first presents itself. By the phrase, "deprived of their freedom," might be understood, "thrown into chains and imprisoned." See above, p. 139, the edict of Valerian against the *Cæsarianos*. It is the safest course, however, to follow Rufinus, who might have seen the original edict: "Si quis servorum permansisset Christianus, libertatem consequi non posset." If this is right, the translation of Eusebius, it must be admitted, was very defective.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius and Rufinus place the publication of the edict in the month of March,

plan now was to extirpate Christianity from the root. There was something novel in the undertaking to deprive the Christians of their religious writings. It differed from the mode of proceeding in the former persecutions, when it was hoped to suppress the sect by removing away their teachers and guides. The importance of these documents, as a means of preserving and propagating the Christian faith, must now have been understood. And there can be no doubt that the destruction of every copy of the Bible, had such a thing been possible, would have proved more effectual than the removal of those living witnesses of the faith, whose example served only to call forth a still greater number to supply their place. On the other hand, could the plan have been carried out, to destroy every existing copy of the Scriptures, the *very source* would have been cut off from which true Christianity and the life of the Church was ever freshly springing with unconquerable vigour. Let preachers of the Gospel, bishops and clergy, be executed; it was all to no purpose, so long as this book, by which new teachers could always be formed, remained in the hands of the Christians. The transmission of Christianity was not in itself, it is true, inseparably and necessarily connected with the letter of the Scriptures. Written, not on tables of stone, but on the living tablets of the heart, the divine doctrine, once lodged in the human soul, could preserve and propagate itself through its own divine power. But exposed to those manifold sources of corruption in human nature, Christianity, without the well-spring of Scripture from which it could ever be restored back to its purity, would, as all history teaches, have been soon overwhelmed, and have become no longer recognizable under the load

which harmonizes well with its first publication at the imperial residence, Nicomedia. In Egypt, according to Coptic accounts, it was published on the first of Parmuthi, *i. e.* by Ideler's tables, the 27th of March; which also harmonizes with the rest. See Zoëga Catalog. codd. Copt. Romæ, 1810, f. 25, of the fragments of the Coptic *acta Martyrum*, published by Georgi, Romæ, 1793, Præfat. 109, where Georgi proposes an unnecessary emendation, and other passages. When these Coptic accounts, however, which contain a good deal that is fabulous, represent the persecution as following immediately after the victory over the Persians, to express Dioclesian's thanks to the gods for the success of his arms, this must be an anachronism; unless the first persecution among the soldiers was confounded with this second one. What is stated in these Coptic records, about the cause of the persecution, *viz.* that a Christian metropolitan had released the son of the Persian King, Sapor, who had been committed to him for safe keeping, hardly admits of being reconciled in any way with the history as known to us.

of falsehoods and corruptions. Yet how was it possible for the arbitrary human will to succeed in actually executing this cunningly-devised means for the suppression of Christianity? How could the arm of despotism, though disregarding all private rights, yet reach so far as to grasp and destroy every existing copy, not only of those Scriptures which were deposited in the churches, but also in so many private dwellings? The blind policy of the kingdom of lies is ever true to its character, in imagining that nothing can escape its investigation, and that, by fire and sword, it can destroy what is protected by a higher power and necessity. The infatuated zeal for the preservation of the old religion proceeded to such length with many, that they would fain have seen burnt with the Holy Scriptures of the Christians, some of the noblest monuments of their own ancient literature; that they were for having every thing destroyed which could be used by Christians as a testimony against paganism, and as a means of transition to their own faith. They called for a law, ordering the destruction of all the writings of antiquity which did such good service for the Christians.<sup>1</sup> It may be easily conceived that, where individuals of this stamp, or men who would sooner do too much than too little to gain the emperor's favour, were found among the governors and provincial magistrates, there would exist already, in the executing of this first edict for the surrender of the Scriptures and the suspension of all assemblies for religious worship, an occasion for the exercise of every species of oppression and cruelty towards the Christians,—especially as by this same edict Christians of all ranks and conditions were liable to the torture in judicial investigations.

But there were also magistrates of an entirely different temper, who endeavoured to soften, as far as possible, the rigour of these measures, and executed them with as much lenity as they could, without a manifest infraction of the imperial edict. They very willingly allowed themselves to be deceived, or even suggested means of evading the edict, by an apparent compliance with

<sup>1</sup> This is said by the North-African writer, Arnobius, who in these times composed in defence of Christianity his *diputationes adversus gentes*. Lib. iii. c. 7: *Cum alios audiam mussitare indignanter et dicere: oportere, per Senatum aboleantur ut hæc scripta, quibus Christiana religio comprobetur et vetustatis opprimatur auctoritas.* Arnobius remarks, in objection to this proposal: *Intercipere scripta et publicatam velle submergere lectionem, non est Deos defendere, sed veritatis testificationem timere.*

its requisitions. Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, had taken the precaution to remove all manuscripts of the Bible from the church at Carthage to his own house, as a place of greater security, leaving behind only the writings of heretics. When the search-officers arrived, they seized the latter, asking no further questions. These, too, were religious writings of the Christians, and nothing was said in the edict as to what sacred writings were intended, nor of what Christian party. But certain senators at Carthage took pains to expose the artifice to the proconsul Annubenus, and advised him to cause search to be made in the house of the bishop, where the whole would be found. But the proconsul,—who, it should seem, therefore, was willing to be deceived,—declined to follow the advice.<sup>1</sup> When Secundus, a Numidian bishop, refused to surrender the sacred Scriptures, the officers of police demanded if he would not give them then some useless fragments, or anything he pleased.<sup>2</sup> Such, very probably, may have been the meaning also of the proconsul's legate, when he repeatedly put the question to the Numidian bishop Felix, “Why do you not give up your useless writings?”<sup>3</sup> So the question of the prætorian prefect to Felix, the African bishop, “Why do you not surrender the sacred writings?—or perhaps you have none;” was evidently shaped with a view to suggest the desired reply.<sup>4</sup>

This critical and trying period brought to light both good and evil in the great body of Christians. The weak faith, the false zeal of enthusiastically-excited feelings, and the true mean of genuine, evangelical good sense, were both discernible in the different modes of behaviour. Some yielded to the fear of torture and death, and gave up their copies of the Bible, which were immediately committed to the flames in the public market-place. These, who passed by the name of *Traditores*, were excluded from the fellowship of the Church. Others—and examples of this class we find particularly in North Africa, where a certain leaning to enthusiasm belonged to the native temperament of the

<sup>1</sup> Augustin. brevicul. collat. c. Donatistis, d. iii. c. 13. Optat. Milev. ed du. Pin, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Aliqua *ἄχρηστα* aut quodcunque.

<sup>3</sup> Quare scripturas non tradis supervacuas, doubtless with intentional ambiguity, so that the words might be understood in the sense, that all the sacred writings of the Christians were useless.

<sup>4</sup> See the acta Felicis in Ruinart.

people—challenged the pagan magistrates to do their office, and courted martyrdom with a fanatic zeal. Such persons declared, without being asked, that they were Christians, that they had copies of the sacred Scriptures, but that they would surrender them on no account; or they disdainfully spurned those means of evasion which were offered to them by humane magistrates. They refused to comply with the suggestions of those who were desirous of executing the imperial ordinance only in form, and who would have them surrender other writings instead of the Bible. They imagined that they ought to follow the example of Eleazer, 2 Maccab. vi., who would not even *seem* to eat of the swine's flesh. There were others again, who, oppressed with debts, or conscious of grave transgressions, either wanted to rid themselves of a life that was burdensome to them, in an honourable and seemingly pious manner, or sought in martyrdom an expiation of their sins; or who were ambitious of the honour which would be paid them by the brethren in the cells of their prison, or greedy of the gifts which they might hope to receive there.<sup>1</sup> Among the bishops themselves, there were individuals who applauded every mode of confessing the faith, and gave countenance to that fanatic zeal by which they were seized themselves. Others endeavoured to unite, to steadfastness in the faith, Christian prudence and sobriety,—and at the head of these stood the Bishop Mensurius of Carthage. He would not consent to it, that such persons as had themselves invited the pagan magistrates to do their worst, in the way above mentioned, should be honoured as martyrs. In these opposite tendencies of the religious spirit here manifested, we may discern the germ of those divisions which broke out in the Church of North Africa, after peace from without had been once more restored.

Let us now proceed as before to contemplate in detail some examples, derived from authentic sources, of the power of Christian faith, and the intrepidity of Christian courage. In an inland town of Numidia, a band of Christians,—among whom was a lad in the tenderest years,—were seized in the house of a church-

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Augustin. brevicul. collat. c. Donatistis, d. iii. c. 13, T. ix. opp. ed. Benedictin. f. 568: Quidam facinorosi arguebantur et fisci debitores, qui occasione persecutionis vel carere vellent onerosa multis debitis vita, vel purgare se putarent et quasi abluere facinora sua vel certe adquirere pecuniam et in custodia deliciis perfrui. De obsequio Christianorum.

reader, where they had assembled under the direction of a presbyter, for the purpose of reading the Scriptures, and celebrating the communion. They were brought to Carthage, to be arraigned before the tribunal of the proconsul, singing hymns to the praise of God all the way. Several of them were put to the torture, for the purpose of drawing confessions from the rest. One of them exclaimed, in the midst of his sufferings, "Ye are wrong, unhappy men; you lacerate the innocent. We are no murderers,—we have never defrauded any man.—O God, have pity! I thank thee, O Lord,—give me power to suffer in thy name. Deliver thy servants out of the prison of this world—I thank thee, and yet am unable to thank thee,—to glory! I thank the God of the kingdom. It appears,—the eternal, the imperishable kingdom! Lord, Christ, we are Christians, we are thy servants; thou art our hope." While he thus prayed, the proconsul said to him, "You should have obeyed the law of the emperor." He replied, with a strong spirit, though in a weak and exhausted body, "I reverence only that law of God which I have learned. For this law, I am willing to die. In this law, I am made perfect. There is no other." In the midst of his tortures, another cried out, "Help, O Christ! I pray thee have compassion,—preserve my soul, that it fall not into shame. O give me power to suffer." To the reader in whose house the assembly was held, said the proconsul, "You ought not to have received them." He replied, under the rack, "I could not do otherwise than receive my brethren." "But the emperor's command," said the proconsul, "should have been of more consequence to you." "God," he replied, "is greater than the emperor." "Have you in your house," demanded the proconsul, "any sacred writings?" "Such have I," he replied, "but they are in my heart." Among the other prisoners was a Christian maiden, named Victoria, whose father and brother were still pagans. The brother, Fortunatianus, had come for the purpose of persuading her to renounce her religion, and thus procuring her release. When she steadfastly declared that she was a Christian, her brother pretended that she was not in her right mind. But, said she, "*This is my mind*, and I have never altered it." The proconsul asked her if she would not go with her brother. "No," she replied; "for I am a Christian, and they are my brethren who obey God's commands." As to the lad,



Hilarianus, the proconsul supposed he would be easily intimidated by threats ; but even in the child, the power of God proved mighty ; “ Do what you please,” he replied ; “ I am a Christian.”<sup>1</sup>

The persecution once begun, it was impossible to stop half-way. The first measures failing of their object, it became necessary to go farther. The first step against the Christians was the most difficult ; the second did not linger. Certain occurrences, moreover, had happened, which placed the Christians in a more unfavourable light, or which, at least, could easily be turned to that account. A fire broke out in the imperial palace of Nicomedia ; it was quite natural to ascribe such an occurrence to the desire of revenge in the Christians,—and the accusation may have had its good grounds, without involving in the disgrace the whole Christian Church of that period. Among so large a number of Christians, there might perhaps have been some who allowed themselves to be urged on by passion, which they excused to themselves under the plea of religion, to forget thus far what manner of spirit became them as disciples of Christ. Certain it is, however, that this charge against the Christians could never be substantiated. The sensitive author of “ God’s Judgments on the Persecutors,” maintains that the fire was kindled by Galerius himself, to give him an opportunity of accusing the Christians,—a statement that cannot be received on such authority alone. The Emperor Constantine ascribes the fire to lightning, and looks upon it as a judgment of God. The truth is, as Eusebius candidly admits, the real cause was never ascertained,—enough that the Christians were accused of conspiring against the emperors, and multitudes of them thrown into prison, without discrimination of those who were or were not liable to suspicion. The most cruel tortures were resorted to, for the purpose of extorting a confession ; but in vain. Many were burned to death, beheaded, or drowned. It is true that, fourteen days after, a second fire broke out, which, however, was extinguished without damage ; so that

<sup>1</sup> The sources are the *Acta Saturnini, Dativi et aliorum in Africa*. Baluz Miscell. T. ii. Ruinart, in the above cited collection of Du Pin. It is true the report has not been preserved in its simple, original form ; but with an introduction, running remarks, and a conclusion, written by some Donatist. Yet the *acta procunsularia*, which form the groundwork, may still be easily recognised.

the supposition becomes certainly more probable that it was the work of an incendiary.<sup>1</sup>

Some disturbances which, soon after this event, arose in Armenia and Syria, afforded new occasion of political jealousy against the Christians. It was intimated that the clergy, as the heads of the party, were particularly liable to suspicion; and under this pretext the edict was issued, which directed that all of the clerical order should be seized and thrown in chains. Thus in a short time the prisons were filled with persons of this class. It is seen, on various occasions, how strong was the inclination to fasten upon the Christians charges of a political character; nor were the Christians always careful to avoid every even seeming ground for such charges as their enemies were seeking to bring against them. A young Christian from Egypt, who had been apprehended at Cæsarea in Palestine, being asked of what country he was by the Roman proconsul, replied, "I am of Jerusalem, which lies towards the rising sun, the city of the saints." The Roman, who perhaps was not aware, in his ignorance, that even such a place existed as the earthly Jerusalem, which might be known to him only by its Roman name, *Ælia Capitolina*,—and who was still more ignorant of the heavenly Jerusalem,—immediately concluded that the Christians had founded somewhere in the East a city, which they intended to make the central point of a general insurrection. The matter appeared to him one of grave importance, and he plied the young man with a great many questions under the torture.<sup>2</sup> Procopius, a presbyter of Palestine, when called upon to sacrifice, declared that he knew of only one God, to whom men were bound to bring such offerings as he would accept. Being then required to offer his libation to the four sovereigns of the empire, the two Augusti, and the two Cæsars, he replied,—doubtless to shew that men are bound to acknowledge but one God as their Lord,—with the Homeric verse, "The government of many is not good; let there be one ruler, one king."<sup>3</sup> It seems, however, that it was construed into

<sup>1</sup> Lactantius (*de mortib.*) relates this. It is mentioned by no other author. But Lactantius, who probably resided himself at that time at Nicomedia, would be more familiar with the particulars of these events than others. Yet it is possible he may have been deceived by some rumour then current in the city.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. *de martyrib. Palæstinæ*, c. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, εἷς βασιλεύς. *Ilias*, ii. 201.

a political offence, as if he meant to censure the existing Tetrarchy.<sup>1</sup>

All the prisons being now filled with Christians of the spiritual order, a new edict appeared, commanding that such of the prisoners as were willing to sacrifice should be set free, and the rest, by every means, compelled to offer. This was followed at last, in 304, by a fourth and still more rigorous edict, which extended the same order to the whole body of Christians.<sup>2</sup> In the cities, where the edict was most strictly executed, public proclamation was made through the streets, that men, women, and children, should all repair to the temples. Every individual was summoned by name from lists previously made out; at the city gates all were subjected to rigid examination, and such as were found to be Christians immediately secured. At Alexandria, Pagans themselves concealed the persecuted Christians in their houses; and many of them chose rather to sacrifice their property and liberty than to betray those who had taken refuge with them.<sup>3</sup> *Sentence of death*, it is true, was not formally pronounced on the refractory; but we may well suppose that an edict which authorized the employment of every means to compel the Christians to sacrifice, would, still more than an unconditional decree of death to confessors, expose them to every cruelty which the fanaticism of a governor, or his desire of courting the imperial favour, might dispose him to inflict. Each one, doubtless, felt sure of never being called to account for any excesses he might be guilty of against the Christians. Already did the persecutors fondly imagine that they should triumph over the fall of Christianity. Already was added to the other honorary titles of the Augusti, the glory of having extinguished the Christian superstition, and restored the worship of the gods. "Amplificato per orientem et occidentem imperio Romano, et nomine Christianorum deleto, qui rempublicam evertabant. Superstitione Christiana ubique deleta et cultu Deorum propagato." Yet at the very time they were thus triumphing, the circumstances were already prepared by Providence which were destined to work an entire change in the situation of the Christians.

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. de martyrib. Palæst. c. 1.

<sup>2</sup> L. c. c. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Athanas. Hist. Arianor. ad Monachos, § 64.

One of the four regents, Constantius Chlorus, who presided as Cæsar over the government of Gaul, Britain, and Spain, possessed naturally a mild and humane disposition, averse to persecutions. He was, moreover, though not himself a decided Christian, yet evidently a friend to Christianity and its professors;—whether it was, as Eusebius affirms, that he really perceived the vanity of paganism, and without being a Christian was an upright monotheist,—or whether, as is more probable, he was, like Alexander Severus, an eclectic in his religion. Those Christians about his person who continued steadfast in their faith, he treated with special regard and confidence; it being a common remark with him, that one who has proved unfaithful to his God would be still less likely to remain faithful to his prince. Yet what Eusebius relates about his method of putting their constancy to the proof wears but little appearance of probability. As he could not, while a Cæsar, shew an open disregard to the edict that had been issued by the Augusti, he suffered the work of destroying the churches to proceed far enough to save appearances. In Gaul, where he usually resided, the Christians enjoyed perfect liberty and quiet, while the persecutions raged in other provinces.<sup>1</sup> In Spain, he may not have been able to effect so much; but it is certain, that in no one of his provinces was the persecution of the same character as in other districts of the empire. The influence of this emperor, so favourable to the Christians, was still more efficient, when, in 305, Dioclesian and Herculius abdicated the sovereignty, and he was elevated, in conjunction with Galerius, to the dignity of Augustus.

On the other hand, there now entered the line of the Cæsars, a man who, in blind heathenish superstition and cruelty, perfectly resembled the emperor Galerius, who nominated him to that station. This was Caius Galerius Valerius Maximinus. It is natural to suppose, that in the provinces committed to his care,—Syria, with the adjacent parts of the Roman empire, and Egypt,—the persecutions would be renewed with increased violence. At times, it is true, men grew weary of their own rage, when they saw that their efforts were to no purpose. The impe-

<sup>1</sup> So say the work *De mortib. persecutor.* c. 16, and a letter of the Donatists to the Emperor Constantine, in which, on this very account, they demanded Gallic bishops for their judges. *Optat. Milev. de schismate, Donatistar.* l. 1, c. 22.

rial edict flagged in its execution, the persecution slept, and the Christians enjoyed a temporary respite; but when their enemies perceived that they recovered breath, maddened to think they had not succeeded in extinguishing Christianity and restoring Paganism to its ancient splendour, their fury broke out afresh, and a new storm more violent than ever arose. Thus at length, in the year 308, and about the eighth year of the persecution, after much effusion of blood in the states of Maximinus, from the time of his accession, a season of tranquillity had commenced. The Christians who had been condemned to labour in the mines were treated with greater lenity and forbearance. But all at once the Christians of these provinces were startled out of their transient repose by a furious storm. A new and more rigorous command was addressed by the emperor to all the officers of his government, from the highest to the lowest, both in the civil and in the military service, directing that the fallen temples of the gods should be restored, that all free men and women, all slaves, and even little children, should sacrifice, and partake of what was offered at heathen altars. All provisions in the market were to be sprinkled with the water or the wine which had been used in the sacrifices, that the Christians might thus be forced into contact with idolatrous offerings. To such length did fanaticism and despotic power proceed! New tortures and a fresh effusion of blood ensued.

Again there was a respite, which lasted till the beginning of the year 310. Christians confined to the mines in Palestine were allowed to meet together for worship, but the governor of the province, observing this in one of his visitations, reported it to the emperor. The prisoners were now kept apart and put to severe labour. Thirty-nine confessors, who after much suffering were enjoying a season of rest, were beheaded at once. It was the last blood that flowed in this persecution, tranquillity having for some time been already restored to the Christians in the West.

The instigator of the persecution himself, the emperor Galerius, softened by a severe and painful disease, the consequence of his excesses, had perhaps been led to think that the God of the Christians might, after all, be a powerful being, whose anger punished him, and whose favour he must endeavour to conciliate. At any rate,

he could hardly fail to be struck with the fact, that all his bloody and violent proceedings had inflicted no material harm on Christianity. So, in the year 311, the remarkable edict appeared which put an end to the last sanguinary conflict of the Christian Church in the Roman empire.

It declared, that it had been the intention of the emperors to reclaim the Christians to the religion of their fathers, in departing from which, they had invented laws according to their own fancy, and given birth to a multitude of sects,—a reproach frequently thrown against the Christians of this age.<sup>1</sup> But as the majority of the Christians, in spite of every measure to the contrary, persevered in their opinions, and it had now become evident that they could not worship their own Deity, and at the same time pay due homage to the gods, the emperors had resolved to extend to them their wonted clemency. They might once more be Christians, and would be allowed to hold their assemblies, provided only they did nothing contrary to the good order of the Roman state (*ita ut ne quid contra disciplinam agant*);<sup>2</sup> “let them now, therefore, after experiencing this proof of our indulgence, pray to their God for our prosperity, for the well-being of the state, and for their own; that the state may still continue to be in all respects well maintained, and they themselves may be enabled to live quietly in their own homes.”

ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANITY.—DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY  
AGAINST THESE WRITINGS.

While the ancient world, in order to maintain itself on its own religious foundation, was endeavouring to suppress Christianity by force, the culture of the age enlisted itself in the same cause, and entered the contest with its writings. Intellectual weapons

<sup>1</sup> “Behold, since you have left the unity of ancient tradition, the authority of the fathers, you have been led entirely by your own caprice, and have fallen from one innovation into another; hence the multitude of your sects.” The Latin words of the decree,—*Siquidem quadam ratione tanta eosdem Christianos voluntas* (such caprice *ἰδιόθρησκεία*), *invasisset et tanta stultitia occupasset, ut non illa veterum instituta sequerentur, quæ forsitan primi parentes eorundem constituerant; sed pro arbitrio suo atque ut huiusmodi erat libitum, ita sibi met leges facerent, quas observarent et per diversa vanos populos congregarent.*

<sup>2</sup> The emperor had probably explained himself more distinctly on this point, in a rescript which has not come down to us.

were combined with outward violence in attacking the new principle which had begun to reveal its power in human life. In these written assaults of Christianity, the relation of the religious and moral principles of the then existing world, and of its different intellectual tendencies—as set forth by us in the introduction—to this new principle which was now entering into the life of humanity, may be easily recognised. If He whose external appearance was the perfectly unsullied mirror of his divine life, still did not fail to distinguish, in the hostile judgments passed upon his own person, the sins against the Son of Man from those against the Holy Ghost, much more should we feel it incumbent on us to institute a like distinction between the judgments of misapprehension and of calumny passed upon Christianity, where its divine life exhibited itself under circumstances and forms exposing it to such various debasing mixtures. In the ferment which Christianity produced on its first appearance, many impure elements necessarily became mixed with it, which were destined to be expelled during the purifying process of its development. The crisis brought on by Christianity, which was to introduce a genuine healthfulness of the spiritual life, must needs call forth also some considerable degree of morbid action, as a necessary means of arriving at that ultimate healthy condition. Much that savoured of a jealous and narrowly exclusive spirit would naturally be engendered by that opposition to the world, in which the new faith must first display itself before it could furnish the world with the principle of its own renovation. Now, in order to judge rightly of these impure admixtures in their relation to the essence of Christianity, and to discern the higher element lying at the ground of them, it was necessary that Christianity itself should be studied and understood in its essential character. Whoever contemplated these phenomena from some outward position, and by the very peculiarity of this point of view found himself opposed to Christianity, would easily confound these accidents attending the process of its development, with the essential thing itself, and from his knowledge of the former, imagine that he comprehended the latter. This remark we shall have to apply to everything which wears the form of opposition to Christianity in these centuries.

Thus Lucian,—of whose peculiar bent on religious matters we have spoken before,—fixing on certain accidental marks by which

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his attention had been caught, could place Christianity in the same class with the various appearances of fanaticism, and boastful jugglery which he made the butt of his ridicule. When he heard of men who were said to possess the power of curing demons, and of healing other diseases, he placed them down on the same list with the common vagabond exorcists and magicians. He has most to say about the Christians in a work where, in his own peculiar style, he has described the life and self-procured death of the Cynic philosopher, Peregrinus Proteus. This personage, according to Lucian's account, was one of those notorious hypocrites who understood the art of concealing their vanity and wickedness under the Cynic guise, and of enchaining the multitude by various other fraudulent tricks. Yet it may be a question, how far this picture, drawn by satire, answers to the truth, or whether it contains any at all—especially as we have a description of this individual by another contemporary,<sup>1</sup> which would lead us to form an altogether different view of his character; unless we choose to assume that this other contemporary suffered himself to be imposed upon by a hypocritical show of moral earnestness and zeal. This Peregrinus then, as we are told, joined himself for a while with the Christians, and being imprisoned for confessing Christianity, acquired among them the highest consideration. All which account may be a pure invention of Lucian for the purpose of connecting his hero with the Christians, that he might have a good opportunity for satirizing the latter.

The importance which was given, from the Christian point of view, to the individual, personal existence, as destined in its entirety for endless duration; the lively confidence of faith in an eternal life and resurrection; the opposition to the whole pre-

<sup>1</sup> Aulus Gellius (in his *Noctes Atticæ*, l. xii. c. 11) tells us that while residing at Athens, he visited this Peregrinus, who lived in a hut without the city. He calls him *virum gravem et constantem*. He cites from his mouth the maxim: wickedness ought to be shunned, not from fear of punishment or disgrace, but only from love of goodness; *virum sapientem non peccaturum, etiamsi peccasse eum dii atque homines ignoraturi forent*. If the purely moral effort which these words express was really his own, it is not difficult to see how he might thus be induced to attach himself to Christianity; while, at the same time, he soon fell away from it, because he could not bring himself to believe the facts which it announced. Yet we do not hold this to be probable, for the following reason, if there were no other, viz. we believe, that if any thing of this kind had happened, some trace or other of such an occurrence would have been preserved in the religious traditions of this period.



viously existing world into which Christianity caused its followers to enter; the hearty brotherly love which bound them to each other;—all these Lucian acknowledges as effects which had proceeded from the man who was crucified in Palestine. But without troubling himself to seek for profounder reasons to account for effects so great, and, as he himself admits, so abiding, he throws them into the same class with all the other kinds of fanaticism which he ridicules. “They still worship,” says he of the Christians, “that great man who was crucified in Palestine, because it was he by whom the initiation into these new mysteries was introduced into human life. These poor creatures have persuaded themselves that they are all immortal, and shall live for ever. For this reason they despise death itself, and many even court it. But again, their first lawgiver<sup>1</sup> has persuaded them to believe that, as soon as they have broken loose from the prevailing customs, and denied the gods of Greece, reverencing instead of these their crucified teacher, and living after his laws, they stand to each other in the relation of brethren. Thus they are led to despise everything alike, to consider everything else as profane, adopting these notions without any sufficient grounds of evidence.”<sup>2</sup> Under the example of Peregrinus, he gives a lively description of the sympathy displayed by the Christians for those confessors who were languishing in prison. “When he was incarcerated,” says Lucian, “the Christians, who regarded it as a great calamity, spared no expense and no sacrifice to procure his liberation. Finding this to be impossible, they were exceeding careful that he should in all respects be well provided for. And from the early dawn, old women, widows and orphans, might be seen waiting at the doors of his prison; the more respectable among these, having bribed the keepers, slept near him in the dungeon. Then various dishes were brought in; and religious discourses were delivered in his presence.”<sup>3</sup> Even from cities in

<sup>1</sup> We find no good reason for supposing that Paul is intended by this expression; but we must conceive of the same person, whom he characterises as the *ἀνισκολοπισμίωνος σοφιστής*, and of whose laws he is speaking—the sole founder of Christianity. We recognise, also, the allusion to what Christ himself had said respecting brotherly love. In this particular description by Lucian we do not remark a single element which could be considered as belonging peculiarly to the Apostle Paul.

<sup>2</sup> *Ἄνευ τινός ἀκριβοῦς πίστεως.*

<sup>3</sup> Ecclesiastics visited him, and gave religious discourses in the cell where he was

Asia Minor deputies from the Christian communities were sent to assist in protecting and consoling him. They shew incredible despatch in a public concern of this sort. In a brief space they give away all."

Again, Lucian accuses the Christians as an ignorant, uncultivated set, of excessive credulity; whence it happened that their charitable disposition was in many ways imposed upon. "If a magician, an impostor, who is apt at his trade, comes among them, having to deal with an ignorant class of people, he can shortly make himself rich." He describes the Christians as men "who thought it the greatest sin to take a morsel of food which, in their opinion, was forbidden, and who would rather do anything than this." Peregrinus was excluded from their community, "because he had offended *even against their* laws, for he had been seen to eat something or other which is forbidden among them." It is possible that Lucian had in mind here the example of Jewish Christian communities; or, perhaps, the very punctilious and superstitious observance of the regulations adopted by the apostolic council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) which prevailed after the suppression of the more liberal spirit of St Paul, may have given occasion to such a judgment. At all events, we cannot fail to see how, in this case, the contracted views of believers led to a misapprehension as to the essential character of their religion.

The stoic Arrian, who lived at a somewhat earlier period than Lucian, judged of the Christians—as the emperor Marcus Aurelius had done before—strictly according to the relation of the stoic philosophy to Christianity. In his work, which aims to elucidate the principles of his master Epictetus,<sup>1</sup> he starts the question, "Whether by insight of reason into the laws which govern the system of the universe it might not be possible to acquire the same intrepidity in view of death, which the Galilæans attained to by mad fanaticism and custom."

It may easily be understood, from what we have said respecting the relation of the *New Platonism* to the religious stage of development in the ancient world, and to Christianity, that while

confined;—unless the words "λόγοι ἱεροὶ ἀντῶν ἰλίγοντο," are to be understood as referring to extracts read from the sacred Scriptures. By the "ἐν σίλει," who remained with him during the night, may doubtless be meant also Ecclesiastics.

<sup>1</sup> Diatrib. l. iv. c. 7.

on one hand it might serve as a transition-point to the Christian faith, and a source from whence to borrow the scientific form to be used in the explanation and defence of Christian truth; so on the other, it would be the school from which the most numerous as well as the most formidable antagonists of the same religion would proceed. Perhaps the first man who felt sufficiently interested in the subject to attack Christianity in an express work was from this school; viz. Celsus, who, under the government of Marcus Aurelius, when it was attempted to extirpate Christianity by the sword, attacked it at the same time with the weapons of his witty and acute intellect. He wrote against the Christians a work in two books, entitled "The true doctrine."<sup>1</sup>

Origen himself, however, started the conjecture, that this Celsus was no other than the person otherwise known as Celsus the Epicurean, Lucian's contemporary and friend. Still it is plain, from

<sup>1</sup> Λόγος ἀληθής, Orig. c. Cels. l. i. c. 4. Several learned writers have supposed it might be inferred from Origen's language (c. Cels. l. iv. c. 36), that besides the work just mentioned, which, as to its essential contents, may be restored from the fragments preserved in Origen's reply, Celsus wrote another work, in two books, against Christianity. But we cannot think that the interpretation of the passage, which lies at the basis of their theory, is the correct one. The passage is this: 'Ο Ἐπικούρειος Κέλσος, εἴγει οὗτός ἐστι, καὶ κατὰ Χριστιανῶν ἄλλα δύο βιβλία συντάξας. I cannot understand ἄλλα, in this connection, as referring to other works against Christianity, besides the one of which alone Origen uniformly speaks, and which it is his business to refute; but I understand by it other works than those known to belong to Celsus, in which he betrays his Epicureanism without any attempt at concealment. "The Epicurean Celsus, if indeed,—so I consider myself warranted by the Greek *usus loquendi* of this period to understand the word εἴγει, while at the same time I acknowledge the *original* difference between εἴγει and εἴπειρ,—if indeed he is the same with the one who wrote two other books against the Christians." By the other books, in this case, none can be meant but that one work which Origen undertook to refute. Precisely this was the point in question, whether the *Epicurean* could be the author of *that work*. Whether the same individual had composed two other works besides, against Christianity, was a question that did not belong here. Had it been Origen's intention to designate two books distinct from that work, he would have expressed himself somewhat as follows: 'Ο καὶ ταῦτα τὰ βιβλία καὶ ἄλλα δύο, etc. Moreover, the prefixing the words, κατὰ Χριστιανῶν, confirms my interpretation. And if Celsus had written another additional work against the Christians, two cases only can be supposed. Either Origen had read this work also, or else he had merely been informed that Celsus had written such a work, without having seen it himself. In the first case, he would not have failed to take some notice, in this controversy, of what Celsus had said in his other work against the Christians. In the second case, he would, at least, not have omitted to declare distinctly, that the other work of Celsus had never come under his eye, as he does in fact observe where he is speaking of a writing of Celsus, which we shall have occasion to mention hereafter.

the uncertainty with which he expresses himself, that he was led to this conjecture, not by any evidence of historical tradition, but only by the identity of the name; and that he was thrown into doubt again by the internal evidence presented in the work itself. Now, since it is by no means impossible, that two authors of the same name should write at the same period—especially when the name is not an unusual one—the inference from the identity of names must be extremely uncertain, unless supported by some agreement also in the way of thinking.

Lucian was induced by the last-mentioned Celsus to publish his life of the magician Alexander of Abonoteichus, a work which he dedicated to that friend. This fact would correspond with the views expressed in the work of Celsus against Christianity. For the antagonist of Christianity places it in the same class with all phenomena belonging to the art of magic, and compares it with the latter when he attempts to account for its origin and diffusion. He might naturally wish, also, to know more about the great magician who had made so much noise in his day, with a view to avail himself of this knowledge in behalf of his own scheme of *enlightenment*, which would throw all religious phenomena, transcending the ordinary standard, into the same category. This Celsus had written a book, as Origen also was aware, against pretended enchantments,<sup>1</sup> and which was intended to counteract the fraudulent tricks of those vagrant Goetæ. It is described by Lucian as a work well adapted to lead men back to sober thought.<sup>2</sup> Now it might very easily happen, that on these principles, the same zeal against fanaticism would induce Celsus to write against those who endeavoured to deceive the multitude by their pretended art of magic, and against the Christians who insisted on their own miraculous gifts. Celsus does, in fact, compare in one place the miracles of Christ with the works of magicians who learned their art from the Egyptians, and for a few oboli exhibited them in the open market-place, pretending to expel evil spirits from men, to drive away diseases by a breath,

<sup>1</sup> Κατὰ μάγων.

<sup>2</sup> He says in his tract, dedicated to this Celsus, and entitled, 'Αλίξανδρος or Ψευδομάντις (§ 21), addressing himself to Celsus: Οἷς κατὰ μάγων συνέγραψας, καλλίστοις τε ἅμα καὶ ὠφελιμωτάτοις συγγράμμασι καὶ δυναμίνοις σφραγίζειν τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας.

to call up the souls of heroes, to charm into their presence costly viands, to make dead things move as if they were alive; and he asks, "Shall we, because they do such things, consider them as sons of God—or shall we say these are the tricks of wicked and pitiable men?"<sup>1</sup> Origen was doubtless wrong in supposing that in these words Celsus conceded the reality of magic; and that the only way, therefore, of reconciling this concession with the attack on magic by the same Celsus, if he were the same, was to assume that, to subserve a particular end, he here pretended to believe what he did not actually believe. For Celsus might express himself thus, even though he looked upon those magicians as no better than jugglers, skilful in deceiving the senses by a certain sleight of hand;<sup>2</sup> and the same writer, in his work against the magicians, may have undertaken to shew how such deceptions were brought about. Yet it must be admitted, that in another passage of the work against the Christians, Celsus expresses himself as though he considered magic to be an art possessed of a certain power, though held by him in no great account.<sup>3</sup> He says he had heard it from Dionysius, an Egyptian musician, that magic exercised an influence over uncultivated and profligate men, but not over those who had received a philosophical education. This view of magic may be easily traced back to a common opinion among the Platonists of that period, who supposed that by taking advantage of certain attractive and repulsive powers in nature—certain magnetic influences—it would be possible to exercise a great control over such as were still fettered by the bonds of nature, though not over those who had risen to freedom, and lived in the divine element which is exalted above all natural forces. With this the assertion first quoted from Celsus may be easily reconciled, that magic, as practised in Egypt, its proper home,<sup>4</sup> so influenced men at a subordinate stage of cul-

<sup>1</sup> Orig. c. Cels. l. i. c. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Μίχρη φαντασίας φαινόμενα τοιαῦτα.*

<sup>3</sup> c. Cels. l. vi. c. 41.

<sup>4</sup> And so the possession of the art of magic was ascribed, by those who acknowledged its reality, particularly to the Egyptian priests. Moreover, Celsus (l. i. c. 28) brings forward the story, borrowed perhaps from the Jews, that Jesus, on account of his poverty, was obliged in Egypt to let himself out for wages, and there learned the arts by which he performed his pretended miracles, and contrived to attain to such eminence as to be worshipped as a divine being. "Ὅτι οὗτος διὰ πείναν εἰς Αἴγυπτον μισθαρήσας

ture, that sights, and affections of whatever kind, might be produced in them at pleasure. It may be questioned, however, whether Lucian's friend would have conceded as much as this to magic.

Lucian praises the mild temper and the moderation of his friend. But in Celsus' work against the Christians we see no marks of such qualities as these; but we feel that we have to do with a man of vehement passions, a man altogether incapable of allowing the cause which he attacks to be right on any side whatever. At the same time, we cannot be certain that Lucian's opinion of his friend was according to truth. Besides, there are those who find no difficulty in preserving their temper until certain topics are introduced, when they flash out at once into fire and flames. And especially on religious matters, nothing is more common than for men of acute minds, who have intrenched themselves in some negative position of the understanding, and feel jealous of every eccentric appearance in this province, to lose all self-possession whenever powerful phenomena of the religious life are presented to their notice. The heat with which Celsus attacks Christianity betrays his own oppressive sense of the power with which it was extending itself on all sides.

There can be no doubt that the Celsus who was Lucian's friend favoured, for the most part, the school of Epicurus. But in the work against Christianity very little is to be found which indicates a tendency to this way of thinking, and even this little vanishes under a more careful examination. On the other hand, the marks of an entirely opposite system are everywhere apparent.

In this book we certainly perceive a mind which would not consent to surrender itself to the system of any other individual; we find ourselves in contact with a man who, by combining the ideas predominant in the general philosophical consciousness of his time, the popular ideas,—so to speak,—of that period, had framed a system of his own, of which he felt rather proud, and which, after he had appeared as a polemic in his work against the Christians, it was his intention to unfold in another performance, under a more positive form. In this second work, he meant to shew how it would be necessary for those to live who were willing and able to follow

*καὶ δυνάμεων τινῶν πειραθῆς, ἐφ' αἷς λιγύσασσι σερμύονται, ἰπανόλιν, ἐν ταῖς δυνάμεσι  
μῖγα φρονῶν καὶ δι' αὐτὰς θιδὸν αὐτὸν ἀνηγόρευσε.*

him. Whether this plan was ever executed we are not informed.<sup>1</sup>

But in this system the main ideas are borrowed from Platonism. Among these we reckon the idea of the Absolute, the *ἄν*, to which the contemplative spirit of the philosopher alone could soar; the distinction between the highest, primal Being or Essence, and his self-manifestation in the Universe; between the Highest, who reposes in being, and the second god, who reveals himself in becoming; the world, as the Son of the Supreme God; the idea of the celestial luminaries as divine essences, of the higher intelligences animating those heavenly bodies, of the gods appearing visible in the phenomenal world,<sup>2</sup> as opposed to the invisible, hidden deities presiding over the several parts of the world; the national gods to whom the different portions of the world are subject, and to whom men are bound to render due homage, by acknowledging this dependence grounded on the nature of the earthly life; the idea that the imperishable element in human nature, the spirit alone, derives its origin from God; that this element, possessing an affinity to God, exists in the human soul; the hypothesis of a power struggling against the divine and formative principle in the world, of the *ἄλγ* as the source of evil; hence of evil in this world as something necessary. From this *ἄλγ* are derived the evil spirits, the powers that struggle against the divine, against reason.

These ideas, scattered through his work, betray not the Epicurean certainly, but one who had appropriated nearly all he possessed from the current ideas of the New Platonic philosophy of religion. Though we cannot but suppose that Celsus, in opposing the Christian mode of thinking, and for the purpose of bantering the Christians, said many things which he did not seriously mean; yet assuredly we have no reason to suppose that the tinge of Platonism which appears everywhere through the surface, was assumed merely out of pretence. And however strong we may be inclined to suppose the tendency to eclecticism was at this

<sup>1</sup> Origen, at the conclusion of his work, begs of his friend Ambrosius, that if Celsus had actually executed this plan, he would procure for him this work also, that he might take measures for its refutation. These words, too, clearly prove, that Origen had no knowledge of a second work of Celsus against Christianity.

<sup>2</sup> *Θεοὶ φανεροί.*

particular period of time, still we cannot consider it to be natural or probable that Epicurean views would be blended with so predominating an element of New Platonism. But whoever this Celsus may have been, he is for us an important individual, being, in fact, the original representative of a kind of intellect which has presented itself over and over again in the various attacks made on Christianity: wit and acuteness, without earnest purpose or depth of research; a worldly understanding, that glances merely on the surface, and delights in hunting up difficulties and contradictions. His objections against Christianity serve one important end. They present, in the clearest manner, the opposition between the Christian standing ground and that of the ancient world; and, in general, the relation which revealed religion will ever be found to hold to the ground assumed by natural reason. Thus many of his objections and strictures became testimonies for the truth.

How the divine foolishness of the Gospel, the faith whereby the highest truth was to be made the common property of all mankind, must needs appear to the twilight wisdom, and aristocratic culture of the ancient world, may be seen in those remarks of Celsus, where he objects to the Christians,<sup>1</sup> that they refused to give reasons for what they believed, but were ever repeating, "Do not examine, only believe; thy faith will make thee blessed. Wisdom is a bad thing in life; foolishness is to be preferred."<sup>2</sup> He makes the Christians say, "Let no educated, no wise man approach; but whoever is ignorant, uncultivated,—whoever is like a child, let him come and be comforted."<sup>3</sup> This objection was in part called forth by the divine paradox of the Gospel itself; but in part there was also a one-sided tendency among the Christians themselves to set up faith as something opposed to culture and scientific inquiry,—a course which led to the mis-

<sup>1</sup> A similar objection to Judaism and Christianity is made also by Galen, that celebrated physician of the second and third centuries,—a man incapable of rising to the higher fields of thought. From the position at which he contemplates the world, on one particular side of it, and by the mere understanding, he observes: "ἵνα μὴ τις εὐθύς κατ' ἀρχὰς ὡς εἰς Μωϋσοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ διατριβὴν ἀφιγμένος νόμων ἀναποδείκτων ἀκουῇ. De different. puls. l. ii. c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> L. i. c. 9.

<sup>3</sup> L. iii. c. 44: Δῆλοί εἰσιν, ὅτι μόνους τοὺς ἡλιθίους καὶ ἀγενεῖς καὶ ἀναισθήτους καὶ ἀνδράποδα καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ παιδάρια πείθειν ἰθίλουσί τε καὶ δύνανται.



apprehension of Christianity itself, and to accusations which had no other ground than this misapprehension. Along with this class of objections we find another of the directly opposite character, shewing how much the religion which was thus accused of demanding and encouraging implicit faith, claimed and excited intellectual inquiry, called into requisition the powers of thought. We refer to the objection drawn from the multitude of conflicting sects among the Christians.<sup>1</sup> "In the outset," says he,<sup>2</sup> "when the Christians were few in number, they may, perhaps, have agreed among themselves. But as their numbers increased, they separated into parties, mutually attacking and refuting each other, and retaining nothing in common but their name, if indeed they did that."<sup>3</sup> He accuses them of calumniating each other, and of refusing to yield up a single point for the sake of unanimity.<sup>4</sup>

In objecting to Christianity the many oppositions of human opinion which it called forth, Celsus testifies against himself. How could a religion of bare faith, a religion that called the unenlightened and repelled the wise of this world, give birth to such a multitude of heresies? If he had not been so superficial an observer, he could not have failed to be struck with this contradiction; and in endeavouring to resolve it, must have had his attention directed to that peculiarity, by which Christianity is so clearly distinguished from all preceding phenomena in the intellectual world. Celsus was of the opinion, that these oppositions of knowledge, so hotly conflicting with each other, would bring about the dissolution of Christianity. But history has decided against him; it has shewn how the indwelling power of unity in Christianity could overcome these oppositions, and make them subservient to its own ends.

Celsus, then, as we see, was aware of the fact, that many different sects existed among the Christians. But he did not give

<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria observes, that pagans and Jews were used to bring this objection against Christianity: *μη δειν πιστεύειν διὰ τὴν διαφωνίαν τῶν αἰρέσεων*. Strom. l. vii. f. 753. Ed. Paris, 1641.

<sup>2</sup> L. iii. c. 10, and the following.

<sup>3</sup> *Στάσεις ἰδίας ἔχουσιν ἕκαστοι θείουσι, σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐλέγχουσιν, ἑνός, ὡς εἰπεῖν, ἔτι κοινωνοῦντες, εἴγε κοινωνοῦσιν ἔτι, τοῦ ὀνόματος.*

<sup>4</sup> L. v. c. 63: *βλασφημοῦσι δὲ εἰς ἀλλήλους οὗτοι πάνθ' ἕνα ῥητὰ καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἴξαιεν οὐδὲ καθ' ὅτιον εἰς ὁμόνοιαν.*

himself the pains, which a lover of justice and of truth would have done, to distinguish what was grounded in the original Christian doctrine, and what had been added by these sects; what was acknowledged as true doctrine by the great body of Christians, and what was adopted only by this or that particular party. He was somewhat deeply read in the religious records of the Christians, and had heard a great deal repeated which was derived from them. But the spirit in which he had read and heard all this was not one that prepared him to receive, or made him capable of understanding it; but one which, keeping him on the alert for opportunities of ridicule and misrepresentation, must find these opportunities. He threw the religious writings, as he had done the religious parties of the Christians, into one class, without examining either into the origin of them or into their character. Whatever he could lay hold of, belonging to the most opposite parties,—to those fanatical spiritualists, the Gnostics, and to those gross anthropomorphists, the Chiliasts,—which served to present Christianity on different sides in the most unfavourable light, was eagerly welcomed by him.

Sometimes he objects to the Christians that they had nothing in common with all other religions, neither temples, images, nor altars; at others,—opposing an abstract knowledge of God to the religion that had its birth in historical facts,—he calls them a miserable sense-bound, sense-loving race,<sup>1</sup> who would acknowledge nothing but that which was palpable to the outward senses. He preaches to them, that men should close their senses and turn away from all sensible things, so as to have the intuition of God through the eye of the mind.

On the watch for every weak spot which the Christians might expose, and which he could take advantage of in assailing their faith, the pains taken by many to work into form the traditions relating to the history of Christ did not escape his notice. “Many of the faithful,” says he, “who have come, as it were, out of the fit of intoxication to their sober senses, alter the evangelical narrative from the shape in which it was first recorded, in three, four, manifold ways, that they may have wherewith to deny objec-

<sup>1</sup> Δειλὸν καὶ φιλοσώματον γένος. L. vii. c. 36. Παντιλῶς τῇ σαρκὶ ἰνδεδιμένοι καὶ μηδὲν καθαρὸν βλέποντες. L. c. c. 42.

tions."<sup>1</sup> He brings this to prove the position, that the more prudent and discreet among the Christians could not help feeling the insuperable difficulties in those accounts, and therefore felt themselves called upon to remove these difficulties by their emendations. But even this is still a witness in favour of the inward power with which these facts had found their way into the religious consciousness; since notwithstanding the stones of stumbling that offered themselves to the common understanding, still, when these accounts came to be spread among the cultivated, they could win conviction on their side.

In like manner Celsus bears witness against his will of the distinguishing peculiarity of the Gospel, and at the same time of that which lay at the very ground of his own want of susceptibility to its power, when he imagines he can ridicule Christianity, because it invites sinners only to participate in the kingdom of God, and excludes such as are wholly without sin. "They who invite us," says he,<sup>2</sup> "to become initiated into other religious mysteries, begin by proclaiming, 'Let him approach who is free from all stains, who is conscious of no wickedness, who has lived a good and upright life;'—and this they proclaim who promise purification from sins." But let us hear who it is these Christians call: "Whoever is a sinner," say they, "whoever is foolish, unlettered; in a word, whoever is wretched, him will the kingdom of God receive." And then he asks, "But how? Was not Christ sent in behalf of those who are sinless?"<sup>3</sup> As Celsus was wanting in a just sense of the nature of sin, and hence could express surprise that Christ did not announce himself as sent particularly in behalf of the sinless, so too he was without a presentiment of the soul-transforming power which Christianity carries with it, of

<sup>1</sup> The remarkable words of Celsus (l. ii. c. 27) are: *Τινὰς τῶν πιστευόντων ὡς ἐκ μίθης ἤκοντας εἰς τὸ ἰφιστάναί αὐτοῖς μεταχαράττειν ἐκ τῆς πρώτης γραφῆς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τριχῆ καὶ τετραχῆ καὶ πολλαχῆ καὶ μεταπλάττειν, ἵν' ἔχουσιν πρὸς τοὺς ἐλίγλους ἀρνεῖσθαι.* Origen supposes that what Celsus says can apply only to the Gnostics, who allowed themselves in the practice of altering the evangelical records to suit their peculiar doctrines. Celsus, however, could hardly have in view this class of men, but more probably referred to those who, by their criticism of the text, springing out of some apologetical interest, were for removing what might prove offensive to the *sensus communis*.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. iii. c. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Τί δὲ; τοῖς ἀνομαρτήτοις οὐκ ἐπέμφθη;* l. c. c. 62.

that mystery of an entire moral renovation of the nature estranged from God, which Christ sets forth in his conversation with Nicodemus. He had no conception of the fact, that by the power of divine love, a change could be produced, beginning from within and working outwards, which no fear of punishment could ever effect from without. His words bearing on this subject are well deserving of notice.<sup>1</sup> "It is manifest to every one, that it lies within no man's power to produce an entire change in a person to whom sin has become a second nature, even by punishment, *to say nothing of mercy*; for to effect a complete *change* of nature is the most difficult of things; but the sinless are the safer companions in life."

It is evident, that with the habit of thinking which expresses itself in the passages already cited, Celsus would be incapable of understanding another point which belongs to the characteristic marks of the Christian position as distinguished from that of antiquity, namely, the nature of humility. In virtue of his Platonism, he did indeed see that the ταπεινότης, which, from the ordinary ethical position of antiquity, was looked upon only as something wrong and evil, might also be a virtue; and hence he refers to the passage in Plato's fourth book of the Laws, which has already been cited on page 26. But instead of recognising in this something typical and prophetic in relation to Christianity, he derives the Christian idea of humility from a misunderstanding of that Platonic sentiment.<sup>2</sup> The true nature of humility was a matter too foreign to his own way of thinking and apprehension, to make it easy for him to understand the Christian life on this particular side. Thus, in those caricatures of humility which came under his observation in exceedingly imperfect exhibitions of the Christian life, he was unable to discern the truth at bottom; and he seized on such morbid offshoots, to represent the essence of Christian humility itself as a morbid thing;—as if, according to the doctrine of the Christians, the humble man was a creature "for ever on his knees, or rolling in the dust, a man who dressed meanly, and sprinkled himself with ashes."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Οὐδείς ἄν οὐδὲ κολάζων πάντη μεταβάλοι, μήτι γι ἰλιῶν. L. iii. c. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Παράκλισμα τῶν Πλάτωνος λόγων. L. vi. c. 15.

<sup>3</sup> L. vi. c. 15. Origen justly replies, "If there are some who, through ignorance and the want of a right understanding of the true doctrine of humility, do this, the Christian

It may appear strange that Celsus, who taunts the Christians for their self-abasement before God, should accuse them at the same time of the directly contrary error, *immoderate pride*, a foolish self-exaltation towards God. But as he had no proper conception of true humility, so neither had he any just conception of true loftiness,—both being intimately connected together in the Christian consciousness, according to the words of Christ, who makes the humiliation of self the condition of man's exaltation. At the position held by the natural man these appear as incompatible opposites; but they find their resolution in Christianity. Hence Celsus must necessarily mistake the Christian ground of standing on both sides. Hence he could attack it on both these opposite aspects. He ridicules the Christians for presuming to ascribe to themselves, to *man*, compared with the rest of creation, such worth and dignity in the sight of God, as they did when they taught that God had created all things on man's account, and when they represented man as the end of the creation and of the government of the world. The importance which Christianity attached to personal existence struck him as singular and strange. It appeared to him, in accordance with the prevailing view of the ancient world, that the *universal whole* was the only end worthy of the divine mind; and that man was of account only as an integrant part of this whole, subjected to those unchangeable laws of its evolution which operate with iron necessity. "It is not for man," says he, "that every thing has been given; but everything grows and decays for the sustentation of the whole."<sup>1</sup> How little capable he was of understanding, indeed, the great idea, that all things have been created for man, is evident from the form of some of his objections. "Although it might be said that trees, plants, herbs, grow for the sake of man, yet might it not be said with the same propriety that they grow also for the wildest animals!"<sup>2</sup> And comparing these latter with man, he observes<sup>3</sup>—"We with great labour and care are scarcely able to support ourselves; but for the brutes every

system is not therefore to be accused; but it must be charitably imputed to the ignorance of those who propose to do what is right, but fail for want of knowledge."

<sup>1</sup> "Ἐκαστα τῆς τοῦ ὅλου σωτηρίας εἴνεκα γίνονται τε καὶ ἀπόλλυται. L. iv. c. 69.

<sup>2</sup> L. c. c. 75.

<sup>3</sup> L. c. c. 76.

thing grows spontaneously, without any sowing and ploughing of theirs." In his passionate opposition to what Christianity teaches respecting the worth of human nature, he goes so far as to exalt the brutes at man's expense.<sup>1</sup> "If you say God has given you the power to capture the brutes and make them subservient to your ends, we will say, that before cities, arts, trades, and weapons had existence, men were torn by wild beasts, not they taken by men." Instead of marking how in the brutes nature is striving upward to man, he adduces the bees and the ants as examples to shew, that even the order of civil society is no prerogative of man.<sup>2</sup> What the Christians taught concerning a particular providence, and concerning God's care for the wellbeing of individuals, appeared, therefore, to him as vain arrogance, as an altogether anthropomorphite notion. "It is not for man," he asserts,<sup>3</sup> "any more than for lions or eagles, that every thing in the world has been created; but it is in order that the world, as the work of God, might present a complete and perfect whole. God provides only for the whole; and this his providence never deserts. And this world never becomes any worse. God does not return to it after a long interval. He is as little angry with man as he is with apes or flies." Like a consistent Platonist, Celsus rejects every thing *teleological* in the creation and government of the world. A redemption, according to his doctrine, is wholly out of the question. For in this world evil is a necessary thing. It has no origin, and will have no end. It remains constantly as it is, just as the nature of the universe generally remains eternally the same.<sup>4</sup> The  $\nu\lambda\eta$  is the source, whence what we term evil ever springs afresh. By this Platonic principle, a redemption, triumphing over evil, is excluded. Celsus conceives the evolution of the universe as a circle constantly repeating itself according to precisely the same laws. With such notions of God's relation to

<sup>1</sup> To avoid the mistake of many, who have supposed they found, in what Celsus here says, a token of his leaning much rather to the side of Epicureanism than Platonism, in his mode of thinking, it should be duly considered, that passion and obstinacy lead him here to push every thing to the extreme, and that even according to the New Platonic principles, a soul bearing some affinity to that of man, but only checked in its development by the constraint of the  $\nu\lambda\eta$ , was supposed to exist in brute animals.

<sup>2</sup> L. c. c. 81.

<sup>3</sup> L. iv. c. 99.

<sup>4</sup> L. c. c. 62, and the following.

the world, and to man in particular, with such mistaken views of the worth and significance of personal existence, he could bring against the Christian view of God's government of the world, and of his method of salvation, and especially of the work of redemption, the objection so often repeated in after times, "that the universe has been provided, once for all, with all the powers necessary for its preservation, and for developing itself after the same laws; that God has not, like a human architect, so executed his work, that at some future period it would need repair."<sup>1</sup>

Characteristic of the man is the way in which Celsus treats the history of Christ. In part, he follows the stories set in circulation by the Jews; in part, other spurious or mistaken traditions, and partly, the evangelical narratives, which, because he possessed no single collective intuition of Christ's person, he could not understand in their true significance.<sup>2</sup> Wherever he thinks the evangelical narratives can be made to answer his purpose, he considers their authority to be unimpeachable; but when they refuse to lend themselves to his polemical interest, he denies their truth.<sup>3</sup> The Jew, whom he introduces as an opponent of Christianity, is made to say, that he had many true things to state in relation to Christ's history, and altogether different from those reported by his disciples, but he purposely kept them back.<sup>4</sup> Yet Celsus, whose perfect hatred of Christianity led him to collect together everything that could be said with the least show of probability against it, would not have failed certainly to avail himself of such accounts if they were really within his reach. We must consider this, therefore, with Origen, as one of those rhetorical tricks of which Celsus set the example for later antagonists of Christianity.

Accordingly he assails the position that Christ was wholly free from sin;<sup>5</sup> yet without producing a single action of Christ to shew the contrary.

<sup>1</sup> Οὐτι τῶ θεῷ καινοτίμως δι' διορθώσεως. L. c. c. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Origen aptly characterizes the sources of information of which Celsus availed himself: Εἶτ' ἐκ παρακουσμάτων, εἶτι καὶ ἐξ ἀναγνωσμάτων, εἶτ' ἐκ διηγημάτων Ἰουδαϊκῶν. L. ii. c. 10.

<sup>3</sup> L. c. c. 34.

<sup>4</sup> L. c. c. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Μηδὲ ἀντιλήπτου γεγονέναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν. L. c. c. 41 and 42.

Among other stories, he lays hold of the wholly unfounded tradition respecting the uncomeliness of Christ's person,<sup>1</sup> to represent it as inconsistent with the supposition that Christ partook of the divine nature beyond all other men.<sup>2</sup>

In respect to the resurrection of Christ, it did not occur to him to deny the reality of his death; but he denied the truth of the accounts concerning his reappearance after he had risen. Without entering into any careful examination of these accounts, he leaves it optional, either to suppose them pure inventions, or cases of optical delusion—visions belonging to the same class with the apparition of ghosts.<sup>3</sup> The objections which Celsus urges against the reality of Christ's miracles and of his resurrection, harmonize perfectly with his ignorance of the true significance of these facts. "Why did Christ perform no miracle when challenged to do so by the Jews in the temple?"<sup>4</sup> "If he really intended to manifest his divine power, he ought to have shewn himself to those who condemned him, and generally to all."<sup>5</sup> How he is compelled, from overlooking the connection of the divine with the human in history, to testify against himself, appears once more in a very remarkable manner, where he says, "How is it, that a *man*, who was incensed with the Jews, should destroy them all at a stroke and send up their city in flames!—so utterly nothing were they before him;—but the Great God, angry and threatening, sends his own son, as they say, and he must suffer all this."<sup>6</sup>

Thus, to the man who was incapable of understanding the true import of Christ's appearance, the course of history generally, the signs of the times, must also be unintelligible. He could not perceive that men whose anger had been excited against the Jewish people, served as instruments of the divine justice to inflict the penalty which that people had brought upon themselves by the accumulated measure of their guilt.

From the same school of Platonism proceeded, in the latter

<sup>1</sup> Which tradition had grown out of the idea—pushed to the extreme—of Christ's appearance in the form of a servant, and the literal interpretation of Isaiah liii.

<sup>2</sup> Ἀμήχανον, ὅτι θεῖόν τι πλὴν τῶν ἄλλων προσῆν μηδὲν ἄλλου διαφέρειν· τοῦτο δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλου διαφέρειν, ἀλλ' ὡς φασὶ μικρὸν καὶ δυσεῖδὸς καὶ ἀγιννὸς ἦν. L. iv. c. 75.

<sup>3</sup> L. ii. c. 55; l. vii. c. 35.

<sup>4</sup> L. i. c. 67.

<sup>5</sup> L. ii. c. 63 and 67.

<sup>6</sup> L. iv. c. 73.



half of the third century, another opponent of Christianity,—one in whom we recognise a man of noble spirit united with profound intellectual attainments, altogether the reverse of Celsus. Porphyry, a Phœnician by birth, was a man of the East, in whom the Oriental basis of character had been completely fused with the elements of Grecian culture. The account which comes from the church historian Socrates,<sup>1</sup> that he had originally been a Christian, and only became embittered against Christianity on account of the ill-treatment he had suffered from some of his fellow-believers, resembles, too much to deserve any credit, one of the common stories by which men endeavoured to account, from outward causes, for an opposition grounded in the inward bent of the mind itself. In all that belongs to Porphyry, no trace can be discovered of his having once been a Christian; for, assuredly, those ideas of his which are, or rather which seem to be, related to Christianity, cannot rightly be considered as any evidence of this sort. In part, those ideas sprung naturally out of that part of Platonism which may claim some relationship with Christian doctrines, and which was more distinctly brought out by the effort to refine paganism, and hold it up in opposition to Christianity; and in part they shewed the power exerted by Christianity even over those minds that were opposed to it; as, for instance, when Porphyry describes the triad of Christian principles, Faith, Love, and Hope—though not apprehended according to the profound meaning of St Paul—as the foundation of genuine piety.<sup>2</sup> If Porphyry had not been a disciple of Plotinus, it is possible that by the fusion of Oriental Theosophy with Christianity he might have become a Gnostic. That speculative direction, opposed to the Oriental Gnosticism, which he received from Plotinus, the union of a Theosophy based on Platonism with the spiritualized polytheistic system, rendered him a violent enemy of Christianity, which could not be forced to accommodate itself to his eclectic theory.

Porphyry, in the letter to his wife, calls it the noblest fruit of

<sup>1</sup> L. iii. c. 23.

<sup>2</sup> In his letter to his wife, Marcella, which was published by Mai, in Milan, 1816 (c. 24): *Τίτσαρα στοιχεῖα μάλιστα κεκρατύνθη περι Θεοῦ πίστις, ἀλήθεια, ἔρως, ἐλπίς.*

piety to worship God after the manner of one's country.<sup>1</sup> Christianity, then, would be hateful to him, if on no other grounds, because it was a religion that conflicted with the national worship. As it was his wish that such a worship should be maintained as could not otherwise be reduced to harmony with the fundamental ideas of his philosophical religion than by artificial interpretations, unintelligible to the multitude, he was necessarily betrayed into many self-contradictions. He was, as we have seen, a zealous advocate of image-worship; and in encouraging this, he countenanced at the same time the old superstitions, since the people associated with these images their ancient notions. And yet he writes to his wife: "*That man is not so much of an Atheist who neglects to worship the images of the gods, as he who transfers to God the opinions of the multitude.*"

He wrote a work against Christianity, in which he endeavoured to detect contradictions in the sacred Scriptures,—contradictions between the Apostles—especially between the Apostles Peter and Paul.<sup>2</sup> Doubtless he may have adroitly availed himself in this work of the weak spots presented, not by the matter itself which he was attacking, but by the manner in which men had set forth and defended it; as, for example, when he was led by those harmonists who regarded the New Testament only as a rigid unity, to point out the discrepancies existing in the same, of which, as we may suppose, he would be sure to make a false use; when, as Celsus had done before him,<sup>3</sup> he seized upon the artificial allegorical interpretations, resorted to for the purpose of so explaining the Old Testament as to shew that every part of it was equally divine, and that every Christian doctrine might be found in it, and turned them into an argument to prove that the Old Testament admitted of no worthy sense to the natural and simple apprehension. Not without good reason could he say of such explanations, that men had contrived to dazzle and bewilder the judgment by pompous show.<sup>4</sup> Yet what he could assert with so much justice against this artificial interpretation of the Old

<sup>1</sup> Ep. ad Marcellam, ed. Maj. c. 18, where perhaps the reading should be: *Τιμῶν τῶ θεῶν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια.*

<sup>2</sup> Where he has recourse to the fallacious argument grounded on the well-known incident at Antioch, Gal. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See c. Cels. l. i. c. 17; l. iv. c. 48.

<sup>4</sup> The words of Porphyry, which very aptly characterize this sort of self-delusion in

Testament, fell back with no less weight against himself and the school to which he belonged, who took the same unwarrantable liberties in interpreting the Greek religion and its fables.

There is another work of Porphyry's, respecting which our information is more accurate, where too he has spoken against Christianity, and may have intended, indirectly at least, to present some check to its progress,—a system of theology such as could be drawn up from the ancient, pretended responses of the Oracles.<sup>1</sup> He aimed in this way, as we have already observed in the Introduction, to supply the craving now awakened for religious instruction on the basis of some divine authority that could be relied on—an interest by which many were led along to Christianity. Now, among the responses of the Oracles, some are to be found which relate to Christ and Christianity,—an evidence of the power of the Christian religion, which had so early infused its influence into the spiritual atmosphere, and already pressed itself upon the heathens from all that surrounded them. Hence many were at a loss to know how they should act with regard to it, and sought for advice from the Oracles or from the priests who spoke in their name. The responses given in answer to these applications differed in tone and import, according to the different modes of thinking of the priests who gave them. It was a case of frequent occurrence, in the first centuries, that the women became zealous Christians, while their husbands remained wholly devoted to Paganism. In a case of this sort a man inquired of Apollo what god he should propitiate in order to bring back his wife from Christianity.<sup>2</sup> The pretended Apollo, who knew doubtless the force of conviction among the Christians, gave for a response, “that he might sooner write on the flowing

the interpretation of the records of religion, are as follows: *Διὰ τοῦ τύφου τὸ κριτικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς καταγοητεύσαντες.* Euseb. hist. eccles. l. vi. c. 19.

<sup>1</sup> Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λόγιων φιλοσοφίας, of which, in many respects very interesting work, considerable fragments have been preserved in the twelve sermonib. curat. affect. of Theodoretus, in Augustine's work de Civitate Dei, after a Latin version, in which Augustine had read it; and especially in that great literary store house, the Præparat. Evang. and Demonstrat. Evangel. of Eusebius. Maii has published a new fragment in connection with the letter to Marcella.

<sup>2</sup> Maii infers from this place, altogether without reason, that Porphyry's Marcella was a Christian. Porphyry undoubtedly cites here the *question of another*, as he does frequently in this work. The letter to Marcella contains no evidence whatever that she was a Christian, but rather proves the contrary.

stream, or fly on the empty air, than change the mind of his wife after she had once become impure and godless. Leave her, then, to lament *her deceased God*."<sup>1</sup> Apollo appears next, justifying the judges who had condemned Jesus to death as a revolter against Judaism; for the Jews acknowledged God, at least more than the Christians" (the common judgment of the pagans. See the preceding history.)

Many of the pagans were led to suppose, from what they had heard concerning Christ, that he might be worshipped as a god along with the other gods, and they consulted the Oracle on this point. It is noticeable that the priests, who composed the response in this case, were cautious against saying anything disrespectful of Christ himself. The answer was, "He who is wise, knows that the soul rises immortal from the body; but the soul of that man is pre-eminent in piety."<sup>2</sup> When they inquired further, why Christ had suffered death, it was responded, "To be subjected to the weaker sufferings is always the lot of the body, but the soul of the pious rises to the fields of heaven."<sup>3</sup> Here Porphyry himself takes occasion to explain that Christ, therefore, must not be calum-

<sup>1</sup> Augustin. de civitate Dei, l. xix. c. 23. The strength of religious conviction among Jews and Christians became proverbial, as we see from the words of the celebrated physician Galen, where he is speaking of the great difficulty of bringing about any change in the opinions of those who are devoted to particular schools of medicine or philosophy, and makes use of the following comparison: *Θᾶπτον ἂν τις τοὺς ἀπὸ Μωϋσοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ μεταδιδάξειν, ἢ κ. τ. λ.* De different. pulsuum, l. iii. c. 3, ed. Charter, T. viii. f. 68.

<sup>2</sup> "Ὅτι μὲν ἀθανάτη ψυχὴ μετὰ σῶμα προβαίνει, γιγνώσκει σοφίῃ τιτι μὴ μείνος, ἀλλὰ γε ψυχὴ ἀνέρος εὐσεβίῃ προφειροστάτη ἴστιν ἐκείνου.

Euseb. Demonstrat. evang. l. iii. p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Σῶμα μὲν ἀδρανέσιν βασάνοις αἰεὶ προβέβληται· ψυχὴ δ' εὐσεβίων εἰς οὐράνιον πίδακον ἵζει.

It may be, that Porphyry was occasionally deceived by spurious oracles, that had been interpolated either by Alexandrian Jews, or other and older pagan Platonicians. It is quite possible also, that oracles of this description had been interpolated by some other more rightly thinking pagan, under the name of the god or the goddess; though it may be very well conceived, and indeed is more natural to suppose, that these oracles were actually given on the occasions specified. But assuredly the suspicion is altogether unfounded, that they were invented by some Christian, for Christians would certainly have never been able to make up their minds to say *so little* of Christ. The example being once given of such pagan oracles in relation to Christ, Christians might then be led, no doubt, to invent others. In the oracular response cited by Lactantius (instit. l. vi. c. 13), the words concerning Christ, *Θνητὸς ἦν κατὰ σάρκα, σοφὸς τιματώδισιν ἔργοις*, and several others, betray their Christian author.

niated; they only should be pitied who worship him as God. "That pious soul which had ascended to heaven, had by a certain fatality become an occasion of error to those souls which were destined to have no share in the gifts of the gods and in the knowledge of the eternal Zeus."

The list of authors who wrote against Christianity is closed by *Hierocles*, president of Bithynia, and afterwards præfect of Alexandria. The time which this writer chose for making his attack was the last which any man of noble and generous feelings would have been disposed to choose, that of the Dioclesian persecution. And it was particularly unbecoming in Hierocles to obtrude himself on the Christians in the character of a teacher, as he was himself one of the instigators of the persecution, and a principal instrument in carrying it into effect. Yet he assumed the air of one who was actuated by an impartial love of the truth, and who wrote with the kindest feelings towards the Christians, entitling his performance, "Words to the Christians, from a lover of truth."<sup>1</sup> In this work he repeats over a great deal that had been said already by Celsus and Porphyry. He indulges himself in retailing the most abominable falsehoods about the history of Christ. In particular, for the purpose of at once glorifying the old religion and attacking the Christian faith, he made use of a comparison of which probably he has no claim to be considered the original inventor. To give the declining religion of paganism a new impulse in its resistance to the overwhelming power of Christianity, it was necessary to direct men's attention to those heroes of the old religion who could be set up, it was imagined, in opposition to him on whom alone the faith of the Christians reposed. Thus the lives of the ancient sages,—of Pythagoras for example, as exhibited by the New Platonic philosopher Jamblichus,—were coloured over with a tinge of the miraculous, if not purposely for an object of this sort, at least under the influence of such a tendency, which reigned supreme in the religious consciousness of the pagans. But men did not wish to go back for the pictures of such heroes of the faith to hoary antiquity; they wanted to find them nearer home. The appearance of men who had occasioned unusual excitement in the public mind, of such men, for example, as Apollonius of Tyana, were made available against Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Λόγοι φιλαλήθεις πρὸς τοὺς Χριστιανούς.

in two different ways. One class, who were in the habit of referring all eccentric phenomena of the religious spirit alike to fanaticism or fraud—as Lucian, who places Apollonius of Tyana on the same level with Alexander of Abonoteichus,—would avail themselves of this comparison to account also for the appearance and effects of Christianity. Others, again, would oppose Apollonius, as a prophet and worker of miracles among the Greeks, to the founder of the new religion. This was the course adopted by Hierocles. He wanted to deprive the miracles of Christ of their force of evidence, by the miracles of this Apollonius. He considered every fable which the rhetorical Philostratus, ages after the alleged events, had drawn from unauthentic sources, or out of his own imagination, to be entirely worthy of credit; as, for example, that Apollonius understood the language of brutes; while the apostles, uneducated, lying men,—jugglers, as Hierocles abusively called them, without attempting to prove it,—are declared to have stated nothing but falsehoods. “You hold Christ to be God,” said he, “because he is reported to have made a few blind men see, and to have performed some other works of the like kind; and yet the Greeks hold an Apollonius, who was the author of so many miracles, not to be a god, but only a man particularly beloved of the gods.” Such was the peculiar method of argument adopted by Hierocles.<sup>1</sup>

In this very life of Apollonius, used by Hierocles, and composed by the rhetorician Philostratus the elder, a favourite of Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus, some have supposed they discovered a side aim against Christianity. But there is no single passage of the work which furnishes any evidence that such was its design, while opportunities were not wanting to introduce in some way or other remarks hostile to Christianity, as, for instance, where he speaks of the Jews. On the other hand, he mentions the divine vengeance inflicted on Jerusalem, of which the Roman arms were only the instrument,<sup>2</sup> in such a way as would be favourable to the Christian interest, and might be supposed, indeed, to indicate that he was unconsciously influenced

<sup>1</sup> See, respecting him, Lactant. l. v. c. 2; de mortib. persecutor. c. 16. Euseb. adv. Hierocl.

<sup>2</sup> L. vi. c. 29, he makes Titus say, in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem: *Μὴ αὐτὸς ταῦτα εἰργάσθαι, θεῶν δὲ ἔργον φήναντι ἐπιδικῆναι τὰς ἑαυτοῦ χεῖρας.*

by the prevailing mode of contemplating that event among the Christians. Yet the remarks on the preceding page are not wholly inapplicable to the case of Philostratus. Whether it sprang from a conscious design, or from an involuntary interest, the effort is apparent to give dignity to his hero as a counter-picture to Christ; and in doing this we need not suppose he was influenced by any *polemic aim against* the Christian faith, but only by a wish to set forth the splendour of the Greek religion in rivalry with Christianity.<sup>1</sup> It may be, that the miracles of Christ, of which he had informed himself, furnished the occasion for many scattered embellishments of his own invention, although no reference of this kind is to be found so *distinct* and *palpable* as to leave this beyond question.

These attacks on the Christian Church were met, from the time of the Emperor Hadrian and onwards, by men who stood up for the defence of Christianity and of the Christians. We reserve it for another portion of our history to speak more in detail of these apologists and of their writings. Here we shall simply remark that these apologies were of two different forms, and had two distinct objects in view. One class of them were expositions of Christian doctrine, designed for the use of enlightened pagans generally; the other class had a more official character, as the authors advocated the cause of the Christians before emperors, or before the proconsuls and presidents of the provinces. As they could not obtain a personal hearing, it was necessary for them to speak through their writings. The supposition that the forms of address to the emperors, to the senate, and the governors, were mere drapery, after the fashion of the declamations practised in the pagan rhetorical schools, is certainly inconsistent with the situation and temper of the Christians of this time. It is far more natural to suppose that the authors of such writings were seeking to correct the judgment of the civil authorities respecting Christianity and its adherents. We cannot wonder, however, that these apologies seldom or never produced their desired effect on the authorities of the state; for the latter would hardly give

<sup>1</sup> As Dr Baur also supposes, in his Essay on Apollonius of Tyana (in the *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie*, Jahrg. 1832, 4tes Heft, also separately printed), although I cannot allow that all the references to the history of Christ which Baur finds in this book are sufficiently proved.

themselves the time, or find themselves in a suitable mood, to examine with calmness what these apologists had to advance. Even master-pieces of apologetic art, which these productions, written from the fulness of conviction, certainly were not, could, in this case, have effected nothing; for there was no possible way in which they could recommend Christianity so as to meet the *politico-religious* views of Roman statesmen. In relation to the fundamental position of a Roman, it was of no avail, though they bore witness, with the force of inspiration, of those truths, the more general recognition of which was certainly owing, in the first place, to the revolution in the opinions of mankind brought about by Christianity; though they appealed to the universal rights belonging to man by his creation; though they assumed as a point which every man must concede, that religion is a matter of free conviction and feeling, that belief cannot be forced, that God cannot be served with the worship of constraint. "It belongs to the human rights and natural power of each individual," says Tertullian, "to worship the God in whom he believes; it is not the part of religion to force religion; it must be embraced voluntarily, not imposed by constraint, as sacrifices are required only from the willing heart. Although, then, you compel us to sacrifice, you will still gain nothing for your gods."<sup>1</sup> But by the principle of the laws of the Roman empire, which here came immediately into consideration, there was no question respecting the *inward religion*, but only respecting the *outward fulfilment of the laws*, the observance of the "Roman ceremonies." There was nothing here that taught any distinction between men and citizens. The apologists might appeal to the blameless lives of the Christians, they might challenge the magistrates to subject them to the severest judicial examinations, and punish the guilty, but this could avail nothing. The more intelligent had long since ceased to believe those fantastic reports of the populace. Like Pliny, they could not accuse the Christians, as a body, of any moral delinquency. But yet the Christian life appeared to them incompatible with the "Roman man-

<sup>1</sup> Humani juris et naturalis potestatis est unicuique, quod putaverit, colere, nec alii obest aut prodest alterius religio. Sed nec religionis est, cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debeat, non vi, eum et hostiæ ab animo libenti expostulentur. Ad Scapulam, c. 2.



ners," and Christianity a feverish fanaticism dangerous to the good order of the Roman state.

It was a sound and healthy feeling that induced the apologists of Christianity to assume the existence of a prophetic element, not in Judaism alone but also in Paganism, and to make appeal to this as the apostle Paul at Athens, in proclaiming the God of revelation, appealed to the presentiment of the unknown God in the immediate consciousness of mankind, and to those forms in which this consciousness had been expressed by the words of inspired poets. Christianity, in truth, is the end to which all development of the religious consciousness must tend, and of which, therefore, it cannot do otherwise than offer a prophetic testimony. Thus there dwells an element of prophecy not barely in revealed religion, unfolding itself beneath the fostering care of the divine vintager (John xv.) as it struggles onward from Judaism to its complete disclosure in Christianity, but also in religion as it grows wild<sup>1</sup> on the soil of paganism, which by nature must strive unconsciously towards the same end. But though the apologists had a well-grounded right to search through those stages of culture from which they themselves had passed over to Christianity, in quest of such points of agreement,—for which purpose they made copious collections from the ancient philosophers and poets,—yet they were too closely involved in the very process of development to be able rightly to understand the earlier culture, as well in that part of it which was opposed to Christianity as in that which was in relationship with it and led to it. Very easily might it happen that they would be led involuntarily to transfer their Christian mode of apprehension to their earlier positions, and allow themselves to be deceived by mere appearances of resemblance. Add to this that Alexandrian Jews and pagan Platonists may have already introduced many forgeries under the famous names of antiquity, which could serve as testimonies in behalf of the religious truths taken for granted by Christianity in opposition to pagan Polytheism. And at a time when all critical skill, as well as all interest in critical in-

<sup>1</sup> I here make use of an expression, coined for this purpose by Schelling, a man endowed above all others with the gift of finding its right word for the expression of the idea,—to mark the notion of nature-religion in its relation to the religion of revelation. In like manner, Clement of Alexandria styles the Hellenic philosophy, in its relation to Christianity, the *ἀγρίλαιος*. Strom. vi. f. 672.

quiries, were alike wanting, it would be easy for men who were seeking, under the influence of a purely religious interest, after the testimonies of the ancients, for such a use, to allow themselves to be imposed upon by spurious and interpolated matter. This happened not seldom with the Christian apologists.

Thus, for instance, there were interpolated writings of this description passing under the name of that mythic personage of antiquity, the Grecian Hermes (Trismegistus) or the Egyptian Thoth; also under the names of the Persian Hystaspes (Gush-tasp), and of the Sibyls, so celebrated in the Greek and Roman legends, which were used in good faith by the apologists. Whatever truth at bottom might be lying in those time-old legends of the Sibylline prophecies,<sup>1</sup> of which the profound Heraclitus, five hundred years before Christ, had said, "Their unadorned, earnest words, spoken with inspired mouth, reached through a thousand years,"<sup>2</sup> the consciousness of such a prophetic element in Paganism, that which in these predictions was supposed to refer to the fates of cities and nations, and more particularly to a last and golden age of the world,<sup>3</sup> gave occasion to divers interpretations taken from Jewish and Christian points of view; and as it had been the practice from very early times, with both pagans and Jews, to interpolate spurious verses, accommodated to their respective religious views and principles, under the name of Sibylline prophecies,<sup>4</sup> so Christian fiction, from the very first century after Christ, added its own *quota* to the rest. When Celsus reproached the Christians with interpolating many scandalous things

<sup>1</sup> The prophetic element, as a natural power in nature-religion, is characteristically distinguished from the supernatural prophetic element of revealed religion. Thus we find the character of the former expressed in ancient verses, cited under the name of the Sibyl, in Plutarch de Pythiæ oraculis, c. 9: 'Ὡς οὐδὲ ἀποθανοῦσα λήξει μαντικῆς, ἀλλ' αὕτη μὲν ἐν τῇ σιλήνῃ περιέεισι τὸ καλούμενον φαινόμενον γενομένη πρόσωπον, τῷ δὲ ἀέρι τὸ πνεῦμα συγκραθὲν ἐν φήμασι αἰὶ φορέσεται καὶ κληδόνιν, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ σώματος μεταβαλόντος ἐν τῇ γῆ πάσας καὶ ὕλης ἀναφυσόμενης, βοσκήσεται ταύτην ἰσθὰ θρέμματα χροῶς τε παντοδαπὰς ἴσχυοντα καὶ μορφὰς καὶ ποιότητας ἐπὶ τῶν σπλάγχων, ἀφ' ὧν αἱ προδηλώσεις ἀνθρώποις τοῦ μέλλοντος.

<sup>2</sup> Σίβυλλα μαινομένη στόματι ἀγέλαστα καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα φθιγγομένη χιλίων ἐτῶν ἔξικνεῖται τῇ φωνῇ διὰ τὸν Θεόν. Plutarch. de Pythiæ oraculis, c. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ultima Cumæi carminis ætas; vid. Virgil, iv. Eclog.

<sup>4</sup> Varro, in his great archæological work, treated, already in his time, of the different constituent parts of the Sibylline books, and of the interpolated verses. See Dionysius of Halicarn. Archæol. l. iv. c. 62.

into the Sibylline writings,<sup>1</sup> Origen in his reply could appeal to the fact, that the more ancient Sibylline writings were full of interpolations. With this use of the so-called Sibylline prophecies, all Christians, however, were not satisfied. Celsus mentions, among other Christian sects, the Sibyllists,<sup>2</sup> and Origen accounts for it by supposing that Celsus might, some time or other, have heard how this name of reproach had been applied to those who quoted the Sibyl as a prophetess, by other Christians who did not approve of this practice. This, however, is not to be so understood as to imply that those opponents of the Sibylline prophecies had ascertained, on grounds of criticism, the spuriousness of these writings,<sup>3</sup> and for this reason refused to countenance such a fraud for pious purposes; more probably, they revolted *à priori*, at the very supposition that anything of the nature of a prophetic power existed *among the heathen*.

While, by others, the testimonies, genuine and interpolated, derived from their own literature, were employed against the pagans, Tertullian chose a different course. Inclined to perceive in all culture, science, and art, the falsification of original truth, he preferred to appeal to the involuntary utterances of the immediate, original voice of God in nature. He adduced, as evidence for Christian truth against Polytheism, the spontaneous expressions of an irrepressible, immediate, religious consciousness in common life,—the testimony of the soul, which he held to be Christian by nature,<sup>4</sup>—the testimony of the simple, uncultivated, ignorant soul, previous to all cultivation.<sup>5</sup> In his apology before the pagans he makes appeal to this witness of the soul, “which, though confined in the prison of the body, though led astray by wrong training, though enfeebled by the desires and passions, yet when it comes to itself, as out of a fit of intoxication, as out of a sleep, out of a disease, and when conscious of its healthful condition, calls God by this name alone, because it is the proper name of the true God. Great God—good God—and what God gives,

<sup>1</sup> L. vii. c. 56. “Ὅτι παρενέγραψαν εἰς τὰ ἱερῆς πολλὰ καὶ βλάβημα.

<sup>2</sup> c. Cels. l. v. c. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ. Apologet. c. 17.

<sup>4</sup> De testimonio animæ, c. 1: Te simplicem et rudem et impolitam et idioticam compello, qualem habent, qui te solam habent, illam ipsam de compito, de trivio, de textrino totam.

<sup>5</sup> Apologet. c. 17.

—these are common expressions with all. It adjures also this God as its judge, in such expressions as these :—God is my witness—to God I commit my cause—God will requite me. Finally, in using these expressions, it looks not to the Capitol, but upward to heaven ; for it knows the seat of the living God—from Him and from thence it descended.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quæ licet carcere corporis pressa, licet institutionibus pravis circumscripta, licet libidinibus ac concupiscentiis evigorata, licet falsis Diis exancillata, cum tamen resipiscit, ut ex crapula, ut ex somno, ut ex aliqua valetudine, et sanitatem suam patitur, Deum nominat, hoc solo nomine, quia proprio Dei veri. Deus magnus, Deus bonus, et quod Deus dederit, omnium vox est. Judicem quoque contestatur illum, Deus videt, et Deo commendo, et Deus mihi reddet. Denique pronuntians hæc non ad Capitolium, sed ad cælum respicit. Novit enim sedem Dei vivi, ab illo et inde descendit.

## SECTION SECOND.

### HISTORY OF THE CHURCH CONSTITUTION, OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE, AND OF SCHISMS IN THE CHURCH.

#### I. HISTORY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

##### I. OF THE CONSTITUTION OF CHURCH COMMUNITIES GENERALLY.

IN considering the history of the formation of the Christian Church constitution, two different epochs must be carefully distinguished: *The first epoch of its formation, as it sprang immediately in the apostolic age, out of the peculiar essence of Christianity,*—that essential character of Christianity whereby it is wholly distinguished, as well from the Old Testament position, as from all previous forms of religious community; *and, secondly, the epoch in which this original form of fellowship among Christians became gradually changed under various foreign influences, reaching down to the end of this period of the history.* We speak first, then, of *the foundation laid for the constitution of Christian communities in the apostolic age.*

##### A. THE FIRST FOUNDATION FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

What Moses expressed as a wish,<sup>1</sup> that the Spirit of God might rest upon all, and all might be prophets, is a prediction of that which was to be realized through Christ. By him was instituted a fellowship of divine life, which, proceeding from the equal and equally immediate relation of all to the one God, as the divine source of life to all, removed those boundaries within which, at the Old Testament position, the development of the higher life was

<sup>1</sup> Numbers xi. 29.

still confined ; and hence the fellowship thus derived essentially distinguishes itself from the constitution of all previously existing religious societies. There could be no longer a priestly or prophetic office, constituted to serve as a medium for the propagation and development of the kingdom of God, on which office the religious consciousness of the community was to be dependent. Such a guild of priests as existed in the previous systems of religion, empowered to guide other men, who remained, as it were, in a state of religious pupilage ; having the *exclusive* care of providing for their religious wants, and serving as mediators, by whom all other men must first be placed in connection with God and divine things ; such a priestly caste could find no place within Christianity. In removing out of the way that which separated men *from God*, in communicating to all the same fellowship *with God*, Christ also removed the barrier which had hitherto divided men *from one another*. Christ, the Prophet and High Priest for entire humanity, was the end of the prophetic office and of the priesthood. There was now the same High Priest and Mediator for all, through whom all, become reconciled and united with God, are themselves made a priestly and spiritual race ; one heavenly King, Guide, and Teacher, through whom all are taught of God ; one faith, one hope, one Spirit, which should quicken all ; one oracle in the hearts of all, the voice of the Spirit proceeding from the Father ;—all were to be citizens of one heavenly kingdom, with whose heavenly powers, even while strangers in the world, they should be already furnished. When the apostles applied the Old Testament idea of the priesthood to Christianity, this was done invariably for the simple purpose of shewing that no such visible, particular priesthood could find place in the new community ; that since free access to God and to heaven had been, once for all, opened to believers by one High Priest, even Christ, they had, by virtue of their union to him, become themselves a spiritual people, consecrated to God ; their calling being none other than to dedicate their entire life to God as a thank-offering for the grace of redemption, to publish abroad the power and grace of him who had called them out of the kingdom of darkness into his marvellous light, to make their life one continual priesthood, one spiritual worship springing from the temper of faith working by love, one continuous testimony for their Saviour (compare

1 Pet. ii. 9; Rom. xii. 1; and the spirit and whole train of thought running through the Epistle to the Hebrews.) So, too, the advancement of God's kingdom in general and in particular, the diffusion of Christianity among the heathens and the good of each particular community, was now to be, not the duty of one select class of Christians alone, but the most immediate concern of each individual. Every one, from the position assigned him by the invisible Head of the Church, should co-operate in promoting this object by the special gifts which God had bestowed on him,—gifts grounded in *his peculiar nature*, but that nature renewed and ennobled by the Holy Spirit. There was no distinction here of spiritual and secular; but all, as Christians, should, in their inner life, in temper and disposition, be dead to the ungodlike, to the world, and in so far separate from the world,—men animated by the Spirit of God and not by the spirit of the world. The individual predominant capabilities of Christians, sanctified, made godly by this Spirit, and appropriated as organs for its activity, should be transformed to *charismata*, gifts of grace. It was thus, therefore, the Apostle Paul began his exposition of spiritual gifts, addressed to the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. xii.) “Once, when ye were heathens, and suffered yourselves to be led blindfold by your priests to dumb idols, ye were as dead and dumb as they. Now that through Christ ye serve the living God, ye no longer have such guides, drawing you along blindfold by leading-strings. Ye have yourselves for a guide the Spirit of God, that enlightens you. Ye no longer dumbly follow; He speaks out of you; there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.”

The essence of the Christian community rested on this: that no one individual should be the chosen pre-eminent organ of the Holy Spirit for the guidance of the whole; but all were to co-operate, each at his particular position, and with the gifts bestowed on him, one supplying what might be wanted by another, for the advancement of the Christian life and of the common end. In this view of it, the New Testament idea of the *charisma* becomes important; the *charisma*, by which is designated the individuality and diversity in the operations of the Spirit that quickens all, as contradistinguished from that which in all is the same; the *peculiar* kind and manner or form of the activity of that common principle, so far as it is conditioned by the peculiar natural

characteristics of each individual. Just as the unity of that higher Spirit must reveal itself in the manifoldness of the charismata, so must all these peculiarities, quickened by the same Spirit, serve as organs, mutually helping each other for one common end, the edification of the Church. We understand edification here, according to the general and original sense of the term in the writings of St Paul, as referring to the advancement and development, from its common ground, of the entire life of the church-community. The edification of the Church, in this sense, was the common work of all. Even edification by the word was not assigned exclusively to one individual; but every man who felt the inward call to it, might give utterance to the word in the assembled church. Referring to the same end, there were likewise different gifts, grounded in the diversity of peculiar natures, quickened by the Holy Spirit; according as, for example, the productive (prophecy), or the receptive (interpretation, the *διεσμνησία*), or the critical faculty (proving of spirits); according as the capacity for feeling and intuition, or that of sober reflective thought, predominated; according as the Divine, in its overwhelming force, had the preponderance, and the Human, in its independent development, gave place to it, or a harmonious co-operation of both the Divine and the Human prevailed; according as the momentaneous and sudden seizure of inspiration had the ascendancy, or what was contained in the Christian consciousness became unfolded through a process of thought quickened by the Holy Spirit (where again there were manifold gradations, from an ecstatic elevation of mind down to the uniform, discreet, and cautious unfolding of the understanding, speaking with tongues, prophecy, the ordinary gift of teaching); in fine, according as the prevailing tendency was to the theoretical or to the practical (the *Gnosis* or the *Sophia*).

Since Christianity did not destroy any of the natural distinctions grounded in the laws of the original creation, but sanctified and ennobled them; for our Saviour's words, that he came not to destroy but to fulfil, apply also to the natural world; so, although the dividing wall between man and woman, in respect to the higher life, was removed by Christ, and in him man and woman become one, yet Christianity would have the woman remain true to the particular sphere and destination assigned her by nature. Women



were excluded from taking any public part in the transactions of the Church assemblies; they were referred to their appropriate sphere of activity within the bosom of the family, or some corresponding place in the administration of Church affairs. The Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 34), interdicts the female part of the Church alone from publicly speaking in the assemblies; which makes it evident again, that no other exception existed to the universality of this right among the Christians. But this last-mentioned exception continued to be made, after the same manner, in succeeding times. Even the enthusiastic Montanists recognised it, only maintaining that the extraordinary operations of the divine Spirit were not bound by this rule. In proof of this, they referred to the case of the prophesying women, mentioned in 1 Corinth. xi. 5; but incorrectly, since the Apostle simply speaks here of a practice that prevailed in the Corinthian Church, without approving that practice, but with a design of correcting it in a later part of the epistle. This will be evident on comparing 1 Corinth. xi. 5 with xiv. 34.<sup>1</sup>

As the *inner* fellowship of divine life introduced by Christianity strove, however, from the beginning, to exhibit itself in an outward fellowship, it must necessarily appropriate to itself some determinate form, answering to its own essence—a form in which this union could appear and shape itself as a spiritual body; because without such form no association, for whatever purpose, can have actual being and subsistence. To this end, a certain organization was necessary; a certain relative superordination and subordination of the different members, according to the different positions assigned them in reference to the whole; a certain guidance and direction of the common concerns, and therefore separation of organs destined for that particular end. And this stands in no manner of contradiction with what we asserted respecting the essential character of Christianity and the fellowship grounded therein, and respecting the mutual relations of Christians to each other. On the contrary, the natural rela-

<sup>1</sup> The Hilary, who wrote commentaries on the epistles of St Paul, is remarkable for the freedom from prejudice with which he contemplates Christian antiquity. In speaking of these matters also, he correctly distinguishes the earlier from the later practice of the Church. *Primum omnes docebant et omnes baptizabant, ut cresceret plebs et multiplicaretur, omnibus inter initia concessum est, et evangelizare et baptizare et scripturas explorare.* Hilar. in epist. Ephes. c. iv. v. 12.

tion of members to one another points already to such an organic form in the constitution of the community as a necessary thing. For as there were individualities of character predominantly productive, and others of a more receptive bent; as there were those pre-eminently calculated to guide and rule; and as the Christian life shaped itself after the form of these natural peculiarities, which it ennobled—the natural talent being elevated to a charisma—the result was, that some members of the community would come to be possessed of the gift which is designated in the epistles of St Paul as the *χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως* (governments.) This mutual relation of gifts, grounded in the natural talents of individuals, pointed to a corresponding position of the several members of the community in their relation to one another. The *χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως* required a corresponding office, the fitness for which had been conferred by that gift in the organization of the Church. This was a whole, composed of equal members, all the members being but organs of the community, as this was the body quickened by the Spirit of Christ. All these members, as organs of the whole and of the one Spirit which gave it life, were to co-operate, each in his appropriate place, for the common end; and some of the members acted in this organization of parts as the pre-eminently guiding ones. But it could hardly work itself out in a natural way from the essence of the Christian life and of Christian fellowship, that *this guidance should be placed in the hands of only one individual.* *The monarchical form of government was not suited to the Christian community of spirit.*

The preponderance of one individual at the head of the whole might too easily operate as a check on the free development of the life of the Church, and the free co-operation of the different organs, in whom the consciousness of mutual independence must ever be kept alive. The individual on whom everything depended, might acquire too great an importance for the whole, and so become the centre round which all would gather, so as to obscure the sense of their common relation to *that only One*, who should be the centre for all. The Apostles stood to the collective body of Christians in a relation which corresponded only to their peculiar position in the development of the Church, and which, for that very reason, could not be transferred to another office, since they alone were to be the bearers of Christ's word and spirit for all

ages; the chosen witnesses of his personal appearance and ministry, of his resurrection to a new and more glorious state of being; the necessary intermediate links by which the whole Church was connected with Christ. This was a relation of dependence and subordination, grounded in the nature of the historical development, which could not be repeated. And these apostles themselves, to whom this position in the guidance of the Church belonged, how far were they from any thought of exercising a constraining preponderance in its affairs, to lord it over the faith, of which the foundation had once been laid, and which was now to develop itself with freedom, and give shape to everything by its own inherent power alone! How much respect they shewed for the free development of the collective body! They endeavoured to gain the free co-operation of the communities in all the affairs which concerned those communities—a point on which we shall speak more particularly hereafter. Peter and John place themselves in their epistles in the same class with other presiding officers of the communities, instead of claiming a place *above* them as general rulers of the Church. How difficult it might be to find in the communities an individual uniting in himself all the qualifications for guiding the affairs of the body, and who alone possessed the confidence of all! How much easier to find in every community several fathers of families, whose peculiarities together might supply the deficiencies of each as an individual, one of whom might enjoy the most confidence in this, and the other in that class of the community, and who together, therefore, might be qualified for such a function. *Monarchy in spiritual things* does not harmonise with the spirit of Christianity; for this points everywhere to the feeling of a mutual need of help,—to the necessity and to the great advantage as well of common counsel as of common prayer. Where two or three are assembled in the name of the Lord, he promises to be in the midst of them.

Besides, Christianity freely appropriated to its own use such already existing forms as were adapted to its spirit and essential character. Now, in the Jewish synagogue, and in all the sects that sprung out of Judaism, there existed a form of government which was not monarchical, but aristocratic; consisting of a council of elders,  $\text{זְבָנִים}$ ,  $\text{πρεσβύτεροι}$ , who had the guidance of all affairs belonging to the common interest. To this form, Chris-

tianity, which unfolded itself out of Judaism, would most naturally attach itself. The same polity, moreover, would appear most natural, in whatever part of the Roman empire communities were founded among the Pagans; for men had long been used to see the affairs of state administered by a senate, by the assembly of decuriones. It is an evidence of the relationship between the ecclesiastical and civil administration, that at a somewhat later period the clergy were denominated *ordo*, the guiding senate of the community; since *ordo* stands pre-eminently for the *ordo senatorum*.

The guidance of the communities was accordingly everywhere entrusted to a counsel of elders. It was not necessary that these should be the oldest in years, though some respect, doubtless, was had to age. But age here was a designation of worth, as in the Latin "senatus," and in the Greek "γερονσία." Besides the usual name *πρεσβύτεροι*, given to these heads of the community, there were also many others, denoting their appropriate sphere of action, as *ποιμένες*, shepherds; *ἡγούμενοι*, *προεστῶτες τῶν ἀδελφῶν*. The founding of communities among the Pagans led to another name, more conformed to the Grecian mode of designating such relations than the appellations above cited, which clearly shew their Jewish origin. This name was *ἐπίσκοποι*, borrowed from the city form of government among the Greeks,<sup>1</sup> and applied to the presiding officers of the Christian communities, as overseers of the whole, leaders of the community.

That the name *ἐπίσκοποι*, or bishops, was altogether *synonymous* with that of presbyters, is clearly evident from those passages of Scripture, where both appellations are used interchangeably. Acts xx. comp. v. 17 with v. 28; Ep. to Titus, c. i. v. 5 with v. 7; and from those where the office of deacon is named immediately after that of bishop, so that between these two church offices there could not still be a third intervening one. Ep. to Philip. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1 and 8. This interchange in the use of the two appellations shews that they were perfectly identical. Even were the name bishop originally nothing more than the distinctive title of a president of this church-senate, of a *Primus inter pares*, yet even in this case such interchange would be quite inadmissible. Likewise in the letter which Clemens, the disciple of Paul, writes

<sup>1</sup> See on this point my Hist. of the Planting, &c. vol. i. p. 198.

in the name of the Roman Church, the deacons are named immediately after the bishops, as the presiding officers of the communities.<sup>1</sup>

But we here go on the supposition, that in each town, from the beginning onward, one single community formed itself under the guidance of a senate of elders. Are we warranted to suppose this? An opposite hypothesis has been proposed by several writers in more recent times.<sup>2</sup> It is held, according to this view, that there were not single churches formed from the beginning, especially in the larger towns; but as Christianity was introduced from many different quarters and by different preachers, *single, small* communities must have been founded, independent of one another, which remained separate, and held their assemblies at different places. Not till later, then, would one community be formed from the coming together of these several conventicles. Of such separate conventicles preceding the formation of one community, indications are supposed to be found in those passages of St Paul's epistles, where one person, with the Church assembling in his house, is greeted. Coloss. iv. 15; 1 Corinth. xvi. 19; Rom. xvi. 5-14, 15; Philem. 2. Each of these small communities is supposed to have had its own presiding officer, and in this sense the monarchical was the original form of government in the constitution of the Church. According to one view, the contentions of these little bands and their presiding officers with one another, first caused the want to be felt of greater unity and closer connection under a common head, by which the gradual formation of the episcopal government of the Church would be promoted. According to the other view, the name *ἐπίσκοποι*, designated originally the function of these local presidents, and the name presbyters, the collegial union of these several presidents of communities.

Such an atomic theory, however, corresponds, certainly, least of all to the essence of Christianity, of the Christian community of Spirit, which tended everywhere to fellowship and unity, and conveyed with it the consciousness of all belonging together to one

<sup>1</sup> See Cap. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Kist of Leyden; see his Essay on the Origin of the Episcopal Power in the Christian Church, translated from the Dutch in Illgen's *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*, Bd. ii. 2tes Stück, S. 48; and Dr von Baur, in his *Treatise on the Pastoral Letters*.

body.<sup>1</sup> Everywhere in the epistles of the New Testament, Christians of the same city appear as members associated together to form one *ἐκκλησία*. This unity never represents itself as something which is yet to take place, but as the original form, having its ground from the beginning in the essence of the Christian consciousness; and the party divisions which threatened to dissolve this unity, appear rather as a morbid affection which had crept in later, as in the Corinthian Church. And if portions of the Church sometimes formed separate assemblies in the houses of such individuals as possessed local conveniences for the purpose, or who were eminently qualified to edify those who assembled in their dwellings, by the preaching of the word;<sup>2</sup> yet this was something which did not occur till later, when the communities that were already regularly organized became more numerous; and those who met in such assemblies did not, by so doing, separate themselves from the great whole of the *community* which subsisted under that *guiding* senate. Of course the distinction, which has its sole ground in the theory above mentioned, between bishops and presbyters, vanishes; and all we can admit is, that the latter was particularly the name of dignity, the former the name designating the function, or particular sphere of activity.

These presbyters or bishops then, as we may call the same functionaries considered under different points of view, had the general superintendence of the communities, the direction of all affairs pertaining to the common interest; but the *office of teaching* was not committed exclusively to them; for, as we have remarked above, *all Christians*, originally, had the right of pouring out their hearts before the brethren, and of speaking for their edification, in the public assemblies. It does not follow, however, *from this*, that *all* the members of a community were fitted for the *ordinary and regular office of teaching*; a distinction is to be made between a gift of teaching, such as, like every other cultivated talent, stood constantly at the command of him that once possessed it, and those effusions proceeding from the inspiration of the moment,<sup>3</sup> which were connected with insulated and tran-

<sup>1</sup> Comp. what I have said in objection to this theory, in my *History of the Planting*, &c. p. 49 and 199; also Rothe, in his work *Über die Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 197 and onward.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. my *Hist. of the Planting*, &c. p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> As prophecy, speaking with tongues. I will take this occasion to point out a

sient states of elevated feeling, such as, in especial manner, belonged to the characteristic features of that primitive time of extraordinary mental excitement from above, when the divine life was first entering within the limits of the earthly world, and sudden transitions in conversion must more frequently occur. On such transient awakenings and excitements of the religious consciousness alone, the care necessary to preserve, propagate, and advance religious knowledge, and to defend the genuine, pure, apostolic doctrine against the various corrupting tendencies—already threatening to come in—of Jewish or Pagan modes of thinking, could not be made to depend. Christianity claimed for its service the faculties of knowledge, no less than those of feeling. Where one of these two faculties predominated to the exclusion of the other, disturbances of the Christian consciousness and life always ensued. That healthy and harmonious development, by virtue of which all exclusive preponderance of single charismata would be precluded, was one of the characteristic features of the apostolic period. Hence the watchful counteraction of the Apostle Paul, wherever he noticed any exclusive tendency of this kind which threatened to interfere with the harmonious and healthy development of the Christian life—as we see in his first epistle to the Corinthians. Care was to be taken, therefore, that along with those utterances of extraordinary inspiration, to be connected with no particular function, there should never fail to be in the communities such as were qualified to satisfy the need of knowledge, men capable of unfolding and of defending for them Christian truth: the function denoted by the *λόγος γνώσεως* and the *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας*. This latter presupposed a certain previous cultivation of the understanding, a power of clear and discriminating thought, a certain gift of communication; all which, if once present, when quickened by the agency of the Holy Spirit, became a charisma of this kind. Such as possessed this charisma were on that account fitted to take care for the continual

passage in Irenæus, which serves to confirm what I have so often advanced, that by the gift of tongues was designated something that differed only in degree, not in kind, from the prophetic gift,—an inspiration raised to a higher grade, and suppressing more entirely the ordinary consciousness. The passage in Acts x. 46, relating to the gift of tongues, Irenæus iii. 12, 15, explains thus: while the Holy Ghost rested on them, they poured out their feelings in the manner of prophecy. *Τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἱκαναπαύοντος αὐτοῖς, προφητιύοντας αὐτοὺς ἀκηκόει.*

preservation of sound doctrine in the community; and for the establishment and furtherance of Christian knowledge, without excluding the co-operation of the rest, who were at liberty to assist, each from his own position, and according to the particular gift which might belong to him. Hence, in the apostolic age, the gift of teaching, *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας*, and the order of teachers, *διδάσκαλοι*, who were distinguished by this gift, are represented as constituting an entirely distinct function and order. All the members of a community might, at particular seasons, feel the impulse to address the assembled brethren, or to break forth before them in acts of invocation or praise to their God; but only a few possessed that *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας*, and were *διδάσκαλοι*.

It is clear of itself, however, that this faculty of teaching is a thing quite distinct from the talent for administering the outward concerns of the community, the *χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως*, which was particularly required for the office of assessor in the Church council, the office of presbyter or bishop. These gifts, so different in their kind, could not always be united in the same individual. In the early apostolic Church, to which all arbitrary and idle distinctions of ranks were so alien, and where every office was considered simply with reference to the end it was to subserve and circumscribed by an inner necessity, the function of teaching and that of church government, the function of a *διδάσκαλος* and that of a *ποιμήν*, as also the gifts requisite for both,<sup>1</sup> were hence also originally distinguished and held separate from each other.<sup>2</sup>

In the unfolding of these relations, it is necessary to distinguish different steps or stages; and we should not be warranted in assuming, as the original form, every thing which we find in the later portions of the apostolic times. The historic progress itself must have introduced many changes; and it would be a mistake if we supposed that every arrangement in the communities when St Paul wrote his last epistles remained the same as when he sent the first. Thus, with regard to the ministration of doctrine, the following gradations are to be distinguished in the progressive development.<sup>3</sup> 1. It occurred naturally that indi-

<sup>1</sup> The *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας* and the *χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως*.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. for instance, Rom. xii. 7, 8, and the passages already noticed, for the purpose of seeing the distinction between the *διδάσκων* and the *προιστάς*.

<sup>3</sup> See my Hist. of the Planting, &c. p. 210.



viduals, qualified for it by previous cultivation of mind, were, by virtue of this qualification, particularly called to the regular dispensation of doctrine. 2. Such persons were commonly ordained and set apart as teachers of the Church. 3. The functions of church-teacher and of elder became more closely connected with each other. It must have been held a salutary thing, tending to the good order and quiet of the communities, that among their presiding officers there should be also those who possessed the talent for administering the office of teaching. If, in some cases, as in Paul's farewell address to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, the care of maintaining pure doctrine was committed to the presbyters generally, yet it by no means follows that it belonged to them to administer the office of teaching in the more restricted sense; for the apostle may be speaking here simply of one among the general cares of church government. But when, in the epistle to Titus, it is required of a bishop that he should not only himself hold fast the genuine, pure doctrine of the Gospel, but also be able to establish others in it, and confute its adversaries, it is certainly implied that the bishop must possess also the gift of teaching. Indeed, under many circumstances of the Church, such as those, for example, which are alluded to in the above-mentioned epistle, this would be highly desirable on account of the threatening danger from the spread of erroneous doctrines, which was to be met by the paternal authority of elders of the community, supported by their oral teaching. So, too, in the first epistle to Timothy (v. 17), those of the presbyters who, to the talent for government, *κυβερνησις*, could unite also that of teaching, *διδασκαλία*, are counted worthy of double honour; and the prominence given here to each may be regarded as another proof that the two were not *necessarily* and *always* united.

Besides these we find only one other church office in the apostolic age, that of deacons. The duties of this office were from the beginning simply external, as it was instituted, in the first place, according to Acts vi. to assist in the distribution of alms. The care of providing for the poor and sick of the communities, to which many other external duties were afterwards added, devolved particularly on this office. Besides the deacons, there were appointed also deaconesses for the female portion of the communities, because the free access of men to the female sex,

especially in the East, where custom demanded so careful a separation of the sexes, might excite suspicion and give offence. If the women, in conformity with their natural destination, were excluded from the offices of teaching and church government, yet the peculiar qualifications of the sex were now claimed, in this way, as peculiar gifts for the service of the communities. By means of such deaconesses the Gospel could be introduced into the bosom of families, where, owing to the customs of the East, no man could gain admittance.<sup>1</sup> They were also bound, as Christian wives and mothers of tried experience in all the relations of their sex, to assist the younger women of the communities with their counsel and encouragement.<sup>2</sup>

As regards the election to these church offices, we are in want of sufficient information to enable us to decide how it was managed in the early Apostolic times. Indeed, it is quite possible that the method of procedure differed under different circumstances. As in the institution of deacons the apostles left the choice to the communities themselves, and as the same was the case in the choice of deputies to attend the apostles in the name of the communities (1<sup>st</sup> Corinth. viii. 19), we might argue that a similar course would be pursued in filling other offices of the Church. Yet it may be that in many cases the apostles themselves, where they could not as yet have sufficient confidence in the spirit of the first new communities, conferred the important office of presbyters on such as, in their own judgment, under the light of the divine Spirit, appeared to be the fittest persons. *Their* choice would, moreover, deserve in the highest degree the confidence of the communities (comp. Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5); although when St Paul empowers Titus to set presiding officers over the communities who possessed the requisite qualifications, *this circumstance* decides nothing as to the mode of choice, nor is a choice by the community itself *thereby* necessarily excluded. The regular course seems to have been this, the church offices were entrusted in preference to the first converts of the communi-

<sup>1</sup> As a proof, see the words of Clement of Alexandria (St. l. iii. p. 448), respecting Christian women: Δι' ὧν καὶ εἰς τὴν γυναικωνῆτιν ἀδιαβλήτως παρεσιδύστο ἡ τοῦ κυρίου διδασκαλία.

<sup>2</sup> Tertull. de virginib. velandis, c. 9: Ut experimentis omnium affectuum structæ, facile norint cæteras et consilio et solatio juvare et ut nihilominus ea decurrerint, per quæ femina probari potest.

ties, provided that in other respects they possessed the requisite qualifications (1 Corinth. vi. 15).<sup>1</sup> Clement of Rome cites the following rule, as one which had been handed down from the apostles, relative to the appointment to church offices: "*that they should be filled according to the judgment of approved men, with the consent of the whole community.*" It may have been the general practice for the presbyters themselves, in case of a vacancy, to propose another to the community in place of the person deceased, and leave it to the whole body either to approve or decline their selection for reasons assigned.<sup>2</sup> Where asking for the assent of the community had not yet become a mere formality, this mode of filling church offices had the salutary effect of causing the votes of the majority to be guided by those capable of judging, and of suppressing divisions; while at the same time no one was obtruded on the community who would not be welcome to their hearts.

Again, as regards the relation in which these presbyters stood to the communities, they were not designed to exercise absolute authority, but to act as presiding officers and guides of an ecclesiastical republic; to conduct all things with the co-operation of the communities as their ministers, and not their masters: So the apostles regarded this relation when they addressed their epistles, which treat not barely of matters of doctrine, but of things relating to the life and discipline of the Church; not to the presiding officers of the communities alone, but to the entire communities. In the instance where the Apostle Paul pronounces a sentence of excommunication from the fellowship of the Church, he conceives himself united in spirit with the whole community (1 Corinth. v. 4), assuming that regularly, in a matter of such common concern, the participation of the whole community was required.

<sup>1</sup> So also Clement of Rome (cap. 42), says of the apostles: Κατὰ χώραν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθίστανον τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν, δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι εἰς ἰπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους μιλόντων πιστεύειν.

<sup>2</sup> Clement, cap. 44: Τοὺς κατασταβέντας ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἢ μεταξὺ ὑφ' ἑτέρων ἰλλογίμων ἀνδρῶν, συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης.

B. CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
AFTER THE AGE OF THE APOSTLES.

The changes which the constitution of the Christian Church underwent during this period, related especially to the three following particulars:—1. The distinction of bishops from presbyters, and the gradual development of the monarchico-episcopal church government; 2. The distinction of the clergy from the laity, and the formation of a sacerdotal caste, as opposed to the evangelical idea of the priesthood; 3. The multiplication of church offices.

As to the first of these particulars, we are in want, it is true, of exact and full information respecting the manner in which the change took place in single cases; but a comprehensive view on grounds of analogy will set the matter in a very clear light. Since the presbyters constituted a deliberative assembly, it would of course soon become the practice for one of their number to preside over the rest. This might be so arranged as to take place by some law of rotation, so that the presidency would thus pass in turn from one to the other. Possibly, in many places, such was the original arrangement. Yet we find no trace, at least in history, of anything of this kind. But neither, as we have already observed, do we, on the other hand, meet with any vestige of a fact which would lead us to infer that the presidency over the presbyterial college was originally distinguished by a special name. However the case may have been then, as to this point, what we find existing in the second century enables us to infer, respecting the preceding times, that soon after the apostolic age the standing office of president of the presbytery must have been formed; which president, as having pre-eminently the oversight over all, was designated by the special name of *Ἐπίσκοπος*, and thus distinguished from the other presbyters. Thus the name came at length to be applied exclusively to this presbyter, while the name presbyter continued at first to be common to all; for the bishops, as presiding presbyters, had no official character other than that of the presbyters generally. They were only *Primi inter pares*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Many of the later fathers still have a right understanding of this process of the mat-

The aristocratic constitution will ever find it easy, by various gradual changes, to pass over to the monarchical; and circumstances where the need becomes felt of guidance by the energy and authority of an individual, will have an influence beyond all things else to bring about such a change. It may have been circumstances of this kind which, near the times dividing the first and second centuries, tended to give preponderance to a president of the council of elders, and to assign him his distinctive title, as the general overseer. Already, in the latter part of the age of St Paul, we shall see many things different from what they had been originally; and so it cannot appear strange if other changes came to be introduced into the constitution of the communities, by the altered circumstances of the times immediately succeeding those of St Paul or St John. Then ensued those strongly marked oppositions and schisms, those dangers with which the corruptions engendered by manifold foreign elements threatened primitive Christianity.<sup>1</sup> It was these dangers that had called the Apostle John to Asia Minor, and induced him to make this country the seat of his labours. Amidst circumstances so embarrassing, amidst conflicts so severe from within and from without—for then came forth the first edict of Trajan against the Christians—the authority of individual men, distinguished for piety, firmness, and activity, would make itself particularly availing, and would be augmented by a necessity become generally apparent. Thus the predominant influence of individuals, who, as moderators over the college of presbyters, were denominated bishops, might spring of itself out of the circumstances of the times in which the Christian communities were multiplied, with-

ter. Hilar. in ep. i. ad Timoth. c. 3: *Omnis episcopus presbyter, non tamen omnis presbyter episcopus; hic enim episcopus est, qui inter presbyteros primus est.* Jerome (146, ad Evangel.) says that it had been the practice in the Alexandrian Church, until the times of the bishops Hierocles and Dionysius, in the middle of the third century, for the presbyters to choose one of their own number as a president, and call him bishop. And so also there may be some foundation of truth in the account of Eutychius, though it may not be wholly true, and must be chronologically false. This person, who was patriarch of Alexandria in the first half of the tenth century, relates, that in the Alexandrian Church, up to the time of the bishop Alexander, in the beginning of the fourth century, the following arrangement had existed: there was a college of twelve presbyters, one of whom presided over the rest as bishop, and these presbyters always chose their bishop out of their own number, and the other eleven ordained him.

<sup>1</sup> These I have more fully unfolded in my *History of the Planting, &c.* vol. ii.

out any necessity of supposing an *intentional* remodelling of the earlier constitution of the Church. In favour of this view is also the manner in which we find the names "presbyter" and "bishop" interchanged for each other until far into the second century. It may be, that as the labours of the Apostle John in Asia Minor had a great influence generally on the succeeding development of the Church, such an influence proceeded also from the course he pursued in this matter, that he was induced by the circumstances of the times to entrust to certain individual presbyters in particular, who had made themselves worthy of his special confidence, the care of maintaining pure doctrine, of warding off those threatening dangers, and of keeping an oversight over the whole life of the Church amidst those scatterings of the chaff. The tradition current at the end of the second century, respecting individuals who had been placed at the head of communities by the Apostle John, and ordained by him as bishops, may have been thence derived. This would be the truth lying at the bottom in this report, and there would be no necessity of inferring from this circumstance that an episcopate was designedly founded by this apostle.<sup>1</sup>

This relation of the bishops to the presbyters we may observe all along to the end of the second century. It is hence that Irenæus sometimes uses the names "bishop" and "presbyter" as wholly synonymous, and at others, distinguishes the bishops, as presiding officers, from the presbyters.<sup>2</sup> Tertullian also calls the

<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence to establish any such supposition; for to indefinite traditions the force of evidence cannot be ascribed. In the so-called epistles of Ignatius, I perceive, besides that which took its shape without any preconceived design, an evident purpose. As the tradition of Ignatius' journey to Rome, where he was to be thrown to the wild beasts, appears to me, for reasons already alleged, extremely liable to suspicion; so his letters, which presuppose the truth of this story, inspire me with as little confidence in their authenticity. That a man with death immediately before him, could have nothing to say more befitting than such things about obedience to the bishops, I cannot well conceive; at least when I transfer myself to the time when these letters profess to have been written. But even supposing the Apostle John did institute the order of bishops, for the purpose of satisfying a necessity of the times, still it would by no means follow, that this was a form of church government, either necessary or beneficial for *all times*.

<sup>2</sup> The two names are used synonymously (l. iv. 26), where the *successio episcopatus* is given to the *presbyteris*. In l. iii. 14, he distinguishes them. In the narrative, Acts xx. 17, where Paul sends for the presbyters of the Churches of Asia Minor, Irenæus reckons among them also the bishops, in the view that these latter were no more than presiding elders; in Mileto convocatis episcopis et presbyteris. The confusion spread

presiding officers of the Christian communities by the common name of Seniores, including under this title both bishops and presbyters;<sup>1</sup> though elsewhere in the writings of this father, the distinction between bishops and presbyters is already decidedly drawn. In many respects, Tertullian may be considered as standing on the boundary line between an old and a new era in the Christian Church.

The novel and violent conflicts, internal and external, which the Church had to encounter in these and the next succeeding times, might contribute anew to foster the monarchical element in the constitution of the Church. Yet, as late as the third century, the presbyters still maintained their own footing, as a college of counsellors, at the side of the bishops, and the latter could undertake nothing of importance without calling to their assistance the deliberative assembly of presbyters.<sup>2</sup> When Cyprian, bishop of the Church in Carthage, was separated from his community by his flight from persecution, if he had business to transact relating to the interests of the Church, he immediately communicated it to his presbyters remaining behind in Carthage, and excused himself to them whenever he was obliged to decide any matter without their assistance. He declares it to be his invariable principle to do nothing on his own responsibility and without their advice.<sup>3</sup> Alluding to the original relation of the bishops to the presbyters, he calls them his *Compresbyteros*. Since then, in the constitution of the Church, two elements met together,—the aristocratic and the monarchical,—it could not fail to be the case, that a conflict would ensue between them. The bishops considered themselves as invested with supreme power in the guidance of the Church, and would maintain themselves in this authority. The presbyters would not concede to them this authority, and would seek to render themselves again more independent. These struggles between the presbyterial and episcopal systems belong among the most important phenomena connected with the process

over the whole subject of the succession of the first Romish bishops may doubtless be owing to the fact, that these names were originally not so distinguished, and hence several might bear at the same time the titles of bishops or presbyters.

<sup>1</sup> Apologet. c. 39: Præsident probati quique *seniores*.

<sup>2</sup> Presbyterium contrahere.

<sup>3</sup> A primordio episcopatus mei statui, nihil sine consilio vestro mea privatim sententia gerere.—Sicut honor mutuus poscit, in commune tractabimus. Ep. 5.

of the development of church life in the third century. Many presbyters made a capricious use of their power, hurtful to good discipline and order in the communities. Divisions arose, of which we shall speak more particularly hereafter; and out of these troubles the authority of the bishops, closely united among themselves, came victorious over the presbyters, who opposed them single-handed. The energy and activity of a Cyprian contributed in no small measure to further this victory; but it would both be doing injustice to him, and changing the point of view from which the whole matter ought to be contemplated, if we should charge him with having laboured from the beginning, on a systematic plan, to elevate the episcopal order; as it is generally true, in matters of this sort, that it hardly lies within the compass of one individual to change the relations of a whole period after some scheme for his own aggrandizement. Cyprian acted, in this case, rather without being conscious of any plan, in the spirit of a whole party and of a tendency belonging to the entire Church in his time. He acted as the representative of the episcopal system, whose conflict with the Presbyterian Church policy had its ground and root in the general process of the development of the Church. The contentions of the presbyterian parties with one another might certainly have proved injurious to discipline and good order in the churches; the triumph of the episcopal system undoubtedly promoted their unity, order, and tranquillity; but, on the other hand, it was unfriendly to the free development of church life, and served not a little to encourage the formation of a priesthood, foreign to the essence of the New Testament development of the kingdom of God; while, on the other hand, a revolution of sentiment, for which the way had already been prepared, an altered view of the idea of the priesthood, had no small influence on the development of the episcopal system. Thus does this change of the original constitution of the Christian communities stand intimately connected with another and still more radical change,—*the formation of a sacerdotal caste in the Christian Church.* Without doubt, many changes in church relations might flow of themselves out of the historical course of development, without witnessing of any such revolution in the general apprehension of Christians, or being at all connected with it. Succeeding the time of the first Christian inspiration, of that effusion of the



Spirit which made all differences of cultivation retreat more into the back-ground, came a time when the human element assumed more importance in relation to the progressive movement of the Church. Differences in the degree of cultivation and of Christian knowledge became more strongly marked; and it might hence happen that the guidance of church affairs was surrendered more and more to the above-mentioned church senate, and the edification of the Church by the Word more and more confined to those who made themselves pre-eminent as teachers. But besides what came of itself in the natural course of historical progress, there entered in imperceptibly another idea alien to the Christian principle; an idea which could not fail to bring about a revolution of views, destined to last for ages, and ever to unfold itself in a wider circle from the germ which had once been implanted.

Christianity had sprung to freedom and self-subsistence out of the envelope of Judaism,—had stripped off the forms in which it was first enwrapped, and within which the new spirit lay at first concealed, until by its own inherent power it burst its way through them. This evolution belonged more particularly to the Pauline position, from which proceeded the form of the Church in the pagan world. This principle had triumphantly pushed its way through, in the conflict with the Jewish elements which opposed themselves to that free development of Christianity. In the communities of pagan Christians, the new creation stood forth completely unfolded; but the Jewish principle, which had been vanquished, pressed in once more from another quarter. Humanity was as yet incapable of maintaining itself at that lofty position of pure spiritual religion. The Jewish position descended nearer to the mass, which needed first to be trained in order to the apprehension of pure Christianity,—needed to be disaccustomed from paganism. Out of Christianity, now become independent, a principle once more sprang forth, akin to the Old Testament position,—a new *making outward* of the kingdom of God, a new law discipline, destined to serve one day for the training of rude nations, a new tutorship for the spirit of humanity until it should arrive at the maturity of the manly age in Christ. This retrogression of the Christian spirit to a form nearly related to the Old Testament position, could not fail, after the fruitful principle had once made its appearance, to unfold itself more and more, bringing to

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light, one after another, all the consequences which it involved ; but a reaction of the Christian consciousness, striving after freedom, began also, which was ever bursting forth anew in an endless variety of appearances, until it reached its triumph at the Reformation.

While the great principle of the New Testament is the unfolding of the kingdom of God from within, from the union with Christ, brought about after the like *immediate* manner in all, by faith ; the readmission of the Old Testament position, in making the kingdom of God outward, went on the assumption that an *outward mediation was necessary* in order to the spread of this kingdom in the world. Such a mediation was to form for the Christian Church a priesthood fashioned after the model of that of the Old Testament. The universal priestly character, grounded in that common and immediate relation of all to Christ as the source of the divine life, was repressed, the idea interposing itself of a particular mediatory priesthood attached to a distinct order. This recasting of the Christian spirit in the Old-Testament form did not take place, it is true, every where uniformly alike. Where some Jewish element chiefly predominated, it might very easily grow up out of this ;<sup>1</sup> where the Pauline element among the pagan Christians had unfolded itself in opposition to the Jewish, still the Christian spirit, grown up to independence, but not being able to maintain itself at this lofty position, by virtue of a relationship springing up in itself with the Jewish position, passed over again to the Jewish. Of such a change which had now taken place in the Christian mode of thinking, we have a witness as early as Tertullian, when he calls the bishop *summus sacerdos*,<sup>2</sup> a title certainly not invented by him, but which had been adopted from a prevailing mode both of speaking and thinking in a certain portion, at least, of the Church. This title presupposes that

<sup>1</sup> Thus in the Jewish-Christian apocryphal writing, called the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs (in the Testament iii. of Levi, c. 8), it is promised of the Messiah, that he should found a new priesthood among the pagan nations ; *ποιήσω ἰσραητιανίαν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*. Whether in the letter of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, a contemporary of Irenæus (cited in Euseb. l. v. c. 24), the Apostle John is denominated *ἰερεὺς τὸ πῖταλον πειφορηκώς*, as standing at the head of the government of the Church in Asia Minor, may indeed be doubted. The phrase might also be used simply to designate the highest position of the spiritual priesthood in the witnessing of the faith. (See Testament. Levi, c. 8 : *πίταλον τῆς πίστεως*.)

<sup>2</sup> De baptismo, c. 17.

men had begun already to compare the presbyters with the priests; the deacons, or the spiritual class generally, with the Levites. And so it becomes manifest how the false comparison of the Christian priesthood with the Jewish must tend once more to advance the elevation of the episcopacy over the presbyterial office. In general, the more men fell back from the evangelical to the Jewish point of view, the more must the original, free constitution of the communities, grounded in those original Christian views, become also changed. We find Cyprian already completely imbued with the notions which sprang out of this confounding together of the different points of view of the Old and New Testaments.

In the names by which at first those who administered church offices were distinguished from the rest of the community, no trace of this confusion might as yet be found. The Latin expression, "ordo," denoted simply the guiding senate of the Christian people (plebs.) See above. Into the Greek words *κληρως*, *κληρικοί*, men had introduced, it is true, already in the time of Cyprian, the unevangelical sense of persons pre-eminently consecrated to God, like the Levites of the Old Testament, men employed on the affairs of religion to the exclusion of all earthly concerns, and who did not gain their living, like others, by worldly employments, but for the very reason that, for the good of others, they lived only in intercourse with God, were supported by the rest, just as the Levites, when the lands were apportioned, received no particular allotment, but were to have God alone for their inheritance, and to receive tithes from the rest for the administration of the public functions of religion, *οἱ εἰσιν ὁ κληρως τοῦ Θεοῦ*, or *ὧν ὁ κληρως ὁ Θεός ἐστι*. See Deuteronom. c. 18. This notion of a peculiar people of God (a *κληρως τοῦ Θεοῦ*), applied distinctively to a particular order of men among the Christians, is now, we must admit, in this sense, something wholly foreign to the original Christian consciousness; for according to this, all Christians should be a people consecrated to God, a *κληρως τοῦ Θεοῦ*, and all the employments of their earthly calling should in like manner be sanctified by the temper in which they are discharged. Their whole living and doing,—pointed with one reference to Christ, the great High Priest of humanity, striking root in the consciousness of redemption, and bearing witness

of its effects,—should hence become a consecrated thank-offering, and a spiritual worship (a λογικὴ λατρεία.) This was the original evangelical idea. It may be questioned, however, whether that other notion, so much at variance with the primitive Christian idea, was from the first actually associated with the appellation κληρικοί as applied to the clergy. If we trace along the history of its usage, it becomes much more probable, that this sense was brought into the word at some later period, when a change had taken place in the Christian mode of thinking, and the original sense was forgotten. The word κληῆρος signified originally the place which had been allotted to each one in the community by God's providence, or the choice of the people directed by that providence; hence the church officers were particularly denominated κληῆροι, and the persons chosen to them, κληρικοί.<sup>1</sup>

But although the idea of the priesthood, in the purely evangelical sense, grew continually more obscure, and was thrust farther into the background, in proportion as that unevangelical point of view became predominant, yet it was too deeply rooted in the very essence of Christianity to be totally suppressed. In the boundary epoch of Tertullian, we still find many very significant proofs that there was a reaction of the primitive Christian consciousness of the universal priesthood and the common rights grounded therein, against the arrogated power of that particular priesthood, which had recently begun to form itself on the model of the Old Testament. Tertullian, in his work on Baptism, written before he went over to Montanism, distinguishes with

<sup>1</sup> Thus it is made clear, how the more restricted notion of casting lots in these words might be lost, though elsewhere the ἀρχαὶ κληρωταί are opposed to the ἀρχαῖς χειροτονήταις. So at first, in Acts i. 17: κληῆρος τῆς διακονίας; in Irenæus iii. 3: κληροῦσθαι τὴν ἰπισκοπήν. Clemens Alex. quis dives salv. c. 42, employs κληῆρος and κληροῦν with reciprocal reference to each other. Ignat. ep. Ephes. c. 11: κληῆρος Ἐφεσίων, by which he understands the collective body of Christians in that place. It is true the Old Testament relations could be found applied to the Christian Church in a writer as early as Clemens of Rome (c. 40); but assuredly this epistle, as well as that of Ignatius, although not to such a degree, had suffered interpolation from a hierarchical interest. In other passages of the same epistle, we meet, on the contrary, with the freer spirit of the original presbyterial constitution of the Church. How simply, without any mixture of hierarchical display, is the appointment of bishops or presbyters, and of deacons, spoken of in the 42d chapter! A disciple of the Apostle Paul, moreover, is the last person whom we should expect to find thus confounding together the points of view peculiar to the Old and to the New Testaments.

reference to this matter *divine right* and *human order*. "In itself considered," he says, "the laity also have the right to administer the sacraments and to teach in the community. The word of God and the sacraments were by the grace of God *communicated to all*, and may therefore be communicated *by all Christians* as instruments of the divine grace. But the question here relates not barely to what is permitted in general, but also to what is expedient under existing circumstances. We may here use the words of St Paul, 'all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.' If we look at the order necessary to be maintained in the Church, the laity are therefore to exercise their priestly right of administering the sacraments, only when the time and circumstances require it."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes in their conflict with the clergy, the laity made good their original priestly rights, as we learn from those words of Tertullian the *Montanist*, where in a certain case he requires the laity, if they would have the same rights with the clergy, to bind themselves to the same duties; and where in a sarcastic tone he says to them:<sup>2</sup> "When we exalt and inflate ourselves against the clergy, then we are all one, we are all priests since he has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Rev. i. 6.

Although the office of teaching in the church assemblies was confined more and more to the bishops and presbyters, yet we still find many traces of that original equality of the spiritual right among all Christians. Towards the middle of the third century, two bishops in Palestine did not hesitate to allow the learned Origen, although he had as yet received no ordination, to expound the Scriptures before their people; and when reproved by Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, who was strongly inclined to hierarchy, they appealed in their defence to the practice of many bishops of the East who invited competent laymen even to preach the word.<sup>3</sup> In the pretended Apostolic Constitutions themselves, a work otherwise well tinged with the hierarchical spirit, and compiled, indeed, out of a mass of heterogeneous elements, there is yet an ordinance under the name of the Apostle Paul to the following effect:<sup>4</sup> "*If any man, though a layman, is*

<sup>1</sup> De baptismo, c. 17.

<sup>2</sup> De monogamia, c. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. l. vi. c. 19.

<sup>4</sup> L. viii. c. 32.

*skilful in expounding doctrine, and of venerable manners, he may be allowed to teach ; for all should be taught of God."*

In the early times, those who took upon them church offices in the communities, continued, in all probability, to exercise their former trades and occupations, supporting themselves and their families in the same manner as before. The communities, composed for the most part of poor members, were scarcely in a condition to provide for their presbyters and deacons, especially as they had from the first to meet so many other expenses, in supporting helpless widows, the poor, the sick, and the orphans. It might indeed be, that the presbyters belonged to the richer class in the communities, and this without doubt must have been the case quite often, since their office required, besides other qualifications, a certain worldly education, such as would more likely be found in the higher or middle than in the lower class of the people. When it is required of the presbyters, or bishops (1 Timothy iii. 2), that they should be patterns to other Christians of hospitality also, they must have belonged to the better class, of whom the number was small in the first communities,—and how could such persons be induced to support themselves on the scanty earnings of the poor ! The Apostle Paul does, indeed, declare the travelling preachers of the Gospel to be warranted to expect, that those for whose spiritual necessities they laboured would provide for their bodily wants ; but it cannot be hence inferred that the case was the same with those who held church offices in distinct communities. It would be difficult for the former to unite the labours necessary for their own maintenance with the duties of their spiritual calling, although the self-denial of a Paul could make this also possible. The latter, on the other hand, might at the beginning very easily unite the prosecution of their labours for a maintenance with the discharge of their official functions in the Church, and the simple way of thinking among primitive Christians would find nothing repulsive in such a union ; convinced as they were, that every earthly employment could and should be sanctified by the temper with which it was pursued, and knowing that even an apostle had prosecuted a worldly calling in connection with the preaching of the Gospel. But when the communities grew larger, and the duties connected with church offices became multiplied ; when especially the office

of teaching came to be confined chiefly to the presbyters; when the calling of the spiritual class, if rightly discharged, required all their time and activity, it was often no longer possible for them to provide, at the same time, for their own support; and besides, the wealthier communities were now in a condition to maintain them. Of the common fund which was raised from the voluntary contributions of each member of the community, at each service on the Lord's day, or, as in the North African church, on every first Sunday of the month,<sup>1</sup> a part was appropriated for the maintenance of the clergy. It was now attempted from design to separate the clergy entirely from all worldly employments; and in the third century they were already strictly forbidden to undertake any such business, even a wardship.<sup>2</sup> Without doubt this ordinance might have a very good reason, and a very salutary end, namely, to prevent the clergy from forgetting their spiritual calling in the business of the world. We see from Cyprian's book *de Lapsis*,<sup>3</sup> how extensively even then, during long periods of tranquillity, the spirit of the world had found its way among the bishops, who, immersed in secular business, neglected their spiritual concerns and the interests of their communities. But there was assuredly some other cause also which operated to bring about a change of views, whereby the administration of a church office came to be regarded as something which could not possibly be united with worldly employments, and the clergy deemed themselves bound to keep aloof from them.

When the idea of the universal Christian priesthood retired to the background, that of the priestly consecration which all Christians should make of their entire life went along with it. As men had distinguished, in a way contradictory to the original

<sup>1</sup> The *divisiones mensurnæ*, as salaries for the clergy in this church, answer to the monthly collections.

<sup>2</sup> Cyprian. ep. 66, to the community at Furnæ.

<sup>3</sup> Also from the *Instructiones* of his contemporary, Commodianus, c. 69: *Redditur in culpa pastor sæcularia servans* (who gives himself up to secular business); and from Can. 18 of the council of Elvira (Illiberis), in the year 305: *Episcopi, presbyteri et diaconi de locis suis negotiandi causa non discedant nec circumeuntes provincias quæstuosas nundinas sectentur*. Yet even here it is still supposed that they may in many cases be obliged so to do, "*ad victum sibi conquirendum*," where, perhaps, though they had a salary, they yet received no pay in *money*. But in these cases they were to conduct their business by the agency of a son, a freed man, or some person hired for the purpose, and never beyond the bounds of their own province.

Christian consciousness, a particular priesthood from the universal and ordinary calling of all Christians; so now they set over against each other a spiritual and a secular province of life and action, notwithstanding Christ had raised the *entire* earthly life to the dignity of a spiritual life. And from this view of the matter it was deemed necessary to forbid the priestly, consecrated clergy, all contact with the world and the things of the world. Thus we have here the germ out of which sprang at length the whole medieval priesthood and the laws of celibacy. But by this outward holding at a distance of secular things, the worldly sense could not be charmed away from the clergy, nor the sense for divine things awakened in them. This external renunciation of the world might be the means of introducing into the heart a spiritual pride, hiding the worldly sense under this mask. Cyprian quotes 2 Timoth. ii. 14, as warranting the prohibition given in the above-mentioned letter.<sup>1</sup> But he could not remain ignorant of what, at this particular time, when the universal Christian calling was commonly regarded as a militia Christi, must have immediately suggested itself to every one, that these words applied to all Christians, who, as soldiers of Christ, were bound to perform their duty faithfully, and to guard against every foreign and worldly thing which might hinder them in their warfare. Acknowledging and presupposing this himself, he concludes, "Since this is said of all Christians, how much more should they keep themselves clear of being involved in worldly matters, who, engrossed with divine and spiritual things, ought never to turn aside from the Church, nor have time for earthly and secular employments." The clergy, then, were, in following that apostolic rule, only to shine forth as patterns for all others, by avoiding what was foreign to their vocation, what might turn them from the faithful discharge of it. But still that false opposition between the worldly and the spiritual, which we have before described, found here also a point of attachment.

In respect to the election to church offices, the ancient principle was still adhered to, that the consent of the community was necessary to the validity of every such election, and each one was at liberty to offer reasons against it. The Emperor Alexander Severus was aware of this regulation in the Christian Church, and



referred to it when he was wishing to introduce a similar practice in the appointment to civil offices in the provinces.<sup>1</sup> When the Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, while separated from his community by the persecution, proceeded to nominate to church offices individuals about his person, who had distinguished themselves in the trials of the time, he excused this arbitrary procedure to which necessity compelled him, both to the laity and to the clergy, writing to them as follows:<sup>2</sup>—"We are used to call you together for counsel whenever any are to be consecrated to sacred offices, and to weigh the character and claims of each candidate in common deliberation."

The same principle was also observed in the appointment to the episcopal office. It was in the third century a prevailing custom, which Cyprian therefore derived from Apostolic tradition, for the bishops of the province, in connection with the clergy, to proceed to fill the vacant church in the presence of the community, who were witnesses of the conduct of each individual on whom the choice might fall, and could therefore give the safest testimony of his character. Cyprian conceded to the community the right of choosing worthy bishops, or of rejecting unworthy ones.<sup>3</sup> This conceded right of approving or rejecting was not a mere formality. Sometimes it happened that, before the usual arrangements for an election could be made, a bishop was proclaimed by the voice of the community. Thus there might possibly be a difference between the will of the community and that of the majority of the clergy,—the source of many divisions.

In other concerns of the community, also, the participation of the laity was not yet wholly excluded. Cyprian declared that it had been his resolution, from the commencement of his episcopal

<sup>1</sup> Æl. Lamprid. vit. c. 45: Grave esse, cum id Christiani et *Judei* (a customary form then of choosing presiding officers even among the Jews), facerent in prædicandis sacerdotibus, qui ordinandi sunt, non fieri in provinciarum rectoribus, quibus et fortunæ hominum committerentur et capita. From which language it is also apparent, how far the man who so expressed himself was from doing homage to the Christian Church.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Cyprian, in the name of a synod, to the communities at Lyons and Astorga, ep. 68: Apostolica observatione servandum est, quod apud nos quoque et fere per provincias universas tenetur, ut ad ordinationes rite celebrandas ad eam plebem, cui præpositus ordinatur, episcopi ejusdem provinciæ proximi quique conveniant et episcopus deligatur plebe præsentē, quæ singulorum vitam plenissime novit et uniuscujusque actum de ejus conversatione perspexit.

administration, to do nothing without the consent of the community.<sup>1</sup> An affair of this kind, which belonged to the general interests of the community, was the restoration to the fellowship of the Church of a fallen brother; and the examination connected *with this proceeding* was to be conducted with the assistance of the whole community of Christians; for, in Cyprian's judgment, this respect was due to the faith of those who had stood firm through the trials of persecution.<sup>2</sup> Besides, there were individuals, not belonging to the clerical order, who still, on account of the respect which they personally enjoyed, had obtained an influence over the management of church affairs, which even the clergy found it difficult to oppose. Such were those heroes of the faith, the confessors who, in the face of tortures and death, or under the actual suffering of torture, had laid down their testimony before pagan magistrates. We shall hereafter, in speaking of the schisms of the Church, have occasion to consider more particularly the extent of their influence.

The *third* less important change in the constitution of the Church related to the multiplication of church offices. This was in part rendered necessary by the growth of the communities, and the accumulation of business on the hands of the deacons, from whose office many things had to be taken away; in part, new matters of business in the churches of large capital towns required new offices for their proper discharge; in part, the new notions respecting the dignity of the clerus led men to believe, that what had hitherto been regarded as the free gift of the Spirit to all or to individual Christians, must be confined to a particular office in the service of the Church. It is clear, from what has been said, that none of these changes, which were conditioned partly by local circumstances, should be considered universal ones. The new church offices were as follows: after the deacons followed the sub-deacons, collateral officers to the former in administering the outward concerns of the Church; then, the lectores (*ἀνάγνωσται*), who read the Scriptures before the assembled community, and also had the care of the biblical manuscripts used on these occasions,—a duty performed at first, probably, by the presbyters themselves, or by the deacons, as in later times the read-

<sup>1</sup> Nihil sine consensu plebis gerere. Ep. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Præsente etiam stantium plebe, quibus et ipsis pro fide et timore suo honor habendus est. Ep. 13.

ing of the Scriptures, particularly the *gospels*, still continued to be left to the deacons in many churches;—next, the acolytes (*ἀκόλουθοι*, acolythi), who, as the name indicates, waited on the bishops while discharging their official functions; the exorcistæ, who made prayer over those who were supposed to be possessed of evil spirits (the *energumeni*); finally, the *θυρωροί*, *πυλωροί*, ostiarii, whose business it was to attend to such outward matters as the cleanliness and good order, the opening and closing, of the places of public worship.

The office of church reader is, perhaps, the oldest among these. It is mentioned as early as the second century by Tertullian.<sup>1</sup> The others are noticed collectively not till about the middle of the third century, and indeed the whole of them for the first time, in a letter of the Roman bishop Cornelius, cited by Eusebius.<sup>2</sup> The office of acolyte had its origin most probably in the hierarchical assumptions of the Roman Church. It did not find its way into the Greek Church. The Greek name of the office is not inconsistent with this view of its origin; for the Greek language was in frequent use at Rome, and many of the Roman bishops were of Grecian extraction. As regards the office of exorcist, the end to be accomplished by it had, originally, been considered a work of the Holy Spirit confined to no outward institution,—whether it was supposed that any Christian might be employed as the instrument, who called on the name of Christ with believing confidence in him as having overcome the power of evil, or whether it was regarded as a spiritual gift peculiar to individuals. Now, the free working of the Spirit was to be confined to a formal, mechanical process. The spirit of the ancient Church, preserved for a longer time in the East,<sup>3</sup> was rightly expressed, on the other hand, by the apostolic constitutions; “An exorcist cannot be chosen, for it is the gift of free grace.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Præscript. hæret. c. 41.

<sup>2</sup> L. vi. c. 43.

<sup>3</sup> In the letter of Firmilianus, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia (Cyprian, ep. 75), mention is made of the church exorcists. But Origen describes this sort of influence as something that was not confined to any determinate office, but wholly free. He considers the influence as a thing depending on the subjective piety of the individual that exercises it, in Matth. T. xiii. § 7: *Ἐπίστευε δέ οἱ περὶ Θεραπείαν ἀσχολεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς ποιῶν τὸν τι πιστονότος τινός, μὴ ὀρκίζομεν, μηδὲ ἐπιρωτῶμεν, μηδὲ λαλῶμεν ὡς ἀκούοντι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ πνεύματι, ἀλλὰ σχολάζοντες προσευχῇ καὶ νηστία, ἐπιτύχωμεν προσευχόμενοι περὶ τοῦ πιστονότος.*

<sup>4</sup> L. viii. c. 26: *Οὐ χειροτονεῖται, ἐνείκας γὰρ ἰκυσίου τὸ ἔπαβλον, καὶ χάριτος Θεοῦ διὰ Χριστοῦ.*

We now leave the general constitution of the communities, and proceed to the forms of union by which the individual communities were bound together.

FORMS OF UNION BY WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITIES  
WERE BOUND TOGETHER.

With the inner fellowship, Christianity produced among its professors from the first a living outward union, whereby the distantly separated were brought near to each other. This union must be realized in a determinate form, which latter was conditioned by the existing forms of social life under which Christianity first unfolded itself in the Roman empire. A system of fraternal equality in the relations of the communities to each other would, independent of these determinate circumstances, have answered best to the spirit of Christianity, and been most promotive of its free, uncorrupted manifestation. But those circumstances soon gave rise to a system of subordination in the mutual relation of the communities to each other. This system, as well as every other social form, which had sprung out of the historical development of the race, and contained nothing sinful, Christianity could appropriate to itself. Yet, since this relation was not sufficiently interpenetrated with the free and free-making spirit of the Gospel, it operated, by its undue preponderance, to check and interrupt the development of Christian doctrine and of church life.

We have observed already, that in many districts, Christianity very early made progress in the open country. Now, wherever this was the case, and the Christians, in a village or country town, were in sufficient numbers to form a separate community, it was the most natural course for these to choose at once their own presiding officers, presbyters, or bishops, who were quite as independent as the presiding officers of the city churches. In these first centuries themselves, it is indeed impossible, from the want of authentic records of so early a period, to point out any particular example of this kind; but in the fourth century we find, in many districts of the East, country bishops, as they are called (*χωρηπισκόπους*), who, beyond doubt, might trace back their origin to the oldest times; for in the later period,

when the church system of subordination had become established, and the country churches were now accustomed to receive their presiding officers from the city, it is certain that no such relation *could have arisen*; on the contrary, the country bishops, wherever they yet existed, must have entered into a struggle with those of the city, for the *preservation of their independence*. But the more common case, as we have likewise already remarked, was for Christianity to be diffused from the city into the country; and while the Christians in the immediate neighbourhood of the cities were still few in number, they would most naturally repair on the Lord's-day to the city to join in public worship with the assemblies there convened. But in process of time, when their number was so increased as to enable them to form a community of their own, they applied to the bishop of the city church with which they had been connected, to set over them a presbyter, who consequently remained ever after subordinate to the city bishop. Thus arose the first greater church union between city and country communities, which, together, formed one whole.<sup>1</sup> In the larger cities it might now have become necessary, also, to separate the city communities themselves into several divisions; as in Rome, where, according to the report of the Roman bishop Cornelius, already referred to, there were in his time six-and-forty presbyters; though the statement of Optatus of Mileve, that Rome contained, in the beginning of the fourth century, more than forty churches, is an exaggeration. Yet in this case, distinct and subordinate filial communities were not always formed by the side of the one episcopal Head and Mother Church; but more often, the community remained united as a whole; and only on Sundays and feast days, when *one* church was insufficient to accommodate all the members, they were divided into several churches, where the different presbyters, according to a certain rotation, conducted the public worship. But it must be admitted that, with regard to the early shaping of these incipient relations, nothing can be decided with certainty, and, in default of immediate information on the subject, we can only infer respecting the past from what we find to have been the case in the succeeding times.

<sup>1</sup> The presbyters of whom Cyprian, at his examination before the proconsul, said *invenientur in civitatibus suis*, were such presiding officers of country communities.

Again, as Christianity was diffused, for the most part, from the cities into the country, so, as a general thing, it spread from the principal cities (*μητροπόλεις*) to the other provincial towns. Now, as these latter were politically subordinate to the former, a close bond of union and subordinate relation were gradually formed between the communities of the provincial towns and those of the principal city or metropolis. The churches of a province constituted a whole, at the head of which stood the Church of the metropolis. The bishop of this became, in relation to the other bishops of the province, *Primus inter pares*. Yet, owing to local causes, this relation did not everywhere unfold itself in the same way, and in this period was limited, for the most part, to the East.

A like relation to that between these metropolitan cities and the provincial towns existed between the capitals of the larger divisions of the Roman empire—as seats of government, channels of commerce, and of all intercourse—and the latter. It was from such larger capitals Christianity was diffused through entire sections of the vast empire; it was here the apostles themselves had founded churches, appointed over them their presiding officers, and orally preached the Gospel; and to the churches here established they had written their epistles. Hence these churches, which went under the name of *ecclesiæ*, *sedes apostolicæ*, *matrices ecclesiæ*, were held in peculiar veneration. When a controversy arose with regard to any regulation or doctrine of the Church, it was the first inquiry, how is the matter regarded in these communities, where the principles taught on the spot by the apostles themselves have been faithfully preserved from one generation to another? Such *ecclesiæ apostolicæ* were especially Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth.

But all this, which held good of all the churches in the great capital cities, might be applied in a pre-eminent sense to the Church of Rome, the great capital of the world. The legend that Peter, as well as Paul, died as a martyr at Rome, is not raised, it is true, beyond all doubt; but assuredly it is older than the effort to glorify the Roman Church through the primacy of the apostle Peter, its founder. From many other causes—from the eagerness to confute the Jews and Gnostics, who endeavoured to make out a difference between these two great apostles, by shewing that they were united even to a common martyrdom in the capital of the world—from

the stories of the contest between St Peter and Simon Magus, the origin of such a legend would admit of being more easily explained. But these reasons surely are not sufficient to warrant us in absolutely denying its truth, when so high antiquity speaks in favour of it; and many difficulties which present themselves in relation to the concatenation of events, may have their ground in our defective historical information.<sup>1</sup> At all events, the universally diffused belief that these two great apostles had taught in the Roman Church, and honoured it by their martyrdom, contributed to promote its authority. From Rome, the larger portion of the West had received the Gospel; from Rome, the common interests of Christianity, through the whole extent of the Roman empire, could best be advanced. The Roman bishops, heads of the wealthiest community, were early distinguished, and known in the most distant lands, for their liberal benefactions to the Christian brethren;<sup>2</sup> and a common interest bound all the communities of the Roman empire to the Church of the great capital. In Rome was the *Ecclesia Apostolica*, to which the largest portion of the West could appeal as to their common mother. In general, whatever transpired in this "Apostolic Church" could not fail to be well known to all; for here Christians were continually pouring in from all quarters of the world. So Irenæus, who wrote in Gaul, appeals,—as he does also occasionally to other apostolic churches,—in one passage particularly to the *Ecclesia Apostolica* in Rome, as the greatest, the oldest (which must be doubted), the universally known, the Church founded by the two most illustrious apostles, where Christians congregate from the communities of the whole world, and could not fail to learn the doctrine taught by the apostles.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Comp. the new inquiry into this matter in the 3d edition of my *History of the Planting*, &c. p. 516, et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. iv. c. 23.

<sup>3</sup> L. iii. c. 3. According to the ancient Latin translation, the original Greek text being unfortunately lost: "Ad hanc ecclesiam propter potiorem principalitatem necesse est, omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos, qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea, quæ est ab apostolis traditio." If the word *convenire* is taken in the intellectual sense,—all churches must *agree* with the Roman Church, as the one having pre-eminence over the rest,—we have a meaning which is by no means perfectly natural, and which scarcely in the least degree coincides with the circle of ideas elsewhere exhibited in Irenæus. What would be meant by saying, the communities of the whole world have preserved in the Roman Church the apostolic tradition? It would be understood only in some such way as this; that the Roman Church was the central and representative point of all the Christian churches; as if,—

Moreover, by means of letters, and Christian brethren who were travelling, a mutual correspondence was maintained between

what was said in later times,—the whole Church was contained *virtualiter* in the Roman; an idea of which not the least trace is to be found in Irenæus, and a mode of expression foreign to this whole period. If the passage is really to be understood in this way, we could not avoid the suspicion, that here was one of the interpolations, of which so many indications are to be observed in this writer. But although it is impossible to decide with perfect certainty as to the right interpretation of these words, because we have not the original Greek, yet there are other ways of explaining them, which agree more completely with Irenæus' mode of thinking as elsewhere exhibited, and with the connection in this place. In the first place, I must state that I cannot approve of the interpretation proposed by the Licenciate Thiersch in the *Studien und Kritiken*, J. 1842, 2tes, Heft, S. 527, by which, we may admit, all difficulties would be removed. According to that exposition, the phrase "in qua," "ἐν ᾗ," should refer, not to the more remote subject, "hanc ecclesiam," but to that which stands nearer "omnem ecclesiam," as determining this antecedent,—every church in which the doctrine has been preserved pure, as the author himself explains: "Dummodo ne in ea per hæreticos ipsos traditionis puritas inquinata sit, sive ut Irenæi verbis utar, dummodo in ea a fidelibus cujusvis sint loci pure conservata sit tradita ab Apostolis veritas." But this exposition seems to me attended with an insurmountable difficulty already, in the interposed sentence, "hoc est eos," etc. If Irenæus intended any such determination of ecclesia, he would certainly have affixed it immediately to the word ecclesiam. And after all, it is most natural to refer the relative to the Roman Church as the principal subject. But now the question arises, to what Greek word does the term "convenire" correspond; whether to *συμβαίνειν*, as Dr Gieseler, and agreeing with him, Dr Nitzsch, in his letter to Delbrück and Licenciate Thiersch, in the treatise above cited, suppose, or to *συνέρχισθαι*. If the latter is the word, by *coming* must be understood a coming to that place in person, and the passage would have to be explained thus: On account of the rank which this church maintains as the ecclesia urbis, all churches, that is, believers from all countries must,—the "must" lies in the nature of the case,—come together there; and since now from the beginning, Christians from all countries must come together there, it follows that the apostolic tradition has been preserved from generation to generation by the Christians from all countries of the world, who are there united together. Every deviation from it would here fall immediately under the observation of all. As confirmatory of this interpretation, might be cited what Athenæus says of the city of Rome (*Deipnosoph.* l. i. § 36): "Οἰκουμένης δῆμον τὴν Ῥώμην, τὴν Ῥώμην πόλιν ἱστομένην τῆς οἰκουμένης, ἐν ᾗ συνιδεῖν ἔστιν οὕτως πάσας τὰς πόλεις Ἰερουσόλας." So might one say: "Ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίᾳ πάσας ἐκκλησίας Ἰερουσόλας." Yet I will not deny the difficulty attending the interpretation of the second sentence; to the alteration of *conservata* into *observata*, I can no longer agree. If we consider *συμβαίνειν* to be the word which answers to "convenire," it would be the best way, with Gieseler, to suppose an error of translation,—that the translator, out of mistake, rendered the Greek dative into "ab his." The words would have to be understood thus: "in which church the apostolic tradition has *ever* been preserved *for* the Christians of all countries of the world." I cannot deny, that in the comparison of these words with those at the beginning of the same chapter, "in omni ecclesia adest respicere omnibus," an argument may be found in favour of the sense just given. But even according to this interpretation, the same general view of Rome as that contained in the passage from Athenæus, would lie at the basis of the whole.



the most distant churches in the Roman empire. When a Christian entered a foreign city, his first inquiry was for the church; and here he was received as a brother, and supplied with whatever could contribute to his spiritual and to his bodily refreshment. But as deceivers, informers, false teachers, seeking only to gain more followers for their peculiar opinions, abused the confidence and charity of the Christians, it became necessary to adopt precautionary measures to prevent the manifold evils which might in this way arise. The regulation was therefore adopted, that in foreign churches those travelling Christians only should be received as Christian brethren, who could produce a certificate from the bishop of the community to which they belonged. These church letters,—which were as *tessaræ hospitales*, whereby Christians from every quarter of the world stood in fraternal union with each other,—received the name of *epistolæ* or *literæ formatae* (*γράμματα τετυπωμένα*); because, to guard against counterfeits, they were drawn up after a certain form (*forma*, *τύπος*);<sup>1</sup> and also “*epistolæ communicatoriæ*” (*γράμματα κοινωνικά*), inasmuch as they indicated as well that the bearers were in the fellowship of the church, as that the bishops who mutually sent and received such letters were united together in the bonds of church fellowship. By degrees the church letters (*epistolæ clericæ*) were divided into different classes, according to the different objects for which they were written.

It was remarked above, that a closer bond of union existed in the early times between communities belonging to the same province. We may add as another effect of the catholic spirit of Christianity, that in all cases of emergency, in disputes respecting matters of doctrine, of church life, of church discipline, common deliberations were frequently held by deputed members from these communities. Such assemblies become known to us in the controversies respecting the time of Easter, and in the discussions on the Montanistic prophecies, towards the close of

I think it will be unnecessary for me to remark here, that I am very far from being influenced in this investigation by any Protestant interest. At the position where a scientific understanding of the historical development of Christianity is aimed at, the interests of Protestantism, which I profess, could not be in the least endangered by recognising a high antiquity of the Catholic element, both in general and in particular.

<sup>1</sup> How very necessary it was to guard against the falsification of such church letters, may be seen from a passage in Eusebius, l. iv. c. 23, and another in Cyprian, ep. 3.

the second century. But as a permanent and regular institution, bound to stated seasons, these provincial synods first make their appearance at the end of the second or beginning of the third century; and then, as a peculiar practice of a single district, where local causes may have led to an arrangement of this kind, earlier than in other countries. This district was *Greece proper*, where, from the time of the Achæan league, the spirit of confederacy had been still preserved; and as Christianity could attach itself to all national peculiarities, so far as they contained in them nothing immoral; nay, become so merged in them as to manifest itself under their peculiar form; it might well happen that the *civil* spirit of federation, already existing here, passed over to the *ecclesiastical*, and gave to the latter, still earlier than in other countries, a form which was in fact well suited for the common deliberations of the Christians; so that out of the representative assemblies of the city communities,—the Amphictyonic councils,—sprung the representative assemblies of the church communities—the provincial synods. As the Christians, in the consciousness that they were nothing and could do nothing without the Spirit from on high, were used to begin every important business with prayer, so also at the opening of these assemblies, they prepared themselves for the public deliberations by uniting in prayer to Him who had promised to enlighten and guide by his Spirit his faithful disciples, when they cast themselves wholly on him, and to be in the midst of them wherever they were assembled in his name.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that this regular institution was at first objected to as an innovation, so that Tertullian felt himself called upon to stand forth as its advocate.<sup>2</sup> Yet the prevailing spirit of the Church decided in favour of the arrangement, and to the middle of the third century, the annual provincial synods appear to have been universal, if we may judge from the fact, that we find them observed at the same time in parts of the Church so widely remote from each other as Northern Africa and Cappadocia.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the passage of Tertullian, in a work written at the beginning of the third century (*de jejuniis*, c. 13): *Aguntur per Græcias illa certis in locis concilia, ex universis ecclesiis, per quæ et altiora quæque in commune tractantur et ipsa representatio totius nominis Christiani magna veneratione celebratur.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ista solennia, quibus tunc præsens patrociniatus est sermo.*

<sup>3</sup> Cyprian, ep. 40, and Firmilianus of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in Cyprian, ep. 75: *Ne-*

These provincial synods *might*, beyond a doubt, have proved eminently salutary in unfolding and purifying the Christian and church life, and indeed did prove so in many respects. In these common deliberations the views of different individuals might mutually correct each other's errors and supply each other's defects; wants, abuses, and necessary reforms, might be discussed more easily and under more different points of view, and the communicated experience of each member made available to all. Certainly also, it savoured neither of fanaticism nor hierarchical arrogance, if the delegates and presiding officers of the communities, in the consciousness that they were assembled in the name of Christ, confidently relied on the guidance of his Spirit, whose organs alone they wished to be.

But this confidence, in itself so right and so salutary, took a false and mischievous direction when it ceased to be accompanied by a spirit of humility and self-renunciation, by the constantly living consciousness of the condition to which Christ had attached that promise, that Christians should be assembled *in his name*. When, unmindful of this condition, the bishops believed they were entitled merely as bishops to rely on the illumination of the Holy Spirit, a confidence so ungrounded became the source of all the self-deception of spiritual pride, that expressed itself in the customary words with which the decrees of such synods were made known, "under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,"—"spiritu sancto suggerente."

The provincial synods, again, must have operated as a check on the development of the Church, when, instead of providing for the interest of the communities according to the varying wants of each point of time, they sought to bind mutable things to unchangeable laws. Finally, it was an evil that the communities were excluded from all participation in these assemblies; that at length the bishops came to constitute the sole power in them, and by the union which these synods enabled them to enter into with one another, made themselves more powerful every day.

As the provincial synods were used to communicate their decisions on all important matters of common interest to distant bishops, they thus served, at the same time, to place the distantly

cessario apud nos fit, ut per singulos annos seniores et præpositi in unum conveniamus, ad disponenda ea, quæ curæ nostræ commissa sunt.

separated portions of the Church in living union with each other, and to preserve them in this connection.

UNION OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH IN ONE WHOLE, CLOSELY CONNECTED AND INTER-DEPENDENT IN ALL ITS PARTS. OUTWARD UNITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND ITS MODE OF REPRESENTATION.

Thus from the unapparent grains of mustard seed, scattered in the field of the world, sprung up a tree towering above all the plants of the earth, and spreading its branches in every direction. Such was that great unity of the Catholic Church, which, closely connected through all its scattered parts, was so distinguished in its origin, its course of development, and its constitution, from all barely human institutions. The consciousness of being a member of such a body, that had come off victorious over all opposition of earthly power, and was destined for perpetuity, must have been felt with the more liveliness and power by pagans, inasmuch as they had been familiar only with the political and earthly bond of union, but never had a presentiment of such a spiritual and moral tie binding men together as members of the same heavenly community. Still stronger and more elevated must this consciousness have become in times of persecution, when outward force tried in vain to sunder this connection. With good right might the Christians attach importance even to this unity in its outward manifestation, even to this intimate external connection, as serving to represent that higher life, in the fellowship of which all were as one, and to exhibit the unity of the kingdom of God. In this outward fellowship of the church life, they experienced the blessed effects of the inward fellowship of God's invisible kingdom; and to preserve this unity entire, they entered into conflict with two different parties—those idealistic sects, which threatened to sever the inward bond of fellowship itself—the bond of faith; to introduce into the Christian Church the old distinction between a religion for the educated and refined, and a popular faith (*πίστις* and *γνώσις*), and, as was justly charged upon them by Clement of Alexandria, to divide the Church into a multitude of Theosophic schools;<sup>1</sup> and next, those men

<sup>1</sup> For the words of Clemens, see St. I. vii. p. 755: *Ἀρχαῖσι προίστασθαι διατριβῆς μᾶλλον ἢ ἐκκλησίας.*

who, blinded by self-will or passion, brought in divisions on the ground of mere outward differences, while in faith they continued to agree with the rest.

But the conflict arising out of a genuine Christian interest, and aimed against some one-sided subjective element that threatened to dissolve this wholesome unity of the Church, might easily mislead to another extreme,—an undue estimation of externals,—of the existing church forms, with which at first this unity was closely knit. Since that outward unity was, beyond all doubt, not barely outward, but the image and expression of the unity within, and in this connection exhibited itself to the Christian consciousness and experience; men could the more easily suffer themselves, in this polemic attitude, to be so misled as to confound in their conceptions, things which had been fused together in each one's feelings and experience, and to consider them as inseparably connected. Thus the conception of the Church and its necessary unity was thrown outward (*veräusserlichte sich*.) This outward church became the original one for the religious consciousness; and, in this its outward form, the only possible medium of fellowship with Christ. That which in all should, in like manner, have formed itself outwardly from within, was transferred to this fellowship, mediated by means of a determined outward organism, in certain visible forms,—and so the inner and the outward, the invisible and the visible, inseparably fused together. This association of the Christian consciousness we may perceive already in a writer as early as Irenæus, who defines, in the first place, the conception of the Church subsisting under this determinate form of constitution, and then puts down the communion of the Holy Spirit as something first derived from, and mediated by, the former, when he begins by saying, "Ubi ecclesia, ibi et Spiritus Dei," and then first adds, "et ubi Spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia."<sup>1</sup> An entirely different apprehension of the idea of the Church and its necessary unity would have presented itself, by reversing the order of these propositions. "It is only at the breast of the Church," as Irenæus says, "that one can be nursed to life. He who takes not refuge in the Church cannot partake of the Holy Spirit. He who separates himself from this Church renounces the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Such are the pro-

L. iii. c. 24, § 1.

positions grounded in that association of ideas. It is true, Irenæus has in his mind simply such opponents of the Church as, by unchristian doctrine and temper, by selfish interests, had excluded *themselves* from the fellowship of the divine life.<sup>1</sup> Not without good and sufficient reason could he complain of those “who, from frivolous causes, divided, and, so far as in them lay, annihilated the great and glorious body of Christ.”<sup>2</sup> With great truth, doubtless, could he say of them, that it was utterly out of their power to occasion as much good as they had done evil through the divisions excited by their means. But the position held by Irenæus might easily lead to the mistake of imputing a bad temper and purpose to *all* those who, from whatever tendency, occasioned a reaction against the dominant church system, excited some movement or other in the Church, and hence, divisions. Now as that which distinguishes the New Testament position from the Old, is the outward development of the kingdom of God from within man’s spirit, so we may recognise in this *making outward* of the kingdom of God, in this notion of the outward church as an indispensable mediation, that same confounding together of the Old and New Testament positions, which we were forced to recognise before, in the notions of the priesthood and of the Clerus. Indeed, both are necessarily connected; for the existence and propagation of the Church was, in fact, to depend on the priesthood and its connection with Christ, of which the priesthood was to be the medium. To the priesthood was added afterwards the episcopal system, as the outward mediation and foundation of the outward church unity,—a new step in the progress of Theocracy made outward, whose deep-reaching consequences must ever go on unfolding themselves more widely.

In bringing the episcopal system to its completion, we have seen the important part acted by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage. Not *less* important was his agency in this process of converting the Church into an outward system of mediation, and confounding together the Old and New Testament positions generally. In this regard, his work, *De unitate ecclesiæ*, written after the middle of the third century, amidst the divisions with which he had to con-

<sup>1</sup> Semetipsos fraudant a vita per sententiam malam et operationem pessimam.

<sup>2</sup> L. iv. c. 33, § 7: Διὰ μικρὰς καὶ τυχεύσας αἰτίας τὸ μίγα καὶ ἰνδοξον σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ τίμνοντας καὶ διαίρωντας καὶ ὅσον τὸ ἐκ’ αὐτοῖς ἀναιροῦντας.

tend, constitutes an epoch. This book contains a remarkable mixture of the true with the false, arising from that outward view of the Church; and we shall recognise, in much that he says, only the pure expression of the Christian consciousness, when we strip away from it that outward notion, and understand it after a more inward sense; when we apply to the propositions he lays down the distinction of the visible and the invisible Church. We shall then find in this work much that is true, directed against a self-seeking, insulating tendency, that breaks loose from all connection with the fellowship of life, of which the foundation is Christ. We need only to apply what he says of the outward relation to a determinate visible form of manifestation of the Church, to that inner relation to the community of holy men subsisting in union with Christ its head, whence the divine life flows forth to the collective body of all the members; which community, we must admit, is not necessarily confined to any determinate form of constitution. “Try to pluck away his beams from the sun,” says Cyprian, “the unity of the light cannot be so divided asunder. Break away the twig from the tree, it cannot produce fruit. Cut off the stream from its fountain, it becomes dry. Just so the Church, interpenetrated by the light of the Lord, sends its rays through the whole world. Yet the light which is thus diffused in all directions, is *one*. In the lap of that Church we were born; we are nourished by its milk, and quickened by its spirit. Whatever breaks itself off from the original stock, when thus apart by itself, cannot breathe and live.” But all this, which is in itself true, Cyprian referred exclusively to the determinate Church, connected,—by means of the bishops, its foundation pillars, as the successors of the apostles and inheritors of their spiritual power,—with these apostles, and through them with Christ. His chain of ideas is this: Christ communicated to the apostles, the apostles to the bishops by ordination,<sup>1</sup> the power of the Holy Ghost; by the succession of bishops, the power of the Holy Ghost, whence alone all religious acts can receive their efficacy, is extended, through the channel of this outward transmission, to all times. Thus is preserved, in this organism of the Church, ever unfolding itself with a living progression, that divine life,

<sup>1</sup> See on its original form and significancy, my *History of the Planting*, &c. vol. i. p. 213.

which, flowing from the fountain-head through this point of mediation, is thus distributed to all the members united with the organic whole; and whoever breaks off his outward connection with this outward organism, does, by so doing, exclude himself from participating in that divine life, and from the way to salvation. No one, by himself alone, can, by faith in the Saviour, have any share in the divine life that flows from him; no one can, by this faith alone, secure to himself all the blessings of God's kingdom; but all this remains necessarily mediated through these organs and the connection with them—the connection with the Catholic Church derived from Christ through the succession of bishops.

This outward view of the Church, however, where it had progressed so far, called forth a reaction, in the effort after a more spiritual understanding of its idea, based on the words of Christ himself. A class of persons, perhaps laymen,<sup>1</sup> arose in opposition to Cyprian, who appealed to the promise of Christ, that "where two or three were gathered together in his name, there he would be in the midst of them" (Matth. xviii. 20); every association of true believers, then, was a church. But Cyprian styled such as urged this objection, corrupters of the Gospel. He accused them of rending these words from their connection, and hence giving them a false explanation. He maintained, on the other hand, that Christ had just before established harmony among believers, the union of hearts in love, as the condition to which the fulfilment of this promise was annexed. He then proceeded to argue:<sup>2</sup> "But how is it possible for that person to agree with any individual, who does not agree with the body of the Church itself? How can two or three be assembled in the name of Christ, who are separated from Christ and his Gospel?" He looks in vain for the fulfilment of the condition of this promise in men, who, from leaning to the side of their own opinions, had separated themselves from the Church; for *they* were the authors of the schism,—the

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian describes them thus: *Nec se quidam vana interpretatione decipiant, quod dixerit Dominus: Ubicumque fuerint duo aut tres collecti in nomine meo, ego cum iis sum. Corruptores evangelii atque interpretes falsi.* See next note.

<sup>2</sup> *Extrema ponunt et superiora prætereunt, partis memores et partem subdole comprimentes. Ut ipsi ab ecclesia scissi sunt, ita capituli unius sententiam scindunt. — Unanimitatem prius posuit, concordiam pacis ante præmisit, ut conveniat nobis, fideliter et firmiter docuit. Quomodo autem potest ei cum aliquo convenire, cui cum corpore ipsius ecclesiæ non convenit? Quomodo possunt duo aut tres in nomine Christi colligi, quos constat a Christo et ab ejus evangelio separari?*



Church had not separated itself from them.<sup>1</sup> But who is the infallible judge of men's inward disposition, so as to infer with certainty, from their outward conduct towards a church, not always free from blemish, that such a temper exists; where ignorance and misapprehension are quite possible, and right and wrong, in the struggle between the parties, *may be* on both sides?

The Church once conceived as wholly outward, it must also be conceived as having a necessary *outward unity*; and this principle established, it came next to be thought necessary to settle on some outward representation of this outward unity, at some one determinate point. This was at first a thing wholly vague and undefined; but it was the germ from where sprang the papal monarchy of the middle age.

Now it was, without doubt, not an accidental circumstance, that the Apostle Peter, rather than any other one of the apostles, became the representative of this unity for the religious consciousness of the Western Church. For on him had been bestowed, in virtue of his peculiar natural character, ennobled by the Holy Spirit, more particularly the charisma of church government. This gift Christ claimed for the development of the first community, when he named him the Man of Rock, and made him the Man of Rock on which he would build his Church. Yet he said this not to that Peter with whom the human passed for more than the divine,—not to that Peter whom he called rather a Satan; but to the one who had uttered the powerful witness of him as the Son of God; and inasmuch as he had uttered this, that one to whom he could say, “Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto thee, but my Father in heaven.” That peculiar charisma procured for this apostle the position he assumed in speaking and acting in the name of all who composed the first community of Christians.<sup>2</sup> Yet with all this was by no means conceded to him a preference and precedence over the rest of the apostles. Of any rank, indeed, of one above another, the question generally was never to be raised among them. Every assumption of that kind He who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, severely rebuked; (Luke xxii. 24.) The only contention was to be a mutual strife of each to serve the other.

<sup>1</sup> Non enim nos ab illis, sed illi a nobis recesserunt.

<sup>2</sup> See my History of the Planting, &c. vol. ii. p. 505, et seq.

There were three apostles whom Christ, by virtue of their personal traits of character, distinguished above the rest; Peter was only *one of these*. Each of them had his own particular charisma, and his peculiar position which depended on this. As Peter was the Man of Rock, working outwardly; so John possessed that charisma by virtue of which he leaned on the Lord's bosom, penetrated most deeply into his being, and into the matter of his discourses. As his own peculiar charisma and position caused Peter first to appear prominent at the founding of the Church; so his own charisma and position caused John to retreat more out of view, acting no prominent part until a later period, when it became important to reconcile the oppositions that had arisen, to restore peace among the conflicting elements, to tranquillize and establish the communities when fallen into commotions. The great apostle to the Gentiles maintained, in a manner the most decided, his apostolic independence against that Jewish principle, estimating everything by a standard of outwardness, which subsequently, under another form, mixed itself in with the development of the Church; and Paul could say of himself, that grace had effected more by him than by all the others.

From these remarks, then, it is clear, that the idea of a primacy of the Apostle Peter had nothing to fix on but a misunderstanding as well of the position assigned him in the progressive movement of the church development, as also of the particular predicates which were given to him; although it had its good ground, that this peculiar talent centered precisely in him.

In his work on the unity of the Church, Cyprian justly observes, that all the apostles had received from Christ the same dignity and the same power with Peter; but he supposes that in one passage, however, Christ bestows this power on Peter in particular,—says of him in particular, that on him he will build his Church,—gives it in charge to him in particular to feed his sheep—for the purpose of shewing how the whole development of the Church and of the priesthood was to radiate from one point, and thus making clearly evident the unity of the Church, the unity of the episcopal power. The Apostle Peter appears here as the representative of the *one* Church, abiding in the unity she derived from the divine appointment, and of the one episcopal power which, though distributed among many organs, yet in its

origin and essence is, and ever remains, but one. Whoever, therefore, forsakes the outward fellowship with the one visible, Catholic Church, tears himself away from the representation of the unity of the Church, connected by divine appointment with the person of the Apostle Peter. How is it possible for any one to suppose he continues still to be a member of the Church of Christ, when he forsakes the *cathedra Petri*, on which the Church was founded? <sup>1</sup>

But even allowing that the Apostle Peter might be considered as the representative of the unity of the Church, still it by no means follows that an individual representative of this kind must continue to exist in the Church through every age. Still less does it follow, that this individual representative must be connected particularly with the Roman Church; for although the tradition that the Apostle Peter visited the Church at Rome cannot, on good and sufficient grounds, be called in question, yet certain it is, that he was not the founder of this Church, and that he was never, in any special sense, its presiding officer. This Church could with as little propriety be called the *cathedra Petri*, as the *cathedra Pauli*. Irenæus and Tertullian seem to be aware, indeed, that Peter and Paul were its founders, that they gave it a bishop, and honoured it by their martyrdom. But that the Roman Church held a prominence, as the *cathedra Petri*, over all other apostolic churches, they still remain ignorant. Yet as the idea of an outward unity of the Church could suggest the notion of an outward individual representative of that unity, so the recognition of such a historical representation might easily pass out of the ideal into the real world, so that the exhibition of the church unity at a determinate point came to be considered not barely as a thing *once existing*, but as necessary for the existence of the Church in all times. And as it was no accidental thing that the apostle had been made the representative of the church guidance, so too was it no accidental thing that men, when once impelled to seek for such an outward representation

<sup>1</sup> Some trace of *this* mode of explaining the above passages relating to the Apostle Peter, may be found even in Tertullian. *Præscript. hæret.* c. 22: "Latuit aliquid Petrum ædificandæ ecclesiæ Petrum dictum, claves regni cælorum consecutum et solvendi et alligandi in cælis et in terris potestatem?" This language shews that he was not a Montanist when he wrote this book, as is evident by comparing it with what he wrote when a Montanist, in his book *de Pudicitia*, of which we shall speak hereafter.

of the church unity for all times, transferred this dignity precisely to the Church of the great city which was called to rule in the world. As most of the western communities were used to regard the Roman Church as their mother, their *ecclesia apostolica*, to whose authority they especially appealed; as they were in the habit of naming Peter the founder of the Roman Church, and to trace back the tradition of the Roman Church to him; and as Rome was once the seat of the dominion of the world; it so happened that men began to consider the Roman Church as the *cathedra Petri*, and to apply what had been said of the Apostle Peter, as the representative of the church unity, to this *cathedra Petri*. In the *making outward* of the conception of the Church, from which this form of the outward presentation of its unity gradually shaped itself, the way was already prepared for the conversion of the political supremacy of the "city" into this spiritual form; which moreover contained the germ to the secularizing of Christ's kingdom.

In Cyprian we find this transference already complete. As evidence of this, may serve not only *those* passages in his book *de unitate ecclesiæ*, where the reading is disputed;<sup>1</sup> in an uncontroverted passage, ep. 55 ad Cornel., he styles the Roman Church the "*Petri cathedra, ecclesia principalis, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est.*"

Without doubt, this idea was still very obscure and vague; but a false principle once established, the more vague the notion, the more room would be left for introducing new meanings, and extracting new inferences. In the minds of the Roman bishops this idea seems early to have obtained a more fixed and definite shape; and here the Roman love of empire seems early to have

<sup>1</sup> Though, in the passage from Cyprian, "*Qui ecclesiæ renititur et resistit [qui cathedram Petri, super quem fundata est ecclesia, deserit], in ecclesia se esse confidit?*" the suspected clause, here included in brackets, were genuine, yet it would not follow, that, in *this particular instance*, he had in his mind the *cathedra Petri* subsisting at his time in the *Roman Church*; but the phrases, "*ecclesiæ reniti,*" and "*cathedram Petri deserere,*" might rather, according to the connection, be wholly co-ordinate; so that he would say, he who breaks his connection with the one only church, does by that very act attack the representation of the church unity which had been attached by Christ himself to the person of the Apostle Peter. The whole apostolic and episcopal fulness of authority as one, although manifesting itself through different organs, appears to him to be represented in the spiritual power transferred to the Apostle Peter. The entire episcopatus, or the *cathedra* of all the bishops conceived as one = the *cathedra Petri*,—hence to renounce obedience to the bishops is the same as to attack the *cathedra Petri*.

insinuated itself into ecclesiastical affairs, and made its appearance in a spiritual dress.

Far back we observe already in the Roman bishops traces of the assumption, that to them, as successors of the Apostle Peter, belonged a peculiar and ultimate authority in ecclesiastical disputes; that the *cathedra Petri* must take precedence of all other apostolic churches, as the source of the apostolic tradition. Such an assumption was shewn by the Roman bishop Victor, when, about the year 190, he excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor on account of some trifling dispute relating to mere externals.<sup>1</sup> In the Montanistic writings of Tertullian we find indications, shewing that the Roman bishops issued peremptory edicts on ecclesiastical matters; endeavoured to make themselves considered as the *bishops of bishops*—*episcopos episcoporum*;<sup>2</sup> and were in the habit of appealing to the authority of their “*antecessores*.”<sup>3</sup>

After the middle of the third century, the Roman bishop Stephanus allowed himself to be carried away by the same spirit of hierarchical arrogance as his predecessor Victor. It was his wish, too, in a dispute by no means important,<sup>4</sup> to obtrude the tradition of the Roman Church on all other churches as an unalterable and decisive law; and he excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor and of North Africa, which refused to acknowledge this rule.<sup>5</sup>

But it was far from being the case that these assumptions of the Roman bishops could penetrate even through the Western Church—to say nothing here of the reaction they had to encounter from the freer tendencies of the Greek Church. In the first-named dispute, the communities of Asia Minor, nothing daunted by the arrogant language of Victor, maintained their own principles, and set over against the tradition of the Roman

<sup>1</sup> The dispute about the time of celebrating Easter, of which mention will be made hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian. *de pudicitia*, c. 1: *Audito, edictum esse propositum et quidem peremptorium; pontifex scilicet maximus, quod est episcopus episcoporum, edicit.*

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian. *de virg. velandis*.

<sup>4</sup> The dispute about the validity of baptism administered by heretics, also to be noticed elsewhere.

<sup>5</sup> *Nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*,—he declared,—*se per successionem cathedram Petri habere.* Cyprian. *ep.* 74 et 75.

Church the tradition of their own sedes apostolicæ. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons,<sup>1</sup> in a letter to the Roman bishop Victor, severely rebuked his unchristian arrogance, although agreeing with him as to the matter in dispute. He disapproved of his attempt to obtrude *one* form of church life on all the communities; and declared that nothing was required but unity in faith and in love; and that this, instead of being disturbed by differences in respect to outward things, did but shine forth through these differences with the greater strength. He recognised the right of all the communities in such matters, to act freely and independently, according to *their own* ancient usage. He objected to the authority of the tradition of a single determinate church the fact, that tradition often originates in, and is propagated by, simplicity and ignorance.<sup>2</sup> Although Cyprian, as we have before remarked, looked upon the Roman Church as really the cathedra Petri, and as the representative of the outward church unity, yet he was far from inferring thence the right of this church to determine all matters of church controversy. On the contrary, he maintained, with firmness and energy, the independent right of the individual bishops to manage the affairs of their churches according to their own principles; and he carried through what he recognised as right, in spite of the opposition of the Roman Church. In communicating to Stephanus, bishop of Rome, at the commencement of the second of the above-mentioned controversies, the principles of the North African Church, which he well knew did not accord with the Roman usages, he addressed him in the name of a synod, as one colleague, conscious of an equality of dignity and of rights, addresses another: "In virtue of our equal dignity," says he, "and in unfeigned love, we have imparted these things to you, dearest brother; for we hope, that whatever is agreeable to piety and truth, will also, in accordance with your own true faith and true piety, be pleasing to *you*. We are well aware, however, that many are reluctant to part with the opinions they have once imbibed, and slow to change their principles; but so far as they can do it, without violating the bond of unity and peace binding them to their colleagues, cling to many peculiarities which have become customary

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. l. v. c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Τῶν παρὰ τὸ ἀκριβὲς ὡς εἰκὸς κρατούντων τὴν καθ' ἀπλότητα καὶ ἰδιωτισμὸν συνήθειαν εἰς τὸ μιστίσιμα πιπτοιηκίτων.

among them. In matters of this sort, we put no restraint, we impose no law, on any man; since each presiding officer of a community has, in the management of these matters, his own free will, and is accountable for his mode of proceeding to the Lord alone."<sup>1</sup>

After the violent declarations which ensued from the Roman bishop, he continued to avow the same principle before a council of more than eighty of the bishops of North Africa, inviting each of them to express his own views with freedom; "for no one," said he, "should make himself a bishop of bishops." When Stephanus appealed to the authority of the ancient Roman tradition, and spoke against innovations, Cyprian replied,<sup>2</sup> that it was rather Stephanus himself who made the innovations, and broke away from the unity of the Church. "Whence then," he says, "comes that tradition? Is it derived from the words of our Lord, and from the authority of the Gospels, or from the instructions and the letters of the apostles? Custom, which has crept in among some unawares, ought not to hinder the truth from prevailing and triumphing; for custom without truth is only inveterate error."<sup>3</sup> He finely remarks, "that it is no more beneath the dignity of a Roman bishop than of any other man, to suffer himself to be corrected when he is in the wrong; for the bishop ought not only to *teach* but to *learn*, for he becomes even the better *teacher* who is daily adding to his knowledge, and making progress, by the correction of his errors." Firmilianus also, the bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in expressing his agreement with Cyprian, declared himself quite strongly against the unchristian behaviour of Stephanus, who forbade the Roman Church to receive the delegates of the North African Church into their houses. He considered it a reproach that one who boasted of being the successor of the Apostle Peter, on whom was built the unity of the Church, should rend that unity by his uncharitable and arrogant proceedings. In opposition to the alleged tradition of the Roman Church, he produced the tradition of other ancient churches, as also doctrinal

<sup>1</sup> Qua in re nec nos vim cuiquam facimus aut legem damus, quando habeat in ecclesie administratione voluntatis suæ arbitrium liberum unusquisque præpositus, rationem actus sui Domino redditurus.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 74, ad Pompej.

<sup>3</sup> Nec consuetudo, quæ apud quosdam obrepserat, impedire debet, quominus veritas prævaleat et vincat; nam consuetudo sine veritate vetustas erroris est.

reasons ; and as evidence that the Romans did not observe, in all points, the original tradition, and appealed in vain to the authority of the apostles, he adduces the fact, that in many church matters, they departed from the customs of the Church at Jerusalem, and of the ancient apostolical churches ;<sup>1</sup> yet notwithstanding all these differences, the unity and peace of the Catholic Church had never been disturbed.<sup>2</sup>

On another and earlier occasion, Cyprian had already shewn how far he was from yielding to the Roman bishops a supreme jurisdiction in the Church, and from countenancing them in the exercise of it. Basilides and Martialis, two Spanish bishops, had been deposed by a synod, because they were *libellatici*, and for other offences ; and it is said, they acknowledged themselves the validity of their sentence. In the place of Basilides, a successor had already been chosen by the provincial bishops, with the assistance of the church over which he had presided. The two deposed bishops, however, had recourse to Stephanus, the bishop of Rome, and the latter, assuming a supreme judicatory power, reversed the sentence of the Spanish ecclesiastical court, and restored them both to their office ; whether it was that he found good reasons for so doing in what they alleged in their own justification, or that there was already a strong inclination in the Roman Church to take part with those that appealed to its jurisdiction. A contest now arose in Spain on the question whether the first or the second sentence should be respected, and the communities of North Africa were applied to for their opinion. The North African Synod at Carthage, in whose name Cyprian replied, did not hesitate to declare that the decision of the Roman bishop was without force, and strongly charged the Spanish Churches not to suffer the two unworthy bishops to continue in office. Into the question, whether the Roman bishop was justified in prosecuting such a judicial examination, Cyprian did not enter ; but he declared without farther discussion the unjust sentence, resting as it did on insufficient grounds, to be void. "The regular ordination," he observed<sup>3</sup> (meaning of the succes-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Eos autem, qui Romæ sunt, non ea in omnibus observare, quæ sunt ab origine tradita, et frustra apostolorum auctoritatem præstendere.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 68.



sor to the deposed bishop Basilides), "cannot be rendered null, because Basilides, after his offences were discovered, and had been acknowledged too by himself, went to Rome, and deceived our colleague Stephanus, who was at a distance, and not acquainted with the real circumstances of the case; so that he who had been deposed by a just sentence, fraudulently contrived to be reinstated in his office. Perhaps the mortification which the ambitious, hierarchical views of Stephanus experienced on this occasion—although in other respects Cyprian speaks of him with great moderation—had much influence in deciding him to the obstinate stand which he took in the later controversy, of which we have before spoken.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.—EXCLUSION FROM THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH.—RE-ADMISSION TO THE SAME.

✓ As the founder of the Church had foretold, the process of its development could be none other than a process of refining, renewed over and over again. The idea of a perfectly pure and perfectly holy Church could not be realized in the earthly course of its history;—for the life communicated by Christ to humanity can be sustained and transmitted only in a never-ceasing conflict with the power of sin, which resists the current of that life from without, and even threatens to mix in and disturb it with its own impurities. The Church itself which truly answers to its conception, the Church of the regenerate and sanctified, continues ever to be inwardly affected by the reactions of this principle of sin never wholly overcome; and hence in continual need of cleansing. But this Church, though represented in a visible form, is yet in its essence invisible; and to this its visible appearance various elements become attached, partaking in no respect of that inner essence;—and there are no sure and certain marks whereby it is possible to separate from one another these heterogeneous components. Manifold are the gradations through which the transition is made from the true Church to the opposite world, which strives to draw her into itself and to transform her by its own spirit; a thing impossible, unless she enter herself into such a union. Hence the sifting of the chaff from the wheat, which can be accomplished by no human tribunal, and which strives prema-

turely to sever the threads of historical development ordained and surely guided by Divine Wisdom, and would hinder the very work of the Church itself to reform the world, must be left to a higher judgment, and can only take place after the threads of history have run their appointed course.

But the Church, when left wholly to herself, and unmixed as yet with the state, might bring about, if not a perfect, yet a *certain* separation—so as to exclude from herself the *manifestly* foreign elements, shewing themselves to be such by marks *not to be mistaken*; indeed, the Jewish synagogues had before exercised a disciplinary judgment of this kind over their members. The early communities were thus to seek to secure themselves against the infection of pagan immorality, and thereby practically to bear witness, that the mere confession of faith made no man a Christian; that whoever contradicted by his daily living the laws of Christianity, could not be regarded as a Christian brother.

Hence the Apostle Paul declared the Christian communities to be not merely justified, but bound to eject such unworthy members from their body. With *all pagans*, the Christians might eat, and stand in every social relation; but with such apostate brethren, they were to avoid all manner of intercourse, for the purpose of practically shewing them, that they could no longer claim the title of Christian brethren. It was from this point of view that Tertullian could now say to the pagans: “Those who are no Christians are wrongly so called; such in truth take no part in our religious assemblies; such receive not with us the communion; they have by their sins become yours again, since we hold not even common intercourse with those whom your cruelty has forced to denial; although we should certainly be likely to tolerate amongst us more easily those who through constraint than those who have voluntarily deserted the principles of our religion. Besides, it is without reason you call those Christians who are not recognised as such by the Christians, who cannot deny their own.”<sup>1</sup>

*But the Church was designed also to be an institution for training*; it was not to give up the hope of reclaiming the fallen. By this very exclusion from the society of the brethren, the

<sup>1</sup> Ad nation. l. i. c. 5.

fallen members, if they retained any susceptibility for better feelings, were to be brought to the sense of their guilt and awakened to a fruitful repentance. If they manifested any such penitence in their living, they were to be taken under the fostering care of the Church, and at length, after their repentance had been sufficiently proved, once more adopted into the community. Such was the direction of the Apostle Paul. In later times, various regulations were gradually introduced, relating to the cases in which resort should be had to such exclusion from the church fellowship; to the manner of life which the excluded members ought to lead; to the proofs of remorse and penitence which they must give, and to the duration of the time of their exclusion. All these points were differently determined, according to the different nature of the offences, and the different moral character evinced by the offenders. Those who stood in this relation to the community were made a particular class, designated by the name of *pœnitentes*. Tertullian requires "that the inward compunction of conscience should be manifested also by outward acts;<sup>1</sup> that they should express their sorrow by their whole deportment, pray for the forgiveness of their sins with fasting, present a confession of their sins before the community, request the intercessions of all the Christian brethren, and especially humble themselves before the presbyters and the known friends of God."<sup>2</sup> To those who suffered themselves to be kept back by shame from making confession before the Church, he says,<sup>3</sup> "This may be grievous, where one exposes himself to contempt and to mockery; where others exalt themselves at the expense of him who has fallen. But in the midst of brethren and fellow-servants, where the hope, fear, joy, pain, and suffering are shared in common; because one common spirit proceeds from one common Lord and Father,—how should you there consider your own as different from yourself? Why fly from those to whom your grief is as their own, as if they rejoiced over it? The body cannot rejoice at the suffering of one of its members. The whole body must share in the pain and co-operate towards the cure.

<sup>1</sup> Ut non sola conscientia præferatur, sed aliquo etiam actu administratur. De *pœnitentia*, c. 9.

<sup>2</sup> L. c.

<sup>3</sup> L. c. c. 10.

Where two are together there is the Church ; but the Church is Christ. When you embrace the knees of your brother, you embrace Christ, you are a suppliant to Christ. And so when they weep over you, Christ suffers, Christ supplicates the Father. Easily is that ever obtained, which the Son supplicates of the Father." Origen writes :<sup>1</sup> " The Christians sorrow over those who have been overcome by lust, or any other noticeable vice, as if they were dead ; and, after a long period, if they have given sufficient evidence of a change of heart, they receive them once more to the standing of catechumens, as those risen from the dead." When their penitence had been satisfactorily proved, they were absolved and restored to the fellowship of the Church with the sign of blessing, the laying on of the hands of the bishop and clergy.

Salutary as these regulations might be, as a means of Christian culture, in the then existing state of the Church, yet here also there was great danger of confounding the Inner essence with the Outward form, especially when the outward notion of the Church had already become a fundamental principle. Such must have been the case, for example, when it was attempted to confine the expression of penitent feelings to certain uniform signs, and it was thought that in manifesting these consisted the essence of true penitence itself ; and again, when no distinction was made betwixt absolution and the divine forgiveness of sins. The Church teachers, however, did not fail to point out the true nature of Christian repentance, and to represent those outward mortifications as *merely* signs of an inward grace. " When the man condemns himself," says Tertullian,<sup>2</sup> " God acquits him. So far, believe me, as thou sparest not thyself, God will spare thee." And the bishop Firmilianus of Cæsarea in Cappadocia says, in a letter written in the latter half of the third century : " With us, the bishops and presbyters meet once a year to consult together for the recovery by repentance of fallen brethren ; not as though they could receive from us the forgiveness of sins, but that they may by us be brought to a sense of their sins, and constrained to render a more full satisfaction to the Lord." <sup>3</sup> Cyprian

<sup>1</sup> c. Cels. l. iii. c. 51.

<sup>2</sup> De penitentia, c. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Cyprian, ep. 75.



explains himself thus:<sup>1</sup> "We do not prejudge the Lord's judgment; so that if he find the sinner's repentance full and satisfactory, he may ratify our decision; but if any man shall have deceived us by a hypocritical repentance, then let God, who cannot be mocked, and who looketh on the heart, decide with regard to that which we have failed to explore to the bottom, and the master correct the judgment of his servants."

But still it cannot be denied, that the consequences resulting from that *making outward* of the conception of the Church, and that Old Testament view of the priesthood, had here already mixed in. Thus the judgment on an individual who had rendered himself liable to the church penance was reckoned among the acts of this priesthood; and the full power of exercising it, derived from the authority to bind and to loose, given to the apostles. That one should thus submit himself to the judgment of the priest, appeared as an act of that humility which belongs to the essence of true penitence.<sup>2</sup> The notion took such a shape, that the whole system of church penance came to be considered as a satisfaction to be done to God.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps there were some who opposed this view of the necessity of outward church penance, and who endeavoured to establish the principle that all depended on the direction of the heart, and of the affections towards God, not on external things.<sup>4</sup> We say *perhaps*,—for from the language of Tertullian in combating this class, from his own assumed position, we cannot decide with certainty in what sense that principle was understood. It is certainly possible that they may have been a class who made a *false* distinction between the Inner and the Outward in the religious life, and under the pretext that all depended on the inner direction of the affections towards God alone, allowed themselves to excuse the failings of the outward life.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his 52d letter ad Antonian.

<sup>2</sup> See the words, in a letter of the Confessors, in Cyprian (ep. 26): *Humilitas atque subjectio, alienum de se expectasse iudicium, alienam de suo sustinuisse sententiam.*

<sup>3</sup> *Satisfactio*, in Tertullian's book de Pœnitentia; a term derived from the civil law, which he had studied and practised in early life.

<sup>4</sup> *Sed ajunt quidam, satis Deum habere, si corde et animo suspiciatur, licet actu minus fiat. De pœnitentia, c. 5.*

<sup>5</sup> "Itaque se salvo metu et fide peccare," says Tertullian,—prone, as he was, to infer evil from the doctrines of his opponents.

Connected with the remarks here made on church penance and church absolution, must be our judgment also of a controversy which arose with regard to these matters. Had the notion of absolution been rightly understood as an announcement of the divine forgiveness of sin, always conditioned on repentance and faith, instead of being converted into a judicial act of the clergy, a mutual understanding might have been easily brought about on the matter of dispute which we are now about to mention. We allude to the controversy between a milder and a more rigid party on the subject of church penance.

All were agreed in distinguishing those sins into which all Christians might fall through the remaining sinfulness of their nature, and those which clearly indicated that the transgressor was still living under bondage to sin as an abiding condition; that he was not one of the regenerate; that he had either never attained to that condition, or had again fallen from it—*peccata venalia*—and *peccata mortalia*, or *ad mortem*. These terms they had derived from the First Epistle of St John. Among sins of the second class they reckoned, besides the denial of Christianity, deception, theft, incontinence, adultery, etc.<sup>1</sup> Now it was the principle of the milder party, which gradually became the predominant one, that the Church was bound to receive every fallen member into whatever sins he may have fallen—to hold out to all, under the condition of sincere repentance, the hope of the forgiveness of sin. At least, in the hour of death, absolution and the communion should be granted to those who manifested true repentance. The other party would never consent to admit again to the fellowship of the Church, such as had violated their baptismal vow by sins of the latter class. Such persons, said they, have once despised the forgiveness of sin obtained for them by Christ, and assured to them in baptism. There is no purpose of divine grace with regard to such which is revealed to us; hence the Church is in no case warranted to announce to them the forgiveness of sin. If the Church exhorts them also to repentance, yet she can promise nothing to them as to the issue, since the power bestowed on her to bind and to loose has no reference to such. She must leave them to the judgment of God. The one party would not suffer

<sup>1</sup> *Homicidium, idololatria, fraus, negatio, blasphemia, mœchia et fornicatio. Tertullian. de pudicitia, c. 19.*

that any limits should be set to the mercy of God towards penitent men ; the other would preserve erect the holiness of God, and feared that, by a false confidence in the power of priestly absolution, men would be encouraged to feel more safe in their sins.

#### CHURCH DIVISIONS OR SCHISMS.

The schisms, or *church divisions* in the more limited sense, must be distinguished from the *heresies* properly so called. The former were such divisions of the Catholic Church, as proceeded from certain outward occasions, aiming at objects connected with the constitution or the discipline of the Church ; the latter, divisions which sprung out of differences and disputes on matters of doctrine. While all that is to be said of the latter stands intimately connected with the *genetic* development of doctrines, the exhibition of the former cannot be separated from the history of the constitution and discipline of the Church ; and each serves to illustrate the other. In a doctrinal point of view, the history of *church divisions* is important only so far as it serves to unfold the doctrine of the *Church* ; but the development of *this* doctrine stands closely connected again with the history of the church constitution. It seems, therefore, in every view, best suited to our purpose to annex the history of church divisions with the section which relates the history of the constitution of the Church.

We have to notice in this period two remarkable divisions of the Church, both intimately connected with each other, as well in respect to the *time of their origin*, as in respect to the *churches* and persons, that especially took part in them. In the history of both, the monarchical system of episcopacy is seen coming forth victoriously out of the contest with presbyterianism ; in both, Catholicism is seen triumphing over *Separatism* ; both divisions conduced to the establishment of the system of church unity. We refer to the divisions of *Felicissimus* and to that of *Novatian* ; the first proceeding out of the Church of proconsular Africa, the second out of the Church of Rome.

In the history of the first-mentioned division, the bishop Cyprian of Carthage appears as the head of a party, and as the most important among the actors in the scene ; and the origin of the schism was immediately connected with the manner in which he

arrived at the episcopal dignity. It will serve, therefore, to give us a clearer understanding of the whole subject, if we begin with casting a glance at the history of this man's life. Cyprian had remained a pagan until the last years of his manhood. He was by profession a rhetorician, if not an advocate,<sup>1</sup> and the rhetorical cast of his style of writing testifies of this his earlier occupation. In the years of his paganism he had already gained public confidence by the uprightness of his life.<sup>2</sup> By the influence of the presbyter Cæcilius, whose name he afterwards adopted, and who at his death committed his wife and children to Cyprian's care, he was brought to embrace the Christian faith. Although, while a pagan, he had led a blameless life in the common estimation, yet it by no means appeared so to himself, after he had learned to contemplate the requisitions of the divine law, and to know himself in the light of Christianity. The profound sense of sin, as a power from which man cannot deliver himself by his own strength, preceded also in his case the experience of that which grace alone can effect; as he expresses it in the letter addressed to his friend Donatus, written probably soon after his baptism. Hence he was now the more inspired with a glowing enthusiasm to reach that idea of the divine life which Christianity had lighted up within his soul. And as he interpreted the words of our Lord—"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast and give it to the poor," according to the prevailing views of that period, more closely to their letter than to their spirit, for the purpose of fulfilling this requisition, he sold the two landed estates of which he was possessed,<sup>3</sup> and distributed the proceeds among the poor. The devout zeal which shone forth so brilliantly in his conduct even while a neophyte, acquired for him, to a great degree, the love and esteem of the community. He became the man of the people; and the community

<sup>1</sup> Jerome says (d. v. i. c. 67), that he was a rhetorician, and we have no good reason to doubt this account. We are under no necessity of supposing, that in what he says (ep. i. ad Donatum), respecting the opposition between spiritual and worldly eloquence (in judiciis, in concione), pro rostris, that he was thinking of his own calling, and therefore had once been used to such public discourse.

<sup>2</sup> See the biographical sketch of his life, composed by his disciple, the Deacon Pontius.

<sup>3</sup> His garden was soon restored back to him, probably by the love of the Church, as we may gather from the language of Pontius: Hortos, quos inter initia fidei suæ venditos et Dei indulgentia restitutos.



made use of the influence they could then command in his behalf. He was raised by their votes, contrary to the letter of the church laws, soon after his baptism, in 247, to the dignity of a presbyter, and as early as the year 248, placed at the head as bishop. The community envired his house, for the purpose of compelling him to accept the episcopal dignity. But this very circumstance, that he had been raised to the station he occupied by the enthusiastic love of the Church, contributed from the first to create a party against him, at the head of which stood five presbyters.<sup>1</sup> Of these, several, perhaps, put forward claims themselves to the episcopal office, and looked with eyes of jealousy on the upstart neophyte who superseded those that had grown grey in the service of the Church. They might also be led on by other motives to us unknown. Cyprian was well aware of the difficult position he was about to assume, when he shrank back from the assumption of the chief pastoral office, the whole weight and responsibility of which stood clearly before him,—attractive as it must have seemed, on the other hand, to a man of his peculiar bent and talent for rule to be placed at the head of the church governance. We discover here the first ground and the germ of the ensuing controversies. The five presbyters above mentioned now proceeded with their followers to contest the episcopal authority of Cyprian; and as the presbyters were still mindful of their ancient rights, and still striving to maintain their former influence in the government of the Church, there could be no want of disputes between a bishop, and especially one like Cyprian, so resolutely active, in the consciousness of that supreme spiritual power which he believed himself to possess by divine right, and his antagonists in the presbyterial college.

Where men are contending for their rights, even those men in whom a life from God has indeed begun, but the strength of the old nature still makes itself felt, it is usually the case, that instead of emulating each other, with the spirit of love and self-renunciation, in the fulfilment of duties, they allow, on both sides, their own will and their passions to give that which is wrong the

<sup>1</sup> We see this from the words of Pontius, in speaking of Cyprian's election: *Quidam illi restiterunt, etiam ut vinceret*; with which compare ep. 40, respecting the intrigues of the five presbyters: *Conjuracionis suæ memores et antiqua illa contra episcopatum meum, imo contra suffragium vestrum et Dei iudicium venena retinentes, instaurant veterem contra nos impugnationem suam.*

colour of right. So it happened in the present case. But we are not well enough informed of all the circumstances to be able clearly to separate the right from the wrong on either side ; for we have only the representations of one party in the dispute,—representations which sometimes bear on their very front the marks of strong excitement.

An unbiassed contemplation will certainly not fail to discover in Cyprian the man inspired and animated with true love to the Redeemer and to his Church. It is undeniable that he was devoted to his community, as a faithful shepherd ; that its interests honestly lay nearest his heart ; and that he meant to exercise his episcopal authority for the preservation of good order and discipline in the flock ;—but it is also certain, that he was not sufficiently on his guard against that fundamental evil of man's nature, which so easily fastens on what is best in him, and by which the best qualities may be even perverted and destroyed,—an evil which may be most dangerous to those endowed with great gifts and powers for the Lord's service,—most dangerous, where it exhibits itself under the spiritual garb,—that he was not watchful enough against the risings and suggestions of self-will and pride. The point he was contending for, the full power of the episcopate, proved to him certainly, at times, the rock whereon his spiritual life made shipwreck. He forgot, in the bishop, "*appointed by God himself and acting in the name of Christ,*" the *man*, still living in the flesh, and *exposed*, like all other men, to the temptations of sin ; in the *bishop*, over whom no layman might set up himself to judge, the bishop called to rule, and gifted with an inviolable authority from God, he forgot the disciple of Christ, of him who was meek and lowly of spirit, and for the good of his *brethren*, appeared in the *form of a servant*. Had he ever remained true to this spirit of Christ's disciples, he might assuredly have gained the victory over his adversaries with far more ease to himself and safety to the Church, than by all his stir about the inalienable rights of the episcopate, and his appeals to the dignity of the priestly office with which God had invested him.

The five presbyters of the opposite party, or some of them at least, seem to have been at the head of separate communities in Carthage or its neighbourhood ; and they now ventured, in defiance of the bishop whom they hated, to introduce several arbitrary measures in the management of their filial communities ; or,

at any rate, such measures as Cyprian, from the principles he maintained with regard to the episcopal system, might properly consider as encroachments on the episcopal rights. One of them, Novatus by name, president of a community situated upon a hill in or near by Carthage, was, so far as we can judge,<sup>1</sup> a man of restless and enterprising mind, who, with a fierce spirit of ecclesiastical freedom, spurned from him the yoke of episcopal monarchy.<sup>2</sup> This person, without authority from the bishop, pro-

<sup>1</sup> The charges which Cyprian himself brings against him (ep. 49), if well-founded, do, indeed, place him in the most unfavourable light; but these charges wear every appearance of being dictated by blind passion, trusting in deceptive reports without due investigation, and indulging a most unwarrantable liberty of drawing conclusions. A common method in controversies,—to impute the worst motives to an opponent, and suppose them just as true as if one could read into his heart, yet without offering the least evidence to justify the supposition. Of Novatus, it was said, that he was about to be arraigned before an ecclesiastical court; his own conscience declared him guilty; happily for him the Decian persecution broke out, and interrupted the proceedings which had commenced against him. And now, in order to evade the sentence which awaited him as soon as the persecution was over, he excited all those agitations, of which we shall speak hereafter, and separated himself from the dominant church. How cleverly put together, yet how improbable is all this! Cyprian himself, during the Decian persecution, still recognised Novatus as a lawful presbyter, see ep. 5. Now, for the first time, he knows of this man such wicked things, as, if they were true, would testify against the bishop who could suffer a man of such a character to retain the office of presbyter. Cyprian does, indeed, bring forward facts against him; but what vouches for the truth of those facts? How would it have been possible for this man, if such accusations could be justly laid against him, to play the part he did? What is there which idle tattle will not gradually set agoing amidst party strifes of this kind? The opponents of Cyprian, too, as we may infer from his letter to Pupianus, of which we shall speak hereafter, had said many hard things against him.

<sup>2</sup> So far there may have been truth in Cyprian's statement, when he calls him (ep. 49), *Fax et ignis ad conflanda seditionis incendia*.

In order to a right understanding of Novatus' conduct in these disputes, it is important to have the question settled, whether he was one of the five presbyters who opposed Cyprian from the beginning. Mosheim has urged several objections against this supposition, the most weighty of which we shall notice further along. The question, we must admit, cannot be decided with absolute certainty. But yet the whole connection of the history seems to be in favour of the affirmative. In Cyprian's fifth letter, already cited, the names of four presbyters are introduced, who brought him a petition. One of these, Fortunatus, belonged, according to Cyprian's own statement, ep. 55, to the number of the five presbyters. Now, as the name of Novatus occurs here along with that of Fortunatus, it is highly probable that all the four presbyters, which seem in this case to have formed one party, were in fact no other than the old opposition party,—the five presbyters or presbyterium Felicissimi. And in the repulsive answer which Cyprian gave to their petition, we may perhaps discern a new cause of their irritation against the bishop. A comparison of what Cyprian says respecting the intrigues of Novatus, ep. 49, with what he says respecting the intrigues of those five presbyters, ep. 40, and with

ceeded to ordain one of his followers, Felicissimus, a man well calculated for the position of a zealous and enterprising partizan, and who doubtless, by his personal relations, had great influence in the community, to the office of deacon in this his own church.<sup>1</sup> Cyprian declares this act an encroachment on his episcopal rights; but it may have been the opinion of Novatus, on the principles of his presbyterian system, that, as a presbyter and presiding officer of the Church, he was warranted so to proceed. The right and the wrong in the transaction was a point certainly not so clearly made out, at a time when the struggle betwixt the aristocratic and monarchical forms of church government remained still undecided. Cyprian permitted Felicissimus to retain his office; whether it was out of deference to a powerful party, or whether it was not till later that he was induced by the hostile proceedings of Felicissimus, to declare his ordination irregular, and a violation of the episcopal authority. He avoided in the outset, as it should seem, to take any violent measures; he sought by indulgence and gentleness, with a prudence befitting the circumstances, to gain over his opponents.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps his success would have been complete, if he could have exercised sufficient control over himself to follow out this course with patience; or if the Decian persecution, which broke out soon after, had not furnished the opposite party too inviting an opportunity to commence a public attack on the man, whom, from the first, they had unwillingly seen placed at the head of the church government.

We have already observed, that at the first beginning of this persecution Cyprian retired for a while from his community. He had good reasons, indeed, as we then saw, to justify this step, and the best of all justifications was his subsequent martyrdom;

what Pontius reports about the old adversaries of Cyprian, speaks for the existence of but one anti-Cyprian party, which held together from the beginning, and in which Novatus occupied an important place.

<sup>1</sup> See Cyprian, ep. 49, of Novatus: *Qui Felicissimum satellitem suum diaconum, nec permittente me nec sciente, sua factione et ambitione, constituit.* All goes to shew that this nomination of Felicissimus to the office of deacon preceded the schism of which he was the author; although the whole subject is involved in much obscurity, on account of our imperfect knowledge of the circumstances.

<sup>2</sup> To this doubtless refers what Pontius says of Cyprian's conduct towards his opponents: *Quibus tamen quanta levitate, quam patienter, quam benevolenter indulsit, quam clementer ignovit, amicissimos eos postmodum inter et necessarios computans, mirantibus multis?*

but still it was a step which would always admit of being differently construed. The enemies of Cyprian were glad to look upon the thing in its worst light, and accused him of allowing himself to be influenced to violate his duties as a pastor by motives of fear.<sup>1</sup>

Besides this, the party opposed to Cyprian had many opportunities, arising out of events that transpired in the persecution, to increase the number of their followers, and to excite the minds of men against the bishop. Numbers, as we have already observed in our account of this persecution, had been induced by their fears, or compelled by torture, to resort to measures which were regarded as a virtual denial of the faith, and which actually excluded them from the communion of the Church. But most of them were afterwards seized with compunctions of remorse, and longed to be restored to the community of the brethren, and to the privilege of participating with them in the Lord's supper. The question now arose, whether their wishes should be complied with:—was their petition to be absolutely rejected, or should a middle course be pursued, by holding out to them, indeed, the hope of being restored to the fellowship of the Church; but before the privilege was actually granted them, by subjecting their conduct to a longer probation, and requiring evidence of continued penitence? Should the same course be pursued with all the lapsed, or should the treatment be varied according to the difference of circumstances and the character of the offences? The Church at this time was still without any generally acknowledged principles of church penance in cases of this sort. There was one party who were for refusing to grant absolution, on any conditions, to such as had violated their baptismal vow by one of the so-called mortal sins. Following that Jewish principle which did not allow *all* duties to be regarded alike as *duties to God*, and *all* sins alike, as *sins against God*, men made an arbitrary

<sup>1</sup> We remarked at page 182, how doubtfully the Roman clergy expressed themselves with regard to Cyprian's conduct; their words, "quod utique *recte fecerit*," indicate that Cyprian's enemies had contrived to represent the matter in an unfavourable light. Hence Cyprian intimated a suspicion that this letter, in which passages occurred which were so strange to him, might be a forgery, ep. 3. Afterwards, when he learned that his adversaries had represented his conduct in an unfavourable light at Rome, he considered it necessary to justify himself by a correct account of the whole course of the affair, and he writes thus to the Roman clergy, ep. 14: Quoniam comperi, minus simpliciter et minus fideliter vobis renuntiari, quæ hic a nobis et gesta sunt et geruntur.

distinction,—for which they cited as their authority the passage 1 Samuel ii. 25,—between sins against God and against man; and to the former was reckoned every act of denying the faith, though the degree of guiltiness, if the denial was simply a yielding to the weakness of sense, might be far inferior to that involved in some of the so-called sins *against man*. Cyprian, who was in the habit of calling Tertullian especially his teacher,<sup>1</sup> might perhaps, from the study of that father's writings, have received a bias towards the principles of the more rigid party with regard to penance. Many passages of his works, written previous to the Decian persecution, would lead us to conclude that he was at first in favour of the principle of granting absolution to none who had committed a mortal sin; as, for instance, when he says,<sup>2</sup> “The words of the Lord, who warns while he heals, are, ‘Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worst thing come unto thee.’ After he has bestowed health, he gives the rule of life; nor does he leave the man thenceforth to wander about as he lists; but as the man was bound to serve him by the very fact that he had been healed by him, our Lord threatens him with the greater severity; for the guilt is less, to have sinned before one has known the doctrines of the Lord; but when one sins after he has begun to know them there is no place for forgiveness.”<sup>3</sup> It may be said, perhaps, that Cyprian, in this case, meant simply to mark the greater criminality of a sin committed by a Christian, and that the passage is to be understood only in a relative sense; but assuredly more than this is implied in one of his positions laid down in the collection of Biblical Testimonies.<sup>4</sup> “That to him who has sinned against God no forgiveness can be granted in the Church.”<sup>5</sup> Besides the already cited passages from the Old Testament,<sup>6</sup> he quotes on this occasion that from the Gospel, relating to the sin against the Son of man, and against the Holy

<sup>1</sup> According to Jerome, *de vir. illustr.* When he asked for Tertullian's writings, he used to say to his secretary, “*Da magistrum.*”

<sup>2</sup> *De habitu virginum.*

<sup>3</sup> *Nulla venia ultra delinquere, postquam Deum nosse cœpisti.*

<sup>4</sup> *De testimoniis, l. iii. c. 28.*

<sup>5</sup> *Non posse in ecclesia remitti ei, qui in Deum deliquit.*

<sup>6</sup> The same texts which Cyprian quotes in the epistle to the clergy of Carthage, ep. 9, on the subject of denial of the faith under persecution. So also in ep. 11, we find the antithesis: *Minora delicta, quæ non in Deum committuntur.*

Ghost; whence it is plain how greatly he misunderstood these conceptions and this antithesis.

But if Cyprian was an advocate of *this* principle when he first entered on the episcopal office, yet, cherishing as he did the heart of a father towards his church, he could not fail to be shaken by the great multitude of the lapsed, who, sometimes with bitter tears of repentance, entreated him to grant them absolution. Must all these, many of whom—as for example the libellatici—had fallen only from defect of knowledge, and others from simply yielding to the flesh under the severity of their tortures, remain for ever excluded from the blessed community of their brethren, and, in Cyprian's view, from that church in which alone was to be found the way to heaven? The paternal heart of the bishop revolted at the thought, but he dared not act here upon his own responsibility. In this state of indecision he declared that the fallen should be received and exhorted to repentance; but that the decision of their fate should be reserved to that time when, on the restoration of peace, the bishops, clergy, and churches, in joint and cautious deliberation, after having examined the question in all its bearings, should be able to unite on some common principles, in relation to a matter where every Christian was so deeply interested. Besides, there was a great difference between the offences of these fallen brethren. While some, merely to avoid the sacrifice of their worldly possessions, had, without a struggle, even hastened up to the altars of the gods; others had fallen only through ignorance, or under the force of torture. The disorders of the times made it impossible to examine carefully into the difference of offences, and the difference of moral character in the individuals. Moreover, those that had fallen should, by practical demonstration of their penitence, render themselves worthy of re-admission to the fellowship of the Church,—and the persecution itself presented them with the best opportunity for this. “He who cannot endure the delay,” says Cyprian, “may obtain the crown of martyrdom.”

It was under this view of the case he acted, directing all the lapsed who applied for absolution to look forward with hope to the time for the restoration of tranquillity, when their cases should be examined. But some of the clergy, and as Cyprian afterwards learned, his old adversaries, espoused the interest of

these men, and instead of exhorting them to peace and order, according to the wishes of the bishop, confirmed them in their importunate demands, availing themselves of this opportunity to foment the wished-for division in the Church.

Had these lapsed individuals been upheld in their importunate demands by the presbyters opposed to Cyprian alone, without finding any other support, their resistance to the measures of the bishop would have been of less consequence. But now they found means to gain over to their cause a voice which in those days had great influence with the Christians,—the voice of those witnesses of the faith who, under the pains of torture, had laid down their witness of the Lord, or who, after having laid down their testimony, confronted martyrdom. It was, in itself considered, altogether consonant with the spirit of Christianity, that the last legacy of these men should be a *legacy of affection*; that their last words should be an *expression of love* to their brethren; that they who, after having victoriously sustained the conflict, were about to enter into glory, should shew sympathy for their weaker brethren who had fallen in the struggle; that, finally, they should recommend these fallen to the charitable acceptance of the Church. It was just and right, moreover, that the word of these witnesses of the faith should be held in peculiar respect, provided only it were not forgotten that they were sinful men, needing, like all others, the forgiveness of their sins, and that, so long as they were in the flesh, they had still to maintain the contest with the flesh; and provided only these witnesses of the faith themselves had not forgotten this, and, dazzled by the excessive veneration which was paid them, had not been, on this very account, the more exposed to the lurking enemy with which even they, as sinful men, had still to contend, and turned the momentary victory, gained by the grace of God, to the nourishment of a spiritual pride. Many fell under this temptation; and controversies were excited and nourished by such confessors. The poet Commodian, so distinguished for his moral enthusiasm, held it needful to remind such persons, that even by their sufferings they could not expiate sin.<sup>1</sup> There were

<sup>1</sup> See his *Instructio*, 47 :—

Impia martyribus odio reputantur in ignem,  
Distruitur martyr, cujus est confessio talis  
Expiari malum nec sanguine fuso docetur.



confessors who, in an authoritative tone, gave to all applicants the peace of the Church, and acted as if it needed only their word to exculpate and discharge the fallen. Many of the clergy who, according to Cyprian's advice, ought to have set them right and led them to humility, rather confirmed them in their delusion, and used them as tools in their intrigues against the bishop. By their peremptory declarations, oftentimes vaguely expressed, as for example, "Let such an individual, *with his*,"—an expression admitting of interpretations and applications without limit,—"be received to the fellowship of the Church," they caused the bishop no slight embarrassment.<sup>1</sup> Those who applied such vague declarations to themselves now boasted that the confessors or martyrs had granted them absolution, and they would brook no delay, suffer no trial of their conduct. When Cyprian evinced the less disposition to comply with their impetuous demands, in proportion to the want which they betrayed of true contrition and humility, he made himself extremely unpopular by his resistance. On two sides he appeared in an unfavourable light,—on the side of his severity against the lapsed, and of his lack of reverence for the confessors.<sup>2</sup>

✓ He fulfilled his duty as a pastor, by taking a firm and decided stand against the exaggerated reverence paid to these confessors, which might be a fruitful source of superstition, and against the false confidence in their intercession, leading men to feel secure in their sins. He made the confessors observe, that true confession was not an *opus operatum*, but that it must consist in the whole tenor of conduct. "The tongue," he said, "which has confessed Christ, must preserve its honour, pure and untarnished; for he who, according to our Lord's precept, speaks what tends

<sup>1</sup> *Communicet ille cum suis.* According to Cyprian, ep. 14, thousands of such "libelli pacis" were daily issued by the confessors without examination. Tertullian, at the close of the second century, speaks already of this practice as a traditional one. "Pacem in ecclesia non habentes, a martyribus in carcere exorare consueverunt." *Ad martyr.* c. 1. As a Montanist he speaks earnestly against the excessive abuse to which this practice was carried; and intimates that many were made to feel secure in their sin by these libelli pacis, inconsiderately bestowed by the confessors, *de pudicitia*, c. 22. Against the abuses growing out of recommendatory letters of the confessors, spurious or genuine, the council of Elvira speaks on this wise, c. 25: *Quod omnes sub hac nominis gloria passim concutiant simplices.*

<sup>2</sup> He gives us himself to understand how much he had to suffer in this way, ep. 22: *Laborantes hic nos et contra invidiæ impetum totis fidei viribus resistentes.*

to peace, to goodness and to truth, confesses Christ every day of his life." In warning them against false security and pride, he observes,<sup>1</sup> "It must be your endeavour to carry out what you have happily begun. It is but little to have succeeded in *obtaining* an advantage; it is more, to be able to *preserve* what you have obtained. Our Lord taught us this, when he said, 'Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' Think that he also says this to his confessor: 'Behold thou art made a confessor; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' In fine, Solomon and Saul, and many others, were able, so long as they walked in the ways of the Lord, to retain the grace which was given them; but no sooner had they left the discipline of the Lord, than they were left also by his grace. I hear that some are elated with pride; and yet it is written, 'Be not high-minded, but fear.' Our Lord 'was led as a sheep to the slaughter; as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth;' and is there any one now, who lives by him and in him, that dares to be proud and high-minded, unmindful of the life which He led, and of the doctrines which He has given us either by himself or by his apostles? If the servant be not greater than his Lord, then let those that follow the Lord, humbly, peacefully, and quietly, walk in his footsteps; the more one abases himself the more shall he be exalted."

When a certain confessor, Lucianus, professing to act "in the name of Paul, a martyr," and in obedience to his last injunctions, proceeded to bestow on the fallen the peace of the Church, and to furnish them with the so-called certificates of church-fellowship (*libellos pacis*), Cyprian refused to acknowledge their validity; and observed, "Although our Lord has given command that the nations shall be baptised and their sins forgiven in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; yet this man, in ignorance of the divine law, proclaims peace and the forgiveness of sins in the name of Paul; he does not consider that the martyrs make not the Gospel, but the Gospel the martyrs."<sup>2</sup> He spoke on this point with the same emphasis in the discourse already referred to, delivered on his return to his church.<sup>3</sup> "Let no man

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Quod non martyres evangelium faciant, sed per evangelium martyres fiant. Ep. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Sermo de lapsis.

deceive himself, the Lord alone can shew mercy. He alone can bestow forgiveness of the sins which have been committed against him, who bore our sins; who suffered for us; whom God delivered up for our offences. The servant may not forgive a crime committed against his master, lest the offender contract additional guilt, if he be unmindful of what is written, 'Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man.' We must address our prayer to the Lord, who has assured us he will deny those that deny him, who alone has received all judgment from the Father. The martyrs require something to be done, but what they require must be written in the law of the Lord; we must know, first of all, that they have *obtained* from God what they *require*, and *then only can we do* what they require; for it by no means follows, as a matter of course, that the Divine Majesty will grant what a man has promised. Either the martyrs are nothing, if the Gospel can be made void; or if the Gospel cannot be made void, then *they* are not authorized to act against the Gospel, who by its means become martyrs. *That man can neither say nor do anything against Christ, whose faith and hope, whose power and glory, are nowhere but in Christ.*"

Still Cyprian was not firm and consistent enough in his opposition to the extravagant respect paid to these witnesses of the faith. He was, to a certain degree, carried away himself by the prevailing spirit of the multitude, which he ought to have controlled and guided by the spirit of the Gospel. When the summer heats of an African climate began to multiply cases of sickness, he yielded so far as to grant absolution to those of the fallen, who in sickness and the fear of death, were earnestly desirous of the communion, and *were depending on such certificates given them by witnesses of the faith.*<sup>1</sup> In his report to the Roman Church, he assigns as his reason for so doing, that he wished by such a compliance in one particular, to assuage, in some measure at least, the violence of the multitude, and so to counteract the plots of those who were at the bottom of the mischief, and to remove from himself the obloquy of refusing to the martyrs the respect which belonged to them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian, ep. 12, 13, et 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 14: "Ad illorum violentiam interim quoquo genere mitigandam—, cum videretur et honor martyribus habendus et eorum, qui omnia turbare cupiebant, impetus

Thus by his half-way measures of resistance to the violence of this erroneous tendency, and by his inconsistency, Cyprian did injury to the interests of Christian truth and to his own cause. If, on the one hand, he attacked with the weapons of truth that false confidence in the martyrs' intercession, on the other hand he supported it, by yielding his ground; for must not the recommendation of the martyr become possessed of a peculiar power and significance, as soon as it was understood, that those only who were supported by such a recommendation, might, in the hour of death, *simply on the strength of this recommendation*, obtain the peace of the Church and receive the communion; while it might easily happen that many who had *not* sought for this recommendation of the martyrs, were distinguished above those who had secured it by their sincere contrition and penitence. Cyprian favoured this conclusion, for which his conduct furnished so natural a pretext, by his peculiar form of expressing this concession, addressing it "to those who, by help of the martyrs, may obtain succour from the Lord in their sins."<sup>1</sup> By this inconsistency he laid open a weak spot to his enemies, of which they would not fail to take advantage.

Another circumstance which must have particularly contributed to give a more decided weight to the opposite party in their connection with the fallen, was the powerful voice of the Roman Church, which had declared itself in favour of the milder principle, if not in its application to all the fallen, at least to those who were sick. Cyprian avowed also, in making his concession, that he was partly induced to this measure by his respect for the Roman Church, with which he did not choose to be at variance.<sup>2</sup> But the proceedings of this church had been more consonant with the spirit of evangelical truth, in directing the fallen to the one and only Mediator, and allowing of no other distinction among them but that of a penitent or impenitent disposition.<sup>3</sup> In their first letter addressed to the clergy at Carthage, the Roman Church had said of the fallen, "We have, indeed, separated them from

*comprimendus.*" Of the other lapsi, on the contrary, he says, ep. 13: "Qui nullo libello a martyribus accepto *invidiam faciunt*;" it was therefore this invidia which he feared.

<sup>1</sup> Auxilio eorum adjuvari apud Dominum in delictis suis possunt.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 14. to the Roman clergy. Standum putavi et cum vestra sententia, ne actus noster, qui adunatus esse et consentire circa omnia debet, in aliquo discreparet.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 2.

us, yet we have not left them to themselves; but we have exhorted them, and do still exhort them to repent, if peradventure they may obtain forgiveness from Him who alone can bestow it. We do this, lest they should become worse if deserted by us. If such persons are attacked by sickness, become penitent for their offences, and anxiously desire the communion, they should certainly be assisted."

Yet, by the Christian prudence manifested in the rest of his conduct, where he understood how to unite mildness with energy; by instructions and friendly paternal representations, winning over the better disposed among the confessors; by the firmness with which he maintained his ground against the presbyters who were so obstinate in their opposition; by the love and esteem in which he stood with the majority of the Church; the bishop Cyprian seemed to have succeeded in restoring tranquillity at Carthage, and he was rejoicing in the hope, as the Decian persecution began to wane in its violence, of returning back to the Church from which he had been painfully separated for a year, and of being able to celebrate with his flock the Easter of the year 251. But ere his hopes could be realized, he had to learn that the intrigues of the opposite party were too deeply laid, and too closely and firmly interwoven, to admit of being so easily destroyed. The fire which was smouldering on in secret, wanted but a favourable occasion to break forth into an open flame. This occasion Cyprian himself presented by the exercise of his episcopal power in an important matter.

Before he returned to his church, he had sent two bishops and two presbyters, as his deputies, with full powers to hold a visitation. They were to give to the poor of the church, who on account of their age or sickness could do nothing for their own support, so much out of the church treasury as might be necessary for the supply of their bodily wants. They were to add to the earnings of those who had a trade but could not gain from it enough for their subsistence, or who wanted money to purchase the tools and stock necessary for their employments, or who had been interrupted in their business by the persecution, and were now wishing to commence it again, so much as might be needed in these several cases. Finally, they were to draw up a schedule of all the poor who were to be supported out of the church funds,

with a notice of their different ages, and of their behaviour during the persecution, in order that the bishop, whose care it was, might become accurately acquainted with them all, and might promote the worthy, and, as is here particularly specified, the *meek* and the *humble*, to such places in the service of the church as they might be found qualified to fill. The last of these arrangements promised the following advantages,—that the abilities of such persons would be suitably employed in the service of the Church, that they would secure for themselves an adequate support; and that, at the same time, a burden would be removed from the church funds. The qualifications to which particular attention was to be directed, namely, *meekness* and *humility*, were peculiarly needful, during this period of ferment and uneasiness in the Church, in *those* who entered into its service, that the peace of the Church might be restored on a solid foundation, and the first germs of division suppressed. The Presbyterian party opposed to Cyprian may not have admitted the bishop's right to order such a church visitation, or distribution of the church funds, on his own responsibility, and without the concurrence of the whole presbyterial college, or they may have disputed, at least, the right in *Cyprian*, inasmuch as they were no longer willing to own him as their bishop; at any rate, it would be quite contrary to their plans, should he successfully carry through such an act of episcopal authority, which must tend to confirm his power in the Church, to bind the Church more closely to himself, and thus give strength to his party. At the head of the opposition in this instance, appeared the deacon *Felicissimus*. His official character alone would give him considerable influence with a portion of his community; for in the Church of North Africa, as well as in the nearly related Church of Spain,<sup>1</sup> the deacons had more power than they possessed in other countries. Besides, from circumstances of which we have no accurate knowledge, he had become an influential organ of his party, thought he was entitled, especially, perhaps, because part of the church funds was intrusted to his care,<sup>2</sup> to put in his word in a matter that concerned the ap-

<sup>1</sup> Concil. Illiberit. c. 77: Diaconus regens plebem.

<sup>2</sup> That in the North African Church, it belonged to the deacons to keep and manage the church funds, we learn from the 49th letter of Cyprian, where it is brought as a charge against a deacon, that *ecclesiasticæ pecuniæ sacrilegæ fraude subtractæ et vidu-*

plication of the money of the Church. He employed all his arts of persuasion, his influence and power, to excite a general spirit of determined opposition to this episcopal ordinance. He declared in particular to the poor belonging to the Church of Novatus, over which he had been made deacon, that he should contrive means without fail, of providing for all their wants; and threatened, in case they appeared before those episcopal commissioners, that he would never admit them to the communion in his church.<sup>1</sup>

arum ac pupillorum deposita denegata. And this was the case not only in North Africa, but also in the churches of an entirely different quarter of the world; as we learn from Origen's complaints of those deacons who enriched themselves at the expense of the church (in Matth. T. xvi. c. 22): Οἱ μὴ καλῶς διάκονοι διοικοῦντες τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας χρήματα, ἀλλ' αἰ μὲν ταῦτα ψηλαφῶντες, οὐ καλῶς δὲ αὐτὰ οἰκονομοῦντες, ἀλλὰ σωρεύοντες τὸν νομιζόμενον πλοῦτον καὶ χρήματα, ἵνα πλουτῶσιν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰς λόγον πτωχῶν διδασκάλων, οὗτοι εἰσὶν οἱ κολλυβίσται τραπίζας χρημάτων ἔχοντες, ἃς κατίστρεψεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. It is with reference to this fact, that Felicissimus is accused of "fraudes" and "rapinæ," ep. 55. Pecuniæ commissæ sibi fraudator. Similar charges were brought against Novatus, the presbyter and presiding officer of the community in which Felicissimus had been appointed deacon. True, these accusations against both, from the mouth of their enemy Cyprian, cannot be considered as credible testimony against them. An independent application of *that portion* of the church funds which was deposited in this filial community,—an application of them which, with the views they entertained of their relation to the bishop, they may have thought themselves warranted to make,—an application suited perhaps to the objects and ends of their party, may have been represented by Cyprian as embezzlement. At all events, the want of an impartial statement of the whole matter leaves it impossible to assert anything here with confidence.

<sup>1</sup> Every thing here depends on the correct reading and interpretation of those difficult words in Cyprian, ep. 38: "comminatus, quod secum in morte," or "in monte non communicarent, qui nobis obtemperare voluissent." According to the reading, "in morte," the meaning might be *either*, if the phrase "in morte" be referred to Felicissimus, that at his own death he would not acknowledge them as Christian brethren, would pronounce them excluded from church fellowship,—in other words, would never be reconciled to them; in which case, however, it would be difficult to see how a threat of this kind could be so dreadful a thing to the Christians at Carthage; or, what would be a more natural construction, the phrase, "in morte" being referred to the subject understood in "communicarent," the meaning might be that they, at their own death, should not be admitted by him to the fellowship of the church, should not receive from him, as deacon, whose office it was to convey the consecrated elements to the sick, the communion of the supper. The latter interpretation gives a good sense, if we bear in mind that Felicissimus was deacon of a particular parish church, and that he was well agreed with Novatus, the presbyter and pastor of this church, so that it was in his power to refuse the communion to those who dwelt in this part of the diocese. An analogous sense results, if the reading "in monte" be adopted. In this case, we must suppose that the community over which Novatus and Felicissimus were placed, resided on an eminence in or near by Carthage,—and hence we might be reminded of the Montenses, the Donatists at Rome, who were so called from their place of assembly, which was situated on a hill. Felicissimus threatened to exclude those that complied with the requisition of Cyprian, from communion in this church.

This church now became the general resort of all the lapsed who were unwilling to wait with patience till the whole matter relating to their case could be decided. Here, without any preparation, they were admitted to the communion—here was the rallying point of all the disaffected—a circumstance which must have been attended with the most disastrous effects on the discipline and order of the community.

It was these troubles which induced Cyprian to defer his return to Carthage until after the Easter of 251. He chose this particular time, because he could reckon on meeting at that time the other bishops of North Africa, who would be there assembled at the annual synod. This secured to him two advantages;—united with the collective body of his North African colleagues, he would be enabled to take a firm stand against the refractory; and certain settled principles having been fixed upon, after mature deliberation by the synod with regard to the proper treatment of the lapsi, he might hope that a limit would be set generally to the hitherto wavering practice of the North African Church with regard to penance. In this council of the North African Church, it was resolved to adopt a middle course between that excessive severity which cut off the lapsed from all hope, and a lax indulgence in complying with their wishes; to maintain the soundness of church discipline, and yet not drive the lapsed to despair by an unconditional refusal of absolution and readmission to the church, whereby they might be led at length to abandon themselves to their lusts, or to sink back again into paganism. First, the different character of the offences should be carefully investigated,<sup>1</sup> and to all, not accepting even the *sacrificati*, who gave evidence by their conduct of a truly penitent spirit, the communion was to be granted, at least in cases of mortal sickness. Should such persons recover, they were not to be deprived of the privilege they had obtained by the grace of God, but might remain in the fellowship of the church.<sup>2</sup> When afterwards the persecution was renewed with increased violence, another indulgence, prompted by Christian charity and wisdom, was conceded, namely, that the communion should be granted to *all who had given evidence by their conduct*

<sup>1</sup> The different degree of guilt in the *sacrificati*, according to the different ways in which they had been induced to renounce the faith; and so also in the *libellatici*.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 52.



*of true penitence*, so that they might not enter the conflict unarmed, but strengthened by communion with the Lord's body.<sup>1</sup> But they who had not given the least evidence of repentance in any of their conduct, and first expressed a desire for the communion when on the sick bed, should not then receive it, because it was not sorrow for sin, but the fear of approaching death which had prompted the desire, and *he* was not deserving of consolation in death, who had not thought of death till it was near at hand. In this explanation, it certainly is not difficult to perceive the truly Christian effort to fix men's attention on the nature of true repentance, and to warn them against the error of reposing confidence on the *opus operatum* of absolution and the communion.<sup>2</sup> But as we see, the synod allowed itself, by this purely Christian interest, to be led into the mistake of pronouncing a sentence, too harsh and indiscriminate in this general form, on those who first expressed signs of penitence at the hour of death; for although such repentance might in most cases be false, resulting from mere sensuous impressions, yet in some cases known only to the Omniscient, it might also be true. And it is clear that the synod might have secured its object without resorting to this unwarranted decision, by a more correct and clearer exposition of the nature of absolution in relation to the forgiveness of sin, as we have already explained. At this church assembly, sentence of condemnation was passed on the party of Felicissimus; and Cyprian, united with the bishops of North Africa, succeeded in putting an end to the schism.

It is true, the party did not at once give up their opposition. They sought to extend their influence in this part of the Church; and several of the African bishops, who were at variance with their other colleagues, or who had been deposed for their bad conduct, united themselves to this party. They chose in the place of Cyprian, as bishop of Carthage, Fortunatus, one of the five disorderly presbyters. They sent delegates to Rome, for the purpose of gaining over to their side this principal Church of the West, and there demanded a hearing of the charges which they had to bring against Cyprian; but they were unable to dissolve the bond of friendship existing between the two most influential bishops of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 52.

the West, although their clamours excited a momentary sensation. In a letter, expressing in a remarkable manner the spirit of the episcopal theocracy,—a theocracy that savoured more of Judaism than of Christianity,<sup>1</sup>—Cyprian urged the Roman bishop to defend against the schismatics the unity of the Church founded on the union of the bishops. In the same letter, he strenuously contends also for the independence of the bishops in their own dioceses. “Since it has been decided by us all,” he writes, “and is, moreover, just and right, that every man’s cause should be examined into on the spot where the wrong has been done, and since *his own part* of the flock has been allotted to each pastor, which he is to guide and govern as *one who must render to the Lord an account of his stewardship*; those who are under our jurisdiction ought not to be suffered to go where they please, and by their deceptions and effrontery interrupt the harmony of the united bishops, but they should be obliged to prosecute their causes where accusers and witnesses of their offences can be had.”

It is clear, even from this exhibition of the case, in which we have been able to use the reports of only one party as the sources of our information, that Cyprian’s conduct in this controversy was not wholly free from reproach; and we should, perhaps, find still more to censure, were it in our power to compare together the reports of the opposite parties. In this regard, a letter of Cyprian,<sup>2</sup> addressed to one of the opposition, Florentius Pupianus, who, having maintained a good confession under the pains of torture, stood in high authority as a martyr, is particularly deserving of notice; for this letter is in answer to another, and hence we may gather from it what Pupianus had to object against Cyprian. Although not free from that error of the *separatist* tendency which attaches undue importance to the subjective views and feelings, yet he appears to have been a pious, well-meaning man,—certainly not disinclined to hearken to reason. He had referred to many charges against Cyprian, of which we possess no further distinct information. He asserted that he was at a loss to say what he would not part with, sooner than enter into terms of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 55 ad Cornel.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 69.

fellowship with him as a bishop.<sup>1</sup> He reminds him that priests should be humble, as even our Lord and his apostles were humble.<sup>2</sup>

Cyprian, by virtue of a tendency of mind not uncommon in North Africa, was inclined to lay too great stress on unusual psychological phenomena, on presentiments, visions, and dreams, and was thus exposed to many delusions. He doubtless insisted on the voice of the Spirit, which he pretended to have heard on these occasions where he ought to have maintained his positions on rational grounds ; but Pupian disdained these evidences.<sup>3</sup>

The way in which Cyprian replied to this person was certainly not calculated to remove his scruples. Without entering at all into the matter of his opponent's charges, Cyprian continually insists on the same thing,—the inviolable authority of the bishop ordained of God,—and declares it impiety for any man to set up himself as a judge over the *judicium Dei et Christi*. He maintains that, as the bishop stands in fellowship with the entire Church, so the Church rests on the bishop ; and whoever separates from the bishop, separates from the Church.<sup>4</sup> His hierarchical arrogance inspired in him dreams and visions, which he pronounced divine revelations. He pretended that he had heard a divine voice, saying, “ He that believes not Christ, who appoints the priest, will be compelled to believe him when he avenges the priest.”<sup>5</sup> He brings in proof of the necessity of the obedience to be rendered to the bishop, the fact that even the bees had a queen which they obeyed, and robbers, a captain whom they followed in all things. Moreover, the way in which he appeals to the testimony of Christians and pagans concerning his humility, is not exactly suited to refute what Pupian had said respecting his want of that virtue.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This we gather from Cyprian's answer : *Dixisti, scrupulum tibi esse tollendum de animo, in quem incidisti.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sacerdotes humiles esse debere, quia et Dominus et Apostoli ejus humiles fuerunt.*

<sup>3</sup> As may be inferred from Cyprian's words : *Quanquam sciam somnia ridicula et visiones ineptas videri.*

<sup>4</sup> *Unde scire debes, episcopum in ecclesia esse, et ecclesiam in episcopo et, si quis cum episcopo non sit, in ecclesia non esse.*

<sup>5</sup> *Qui Christo non credit sacerdotem facienti, postea credere incipiet, sacerdotem vindicanti.*

<sup>6</sup> *Humilitatem meam et fratres omnes et gentiles quoque optime novunt et diligunt et tu quoque noveras et diligebas, cum adhuc in ecclesia esses et mecum communicares.*

When Cyprian wrote the above-mentioned letter, in the year 253 or 254,—for, according to his own account, he had then administered the episcopal office for a period of six years,—the conventicles of this party, where the holy supper was distributed, still remained open.<sup>1</sup> Pupian had reproached him also with this, that by his fault a part was separated from the whole community.<sup>2</sup> Commodian, who wrote his *Christian Admonitions* at a somewhat later period, considered it still needful to combat this separatist tendency, which, as usually happens, perhaps continued to be cherished for a short time even after the occasion was forgotten which first called it forth. He rebukes those who see the motes in others' eyes, but cannot discern the beam that is in their own.<sup>3</sup>

The second schism had its origin in the Roman Church; and, as in the suppression of the first, Cornelius of Rome co-operated with Cyprian of Carthage, so in this we see Cyprian joined with Cornelius in maintaining the church unity. This latter division, like the former, sprung out of a controversy relating to the choice of a bishop, and from the collision of opposite opinions respecting the proper administration of church penance; but with this difference, that, in the first case, the schism proceeded from the laxer party, in the last, from the more rigid one. The immediate occasion which led to the actual outbreak of this as well as the other schisms, were various occurrences which took place during the persecution of Decius. We have already observed, that in the Roman Church, the prevailing inclination was on the whole to the milder principle in regard to the matter of penance; but there was also in that Church a more rigid party, at the head of which stood *Novatian*, an eminent presbyter, who had acquired celebrity as a theological writer.

For the rest, we possess but scanty means of accurate informa-

<sup>1</sup> As Cyprian himself gives us to understand, when he says: *Frustra sibi blandiri eos, qui, pacem cum sacerdotibus Dei non habentes, obrepunt et latenter apud quosdam communicare se credunt.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sripsisti quoque, quod ecclesia nunc propter me portionem sui in dispenso habeat.*

<sup>3</sup> *Cap. 66:*

*Dispositum tempus venit nostris. Pax est in orbe  
Et ruina simul blandiente seculo premit  
Præcipitis populi, quem in schisma misistis.  
Conspicitis stipulam coherentem in oculis nostris,  
Et vestris in oculis non vultis cernere trabem.*

tion with regard to the character of this man,—not enough to enable us to form any certain conclusions as to the relation of his views on this question and of his whole conduct in this affair to the peculiar bent of his disposition; for the sayings of exasperated enemies, and representations which everywhere bear the marks of passionate exaggeration, are of course entitled to no credit. When we endeavour to separate the facts at bottom from the distorted and spiteful representations of Novatian's opponents, the following presents itself as the most probable state of the case. Novatian had been thrown, by fierce conflicts within, from an earnest frame of mind into one of those states, usually considered in those times as a demoniacal possession. This was for him, as it was for so many others of that period, the hard way to faith. It was to the prayer of an exorcist of the Roman Church that he,—who had perhaps already been touched in various ways by the power of Christianity,—owed his restoration for the moment. From this violent convulsion of his whole being, he fell into a severe sickness, whence first resulted his entire and radical cure. In the course of this sickness his faith became established, and seeing death near at hand, he received baptism on the sick bed. He found in Christianity peace, rest, and sanctifying power. As he became distinguished for steadfastness in faith, clearness of Christian knowledge,—of which his writings bear witness,—for a happy faculty of teaching, and for an ardour in the pursuit of holiness, which afterwards led him to the ascetic life, the bishop Fabian ordained him presbyter, overlooking the fact that he had first made profession of his faith, and been baptized on the bed of sickness. The Roman clergy were dissatisfied from the first with this procedure; because they held to the *letter* of that church law, which required that no individual baptized on the sick bed,—no *clanicus*,—should receive ordination; but the wiser Fabian decided more according to the *spirit* than according to the *letter* of this law,<sup>1</sup> for its object was simply to exclude from

<sup>1</sup> As this is expressed in the 12th canon of the council held at Neo Cæsarea, A.D. 314; for after it had been here declared, that a person baptized in sickness could not be consecrated as a presbyter, it was assigned as a reason, "that such faith did not spring from free conviction, but was forced" (*οὐκ ἐκ προαιρέσεως γὰρ ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης.*) Hence, too, an exception was made, viz. unless it might be permitted on account of his subsequent zeal and faith (*διὰ τὴν μετὰ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ σπουδὴν καὶ πίστιν.*) This exception might apply to Novatian.

the spiritual order those who had been induced to receive baptism without true repentance, conviction, and knowledge, in the momentary agitation excited by the fear of death. In Novatian's case, every apprehension of this kind was removed by his subsequent life. For a season, he exchanged the active life of a practical ecclesiastic for the noiseless seclusion of the ascetic; but afterwards, perhaps not till he had made up his mind to place himself at the head of a party, he was induced once more to resume the active duties of his office.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is particularly important to compare here the synodal letter of Cornelius, bishop of Rome, to Fabius, bishop of Antioch. A fragment of it has been preserved by Eusebius (l. vi. c. 43). This letter deserves notice, as illustrating that tendency of the church spirit to confound the outward with the inner life, which became, at an early period, so markedly prominent, especially at Rome. It is urged as an objection against Novatian, that his restoration from a demoniacal frenzy (see above), as it was called, by exorcists of the Roman Church, had been the means of his conversion. Whether this were the case or not, that surely could bring no reproach on Novatian's character as a Christian, which belonged simply to the means whereby he had been led to embrace Christianity. Not less wanting in good sense than unworthy of a Christian, was the reproachful language of Cornelius, that Satan was the occasion of Novatian's faith (*ὅτι γὰρ ἀφορμὴ τοῦ πιστεύσαι γέγονεν ὁ σατανᾶς*); as if the works of the evil one must not often become subservient to the foundation and increase of the kingdom of God. After his restoration from this demoniacal disease, it is objected again, that he fell into a severe fit of sickness (which may be very naturally explained: the crisis in his whole organic system, for which he was indebted to the restoration from that frenzy-like condition, was the cause of the sickness), and that in the apprehension of death, he received baptism, but baptism only by sprinkling, as his condition required (the *baptismus clinicorum* not being, according to the usual practice of those times, by immersion), if it could be said, indeed, that such a one had been baptized at all. It is objected, moreover, that subsequently he received none of those rites which should have been bestowed on him according to the usages of the Church,—not confirmation by the hand of the bishop. "*How then could he possibly have received the Holy Ghost?*" All this is *so wholly* characteristic of the outwardness and passionate slavery to prejudice of the hierarchical spirit then acquiring strength in the Roman Church! A bishop of Rome, probably Fabianus—the letter goes on to say—ordained him presbyter, against the wishes of the rest of the clergy, who objected to the ordination of a person who had been baptized by sprinkling, on a sick bed. The bishop (probably a man of more liberal spirit) wished in this case to make an exception. Cornelius again objects to him, that, during the persecution, he had shut himself up in a chamber, out of fear; and was unwilling to leave it, to perform the duties of his office in behalf of such as needed his help. When his deacons asked him to do this, he turned them off with the reply, that "he was the friend of another philosophy." We can here, to be sure, merely *conjecture* what the fact at bottom is, which lies under the distorted representation of Cornelius' hatred. By the *ἐπίστα φιλοσοφία*, is to be understood, probably, the secluded life of the ascetic as compared to that of the practical ecclesiastic. Novatian may have retired, for a season, into solitude, and withdrawn himself from public occupations. This is in keeping with the austere character which expresses itself in his principles of penitence; and he might, as an as-

Some slight hints of Cyprian by no means suffice to prove that Novatian, previous to his conversion, had been a stoic philosopher, and that the spirit of the stoic morality, mixing in with his Christianity, had produced that severe tone of thinking which distinguished him on these matters. His principles admit of so natural an explanation from the sternness of his Christian character, he acted in this case so entirely in the spirit of a whole party of the Church in his time, that there is the less need of attempting to derive them from some outward source, for which there is not the least ground of historical evidence.<sup>1</sup>

Here a question arises of considerable importance, as the right answer to it would materially assist us in forming a judgment both as to the matters in dispute, and as to the character of Novatian. It is this,—whether his opposition was in the first place to Cornelius as bishop, or to the milder principles of church penance. According to the accusations of his passionate opponents, we must, indeed, suppose that in the outset he was striving, from motives of ambition, after the episcopal dignity, and was thence induced to excite these troubles and throw himself at the head of a party. If it could be proved, that during the Decian persecution he still belonged to the milder party, it might in this way be made to appear probable that he had been driven to those extremes by outward causes of excitement. Now the Roman clergy, in the time of the Decian persecution, and while they were without a bishop, sent to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage,<sup>2</sup> a letter in which he was informed of their decision, that absolution ought to be granted at the extremity of death to all lapsed persons who manifested true penitence;—a decision at ecetic, too, stand in high consideration with the Church. Novatian may have been wrong in this respect, that by the misleadings of a false asceticism, he forgot Christian charity, and was unwilling to leave his spiritual quiet and solitude, to serve the brethren who needed his priestly offices; but Cornelius may have allowed himself to invent for his conduct on this occasion another motive, inconsistent with Novatian's character.

<sup>1</sup> It is by no means clear, that Novatian's opponents seriously thought of deriving his peculiar views from any such source as this. When Cyprian objects to these views, that they are more stoic than Christian (ep. 52 ad Antonian), this naturally refers to their character only, and not to their origin; and when he upbraids him, "Jacet se licet et philosophiam vel eloquentiam suam superbis vocibus prædicet," the first alludes perhaps to the *πρίβων*, the pallium of the *ἀσκήτης* (see the preceding note), or to the fame of a distinguished dogmatic writer which Novatian had acquired as author of the work *De regula fidei*, or *De trinitate*. Thus, too, Cornelius speaks of him in the above-cited letter, as *Οὗτος ὁ δὲ γλατιστῆς, ὁ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἰστορήμης ὑπερασπιστῆς*.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 31.

variance with the principles of the more rigid party, according to which all who had been convicted of *peccata mortalia* should be unconditionally excluded from church absolution. And yet, according to Cyprian's testimony, this letter was composed by Novatian.<sup>1</sup> But even if Cyprian's account be entirely correct, yet, from a letter setting forth the common decision of a college of presbyters, no certain inference can be drawn with regard to the subjective opinion of the individual who composed it; for nothing else needed to proceed from him besides the form and style of composition. It may be that Novatian at this time submitted to the voice of the majority, which he afterwards felt himself bound to oppose. By the same letter, in fact, notice was also given that a settled decision on these controverted matters should finally be made at the restoration of peace, and after a new bishop had been chosen. Novatian, although himself inclined to the severer principles, might the more readily yield for the moment, in the hope of being able to succeed, when the matter should be discussed preparatory to the final decision, in procuring an authoritative sanction of his own principles. In the same letter, too, he expresses himself doubtfully enough with regard to the significancy of the absolution imparted in such cases,—"God only knows," he says, "how he will dispose of such, and by what rule he will judge them;"<sup>2</sup> language which intimates the writer's own opinion, that absolution could not with propriety be granted to such persons; that they should only be recommended to the divine mercy, and the decision of their fate left with God; although we would not deny that one might express himself thus from the position of the milder party, in the consciousness of the deceptive nature of all outward signs of penitence.<sup>3</sup> If Novatian generally performed at this time the function of secretary to the Roman Church,<sup>4</sup> he must be considered as the writer also of a

<sup>1</sup> He says, for instance, ep. 52, of this letter: *Novatiano tunc scribente et quod scripserat, sua voce recitante.*

<sup>2</sup> *Deo ipso sciente, quid de talibus faciat et qualiter iudicii sui examinet pondera.*

<sup>3</sup> See Cyprian, ep. 52: *Si nos aliquis pœnitentiæ simulatione deluserit, Deus qui non deridetur, et qui cor hominis intuetur, de his quæ nos minus perspeximus, iudicet et servorum suorum sententiam Dominus emendet.*

<sup>4</sup> Which, however, cannot be certainly inferred from the testimony of Cyprian, already cited. For it is left doubtful whether it was by a mere accident that Novatian composed that letter, or whether he wrote it in his official capacity. We must allow it,



somewhat earlier letter,<sup>1</sup> composed in the name of the Roman clergy, in which the same principles are expressed as in the second. Supposing this to be so, then what we have just said respecting the relation of the writer's own opinions to the views expressed in the communication of a public body, must be applied also to this letter.<sup>2</sup> It was never objected to Novatian, that his later views contradicted the convictions he had earlier expressed; and it admits of being easily explained how it should happen that the opposition of the more rigid party did not assume a bolder form until the close of the persecution, when the deliberations respecting the treatment of the lapsi commenced, and when the milder party obtained a leader in the person of their bishop, Cornelius. We have the less reason to doubt that it was his zeal for the more rigid principles which inspired Novatian from the first, because they accorded so perfectly with his character. The accusations of his opponents should not be suffered to embarrass us; for it is the usual way with theological polemics, to trace schisms and heresies to some outward unhallowed motive, even where there is no evidence at all that any such motive has existed. Novatian had on some occasion solemnly declared, after the Roman bishopric was vacated by the death of Fabian, that he would not be a candidate for the episcopal dignity—an office to which, perhaps, on account of the high respect entertained for him as an ascetic and a divine by a large portion of the community, he might easily have attained. But he said he had no longing for that office. We have no reason, with the bishop Cornelius, to accuse Novatian in this case of falsehood. He could say this with perfect sincerity; he, the quiet, loving ascetic, the theologian, glad to be left undisturbed to his dogmatic speculations, surely had no wish to burden himself with an office so overwhelmed with cares as that of a Roman bishop had already become. Cornelius knows, indeed, that he *secretly* aspired after

however, to be not improbable, that the theological author, in a church where learning and talent for composition were not so common, would be made the church secretary.

<sup>1</sup> The letter we have cited already at page 182, note 2, and page 308, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> In this letter, too, the subjective opinion of the writer *may* gleam through the language, where he speaks of the admonitions given to the fallen: "Ipsos cohortati sumus et hortamur, agere pœnitentiam, si quo modo indulgentiam poterunt recipere ab eo, qui potest præstare,"—though the words do not *necessarily* express as much. In the severity of tone with which this letter speaks of those bishops that forsook their communities, we might likewise recognise the sentiments of the more rigid Novatian.

the episcopal dignity; but whence had Cornelius the faculty to penetrate thus into the secret feelings and inmost recesses of his opponent's heart? Cyprian himself intimates that a party strife *concerning principles*, in the outset wholly objective, had preceded; and it was not until this dispute made a schism inevitable that the opposite party set up another bishop, as their chief, against Cornelius.<sup>1</sup> Inspired by his ascetic zeal, Novatian was only contending for what he conceived to be the purity of the Church, and against the decline of discipline, without wishing or seeking for anything besides. Settled in his own convictions, zealous in the defence of them, but averse, by natural disposition, to everything that savoured of a boisterous outward activity, he was, against his own will, made the head of a party by those who agreed with him in principles, and compelled by them to assume the episcopal dignity. In this regard he could say with truth, in his letter to Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, "*that he had been hurried on against his will.*"<sup>2</sup>

The man who, properly, was the *moving soul* of this party, and to whose influence, doubtless, it was owing that they broke entirely with Cornelius and created another bishop for themselves, came from a different quarter. *Novatus*, the Carthaginian presbyter, who had been the chief instigator of the troubles in the Church of North Africa, had left that country, when Cyprian gained the ascendancy; whether it was that he no longer agreed with the principles of Felicissimus, and yet could not be reconciled to Cyprian, and would not have him for his bishop, or whether it was only the *failure* of his intrigues against Cyprian that induced him to this step, he had betaken himself to Rome, where he found those disputes already existing in the bud. His temperament did not allow him to lie idle and neutral where strife and agitation were going on. According to the principles which, in common with the other four presbyters and Felicissimus, he had advocated at Carthage, he ought to have leaned to the cause of Cornelius.<sup>3</sup> But whether he had now undergone a radical

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian, ep. 42: *Diversæ partis obstinata et inflexibilis pertinacia non tantum matris sinum recusavit; sed etiam, gliscente et in pejus recrudescente discordia, episcopum sibi constituit.*

<sup>2</sup> "Οτι ἄκων ἤχθη. Euseb. l. vi. c. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Mosheim defends Novatian against the reproach of contradicting himself by recalling the fact, that Novatian was not one of those five presbyters, and that he agreed with

change in his views on the matters in dispute, either through the influence of Novatian, his superior as a theoretical theologian, or in consequence of his ardent temperament, so ready to fly from one extreme to another; or whether he took no interest in the real object of the dispute, either at Carthage or at Rome, but was only, in his way, everywhere a friend to the party in opposition; whether he was inclined to espouse the cause of that party which *had no bishop at its head*, or whether he hated Cornelius for other reasons,—it suffices to know, that Novatus enlisted warmly in the contest for the principles of Novatian. He was the man, wherever he might be, at Carthage or at Rome, to become the moving spring of agitation, although he placed some one else at the head, and caused everything to move under the name of the latter. Thus may it have been through *his* active influence, that the schism became more decided in its character, and that Novatian was forced by this party to place himself as bishop, in opposition to Cornelius.

As to the latter, he had been governed, in his treatment of those who had fallen during the persecution of Decius, by the milder principles of the Church. He had received many to church fellowship, who were accused, at least by the other party, of being *sacrificati*. It was laid to his account, by Novatian and his followers, that he had polluted the Church by the admission of the unclean; and on both sides great liberties were taken in ascribing the actions of the opposite party to secret motives, calculated to place them in the most unfavourable light. As Cornelius pretended to believe that Novatian acted under the impulse of an ambitious longing after the episcopal dignity, so a part at least of Novatian's followers attributed the mildness of Cornelius towards others to the consciousness of similar guilt in himself, for he, as they affirmed, was a libellaticus.<sup>1</sup> Both parties sought, as usual in such cases of dispute, to secure on their own side the

these and with Felicissimus, not in every respect, but only in their opposition to Cyprian. But the evidence above cited stands in the way of this assertion. The strongest argument which Mosheim brings in favour of his opinion is, that Cyprian, who hunted up every possible charge against Novatian, yet *never* accuses him, even when he had occasion for so doing, of self-contradiction. But it may be conceived, that Cyprian was loath to touch on this point, because he had reason to fear a retort on account of his own change of principles.

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian, ep. 52.

verdict of the great metropolitan churches at Alexandria, Antioch, and Carthage, and both sent delegates to those communities. The zeal shewn by Novatian for the strictness of church discipline and the purity of Christian conduct, to the honesty of which zeal his own life bore testimony, and the authority of certain confessors united with him in the beginning, procured for his delegates a favourable reception. One bishop, Fabius of Antioch, was even on the point of deciding in his favour. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, a mild, prudent, liberal-minded man, was opposed to the Novatian principles from the first; but he began with trying by friendly persuasions to prevail on Novatian to submit. He wrote in reply to his application,<sup>1</sup> "If you have been urged on, as you say, against your own will, you will prove this by voluntarily turning about; for there is nothing you ought not to be willing to suffer rather than create a schism in the Church of God. And martyrdom incurred for the sake of preventing such a schism would be not less glorious than martyrdom to avoid being an idolater; nay, it would, in my opinion, be a nobler act; for in the one case, you become a martyr for the peace of your own soul, in the other, for the good of the entire Church. If, then, you should now, either by persuasion or by constraint, restore the brethren to unanimity, the good you would thus effect would exceed the evil which you have occasioned. The latter would not be charged to your account, and the former would redound to your praise. But should they refuse to follow you, and the affair prove impracticable, hasten at least to deliver *your own* soul. Follow after peace; and I bid you farewell in the Lord." But Novatian was too firmly set in his opinions, and too far carried away by his polemic zeal, to listen to such representations as these. The amiable Dionysius, therefore, now declared more decidedly against him, and used his influence also to draw away others from his party. He accused him of promulgating the most mischievous doctrines concerning God, and of misrepresenting the compassionate Saviour as an unmerciful being.<sup>2</sup>

Novatian might now rely with the more confidence on finding

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. l. vi. c. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. vii. c. 8: Τὸν χρηστότατον κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, ὡς ἀνηλεῆ στυγεροῦσιν.

Dionysius  
to  
Novatian

support in North Africa, because Cyprian had himself been hitherto inclined to favour similar principles on the matter of penitence. But meanwhile Cyprian, as we have already observed, had changed his views and his line of conduct, thus bringing upon himself the charge of inconsistency and fickleness of mind.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he looked upon Novatian as a disturber of the church unity, who set up himself against a bishop regularly chosen and appointed by God himself, and who would prescribe his own peculiar principles as laws for the entire Church.

The controversy with the Novatian party turned upon two general points; one relating to the principles of penitence, the other to the question, what constitutes the idea and essence of a true church? In respect to the first point of dispute, Novatian had been often unjustly accused of maintaining, that no person, having once violated his baptismal vows, can ever obtain forgiveness of sin,—he is certainly exposed to eternal damnation. But first, Novatian by no means maintained that a Christian is a perfect saint; he spoke here not of all sins, but assuming as valid the above-mentioned distinction between “*peccata venialia*” and “*peccata mortalia*,” he was treating only of the latter. Again, he was speaking by no means of the *divine forgiveness of sin*, but only of the Church tribunal, of *absolution* by the Church. The *Church*, he would say, has no right to grant absolution to a person who, by any mortal sin, has trifled away the pardon obtained for him by Christ, and appropriated to him by baptism. No counsel of God, touching the case of such persons, has been revealed; for the forgiveness of sin, which the Gospel assures us of, relates only to sins committed before baptism. We ought doubtless to be interested for such fallen brethren, but nothing can be done for them save to exhort them to repent, and to commend them to God’s mercy. “The sacrificati,” Novatian wrote,<sup>2</sup> “must not be received to the communion; they should only be exhorted to repentance,—the forgiveness of their sins must be left to that God who alone has power to forgive sin.” That this was Novatian’s doctrine, even Cyprian, though in the heat of controversy he was not always mindful of it, evidently presup-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 52: Ne me aliquis existimet, a proposito meo leviter recessisse.

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Socrat. l. iv. c. 28.

poses, when he says,<sup>1</sup> “ Oh, what mockery of the deceived brethren, what empty cheating of those afflicted, unhappy men, to exhort them to a repentance whereby they are to satisfy God, and yet deprive them of the salvation which they were to obtain by this satisfaction! To say to your brother, mourn, weep tears, sigh day and night, abound in good works, so thou mayest wash away thy sins, but after all thou shalt die *without the Church*. Thou must do all that serves to obtain peace, but the peace thou seekest thou shalt not obtain! Who would not give up at once? Who would not sink in very despair? Think you the husbandman could labour, were it said to him, ‘ Bestow all diligence and care on the culture of your fields, but you shall reap no harvest?’ ” It must be allowed that Cyprian, even in what he says here, does not enter enough into his opponent’s train of thought, and is not entirely fair towards him. For it was by no means Novatian’s doctrine, that all the efforts of a person doing penance in this sense, were to no purpose. He maintained *only*, that the Church was not warranted to announce to him the forgiveness of sin, which was sought and which divine grace might bestow.

As we see from Novatian’s declaration in the passage just quoted from Socrates, the question in this controversy related, in the outset, only to *one of those offences* reckoned among the *peccata mortalia*, only to acts involving the denial of Christianity. On the supposition that Novatian was at first so severe only against *this* class of offences, Cyprian was right in attacking the standard of the whole moral judgment which must lie at the basis of this mode of procedure,—in combating the notion, that barely *such* offences were to be denominated sins against God, denial of God, denial of Christianity; as if every sin were not a sin against God, a practical denial of God, and of Christianity. “ It must be allowed,” says Cyprian,<sup>2</sup> “ the sin of an adulterer and deceiver is more aggravated than that of the libellatici; for the latter have fallen into sin by yielding to force, under the wrong impression that it is enough merely not to have sacrificed, while the former sins out of free choice. Adulterers and deceivers, according to the Apostle Paul, Eph. v. 5, are as idolaters.” “ For since our bodies are the members of Christ, and each of us is a temple of God, whoever by adultery violates God’s temple,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 52.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 52.

offends God himself; and whoever in committing sin does the will of the devil, serves evil spirits and false gods: for evil works proceed not from the Holy Spirit, but from the instigations of the adversary, and evil desires proceeding from the unclean spirit impel men to act against God and to serve Satan."

But later, at least, the Novatian party applied their principle avowedly to the entire class of "mortal sins;" which application Novatian himself most probably had in mind from the beginning, though the immediate turn of the controversy led him to speak of one description only of mortal sins. The ascetic was assuredly not disposed to treat sins of voluptuousness with too much indulgence.

Again, Novatian speaks, in the passage from Socrates, of those only who had sacrificed. But if Cyprian does not misrepresent Novatian, the latter, in the outset at least, must, with great injustice, have placed in the same category, all who had in any way proved unfaithful under the persecution, as well libellatici as sacrificati, without respect to the different gradations of guilt, or to the different circumstances that accompanied it; and utterly refused absolution to all libellatici as well as sacrificati, without considering how many of the libellatici were guilty rather of an error and mistake of the understanding than of an actual sin.

There is beautifully expressed, in the manner in which Cyprian combated these principles of Novatian,<sup>1</sup> the loving, paternal heart of the pious shepherd, following his Master's example—the animating spirit of Christian charity and Christian sympathy. Having supposed the case, that many a libellatic, whose conscience reproved him of no crime, might be tempted, in despair, to tear himself away, with his family, from the Church, and seek admission into some heretical sect, he observes—"At the day of judgment, it will be laid to our charge that we took no care of the wounded sheep, and on account of one that was diseased, left many sound ones to perish; that while our Lord left the ninety and nine whole sheep, and went after the one that had wandered and become weary, and when he had found it, brought it away himself on his shoulders, we not only do not seek after the fallen, but even reject them when they return to us." He contrasts with this severity several passages from the Apostle Paul (1

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 52.

To the west. beam of a scale, that I can't find the exact ...

And writes on manuscript ... after ...

Corinth. ix. 22 ; xii. 26 ; x. 33, etc.), and then adds, " The case stands differently with the philosophers and stoics, who say all sins are alike, and that a sound man should not easily be brought to bend. But the difference is wide betwixt philosophers and Christians. We are bound to keep aloof from what proceeds, not from God's grace, but from the pride of a severe philosophy. Our Lord says in his Gospel, ' Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful ;' and ' the whole need not a physician, but the sick ;' but such a physician he cannot be, who says, I take care only of the sound, who need no physician. Behold, yonder lies thy brother, wounded in battle by his enemy. On the one hand, Satan is trying to destroy him whom he has wounded ; on the other, Christ exhorts us not to leave him to perish, whom he has redeemed. Which cause do we espouse ; on whose side do we stand ? Do we help the devil to finish his work of destruction ? Do we, like the priest and the Levite in the Gospel, pass by our brother lying half dead ? Or do we, like the priests of God and of Christ, following Christ's precepts and example, snatch the wounded man from the grasp of his enemy ; that having done every thing for his salvation, we may leave the final decision of his case to the judgment of God ?"<sup>1</sup>

Not ... the ...

Beautifully and truly said as all this was, in opposition to the spirit of Novatianism, yet Novatian's principles could neither be touched nor refuted by it. Novatian too declared that the fallen brethren must be cared for, and exhorted to repentance. He too acknowledged God's mercy towards sinners, and allowed it right to recommend the fallen to that mercy ; but that men could once more surely announce to them that forgiveness of sins they had trifled away, this he was unwilling to concede, because he could find no objective ground for such confidence. Hence the only way in which he could be substantially refuted was to point out such an objective ground of confidence for all sinners,—namely, in the merits of Christ, which the sinner needed ever but to appropriate to himself in believing penitence and believing trust, when the true relation was unfolded between the objective and subjective

<sup>1</sup> Ut curatum Deo judici reservemus ; upon the supposition, that is, that absolution cannot forestall God's judgment, but remains valid at the divine tribunal only when God, who tries the secrets of the heart, finds the temper of the man to correspond with this absolution.



in justification and regeneration. But on this point, Novatian's opponents themselves had not the clearest views; for though, in opposing his principles, they did sometimes refer, indeed, to 1 John ii. 1, 2, yet in so doing, they expressed themselves as if the forgiveness of sin obtained by Christ, related properly to those sins alone which had been committed before baptism; and as if in respect to sins committed afterwards, there was need of a new and special satisfaction by good works. This position once taken, Novatian might fairly ask, who can vouch for it, that such a satisfaction will suffice?

With regard to the second main point of the controversy,<sup>1</sup> the idea of the Church, Novatian maintained, that one of the essential marks of a true Church being purity and holiness, every church which, neglecting the right exercise of church discipline, tolerated in its bosom, or readmitted to its communion, such persons as by gross sins have broken their baptismal vow, ceased by that very act to be a true Christian Church, and forfeited all the rights and privileges of such a church. Hence the Novatianists, as they held themselves to be alone the pure, immaculate Church, called themselves "*οι καθαροί*," the Pure. It was rightly urged against Novatian, that individuals could be accountable and punishable only for their own sins, and not for the sins of others in which they had no share; that it was only the inner fellowship with sinners by the disposition of the heart, not outward companionship with them, that tended necessarily to contaminate; and that it was a mere assumption of human pride, to pretend to the exercise here below of that judicial power of separation between the true and false members of the Church, which the Lord has reserved in his own hands. On this point, Cyprian finely remarks, "Though the tares appear to exist in the Church, this should not disturb our faith or our love so far as to lead us to separate ourselves from the Church itself, because there are tares in it. We should see to it, that we ourselves belong to the wheat, so that when the grain is gathered into our Lord's garner, we may receive the reward of our work. The Apostle says, 'in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and of silver,

<sup>1</sup> Pacianus, of Barcelona, who wrote in the latter part of the fourth century, concisely expressed the two main positions of Novatian in these words: "Quod mortale peccatum ecclesia donare non possit, immo quod ipsa pereat recipiendo peccantes." Ep. iii. contra Novatian. Galland. bibl. patr. T. vii.

but also of wood and of earth ; and some to honour and some to dishonour. Let us labour with all diligence, that we may be vessels of gold or of silver. To dash the earthen vessel in pieces, belongs to the Lord alone, to whom is also given the rod of iron. The servant cannot be greater than his Master ; and no man may arrogate to himself what the Father has given only to his Son ; nor suppose himself able to wield the fan to winnow and cleanse the floor ; or of separating, by mere human judgment, every tare from the wheat."

But after all it was impossible in this direction to find the real point at issue for the confutation of Novatianism ; rather, Novatian and his opponents were here involved in the same fundamental error, and differed only in their application of it. It was the fundamental error of confounding the notions of the visible and the invisible Church. Hence was it that Novatian, transferring the predicate of purity and unspotted holiness, which belongs to the invisible Church, the community of the saints as such, to the visible form in which the invisible Church appears, drew the conclusion, that every community which suffered unclean members to remain in it, ceased to be any longer a true Church. The same error of conceiving the Church as something wholly outward, which lies at the bottom of Novatian's false application of the predicates belonging to the notion of the Church, is also betrayed when he maintains that a person is made impure by outward connection with the impure in the same church fellowship. But the opponents of Novatian, who started with the same fundamental error, differ from him *only* by laying at the basis of their speculations the notion of the Church as mediated by the succession of bishops, and then deriving the predicates of purity and holiness from that notion. The Church transmitted and propagated by the succession of bishops was, in their view, as such, a pure and holy one. Novatian, on the other hand, laid at the basis of his theory the visible Church as a pure and holy one, and this was, in his view, the condition of the truly catholic Church. The catholic Church, transmitted by the succession of bishops, ceases, in his opinion, to be a truly catholic one, as soon as it becomes stained and desecrated through the fellowship of unworthy men. The more objective or subjective tendency made all the difference between the two parties, in their application of the same fundamental principle.

Now, instead of distinguishing different applications of the notion of the Church, Cyprian is contented to distinguish simply a *two-fold condition of one and the same Church*, its condition on earth, and its condition in glory, where the separation has been made complete by the final judgment. Entangled in this fundamental error of confounding Outward things with Inner, it came about on a subsequent occasion, when the controversy with Novatianism was no longer before his mind, that he approached very nearly himself to the Novatian principles, declaring to certain Spanish communities,<sup>1</sup> that by tolerating unworthy priests they would be defiled themselves; that they who remained in union with sinners would become themselves partakers of their sins.<sup>2</sup>

Out of this controversy, too, the catholic-church system, so firmly established and exactly compacted in all its parts, came forth victorious; and the Novatianists continued to linger along in the following centuries only as an insulated and insignificant sect.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Consortes et participes alienorum delictorum fieri, qui fuerint delinquentibus copulati.

## SECTION THIRD.

### CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

#### CHRISTIAN LIFE.

CHRISTIANITY, since it first entered into human nature, has operated, wherever it has struck root, with the same divine power for sanctification; and this divine power cannot be weakened by the lapse of ages. In this respect, therefore, the period of the first appearance of Christianity could have no advantage over any of the following ages of the Christian Church. There was but one peculiarity of this first period, viz. that the change wrought by Christianity, in the consciousness and life of those in whom it was produced, could not fail to be more strongly marked by the contrast it presented with what they had previously been as pagans; and so the Apostle Paul, in writing to Christians converted from paganism, reminds them of what they once were, when they walked according to the course of this world, according to the spirit that was then working in the children of disobedience—and after enumerating some of the prevailing vices of the corrupt pagan world, says to them, “And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God.” Teachers of the Church, who had been pagans, frequently appeal to such experiences of which they themselves had been the subjects. Thus Cyprian, under the first glow of conversion, witnesses of it.<sup>1</sup> “Receive from me what must be felt ere it is *learned*, what is not gathered from a course of long-continued study, but seized at once, by the shorter method of grace. While I was lying in darkness

<sup>1</sup> Ad Donat.

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and blind night, tossed about by the waves of the world, ignorant of the way of life, estranged from the truth and from the light; what divine mercy promised for my salvation, seemed to me, in my then state of mind, a hard and impracticable thing;—that a man should *be born again*, and casting off his former self, while his bodily nature remained the same, become, in soul and disposition, another man. How, said I, can *such a change* be possible; that what is so deep-rooted within should be extirpated at once? Entangled in the many errors of my earlier life, from which I could see no deliverance, I abandoned myself to my besetting sins, and, despairing of amendment, nurtured the evil within me as if it belonged to my nature. But when, after the stains of my former life had been washed away by the water of regeneration, light from on high was shed abroad in a heart now freed from guilt, made clear and pure; when I breathed the spirit of heaven, and was changed by the second birth into a *new man*, all my doubts were at once strangely resolved. That lay open, which had been shut to me; that was light, where I had seen nothing but darkness; that became easy, which was before difficult; practicable, which before seemed impossible; so that I could understand how it was that, being born in the flesh, I lived subject to sin—a worldly life, but the life I had now begun to live was the commencement of a life from God, of a life quickened by the Holy Spirit. From God, from *God*, I repeat, proceeds all we can now do; from Him we derive our life and our power.” Justin Martyr describes thus the change produced in Christians: <sup>1</sup> “We, who were once slaves of lust, now have delight only in purity of morals; we, who once practised arts of magic, have consecrated ourselves to the eternal and good God; we, who once prized gain above all things, give even what we have to the common use, and share it with such as are in need; we, who once hated and murdered one another, who, on account of differences of customs, would have no common hearth with strangers, do now, since the appearance of Christ, live together with them; we pray for our enemies; we seek to convince those that hate us without cause, so that they may order their lives according to Christ’s glorious doctrine, and attain to the joyful hope of receiving like blessings with us from God, the Lord of all.” Origen appeals to

<sup>1</sup> Apolog. ii.

the effects wrought by Christianity in the communities scattered through the world, as evidence of the truth of the evangelical history. "The work of Jesus," he says,<sup>1</sup> "reveals itself among all mankind, where communities of God, founded by Jesus, exist, which are composed of men reclaimed from a thousand vices; and to this day the name of Jesus produces a wonderful mildness, decency of manners, humanity, goodness, and gentleness in *those* who embrace the faith in the doctrines of God and Christ, and of the judgment to come, not hypocritically, for the sake of worldly advantage and human ends, but in sincerity and truth."

As the contrast of Christianity with paganism—which is none other than that of the old with the new man—was strongly marked in comparing different periods of the life of the same individual, so was it also, in comparing the Christian life with the pagan, as a whole; for the opposition now stood forth open and undisguised; since paganism needed not as yet to hide itself under any foreign guise. To this contrast Origen referred, when he said, "The Christian communities, compared with those among whom they dwell, are as lights in the world."<sup>2</sup>

The inducements to a mere outward Christianity that presented themselves in later times,—the worldly advantages connected with the profession of Christianity as the state religion; custom which leads men, without any special reasons or inward call in their own minds to abide by the religion of their fathers,—all this, in the period of which we treat—especially the early part of it—could effect nothing for the advantage of Christianity. The majority forsook a religion recommended to them by education, by the reverence for antiquity, by the force of custom, by the worldly benefits connected with its observance, for one which had *against it* everything that favoured the other, and which, from the very outset, required of them many sacrifices, and exposed them to many dangers and sufferings.

Still one must be very slightly versed in human nature to believe that in any period whatever there could be a total absence

<sup>1</sup> c. Cels. l. i. § 67: 'Εμποιοὶ δὲ Θαυμασίαν πραότητα καὶ καταστολὴν τοῦ ἥθους καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ χρηστότητα καὶ ἡμερότητα ἐν τοῖς μὴ διὰ τὰ βιωτικὰ ἢ τινὰς χρείας ἀνθρωπικὰς ὑποκρινάμενοις, ἀλλὰ παραδιζαμένοις γνησίως τὴν περὶ Θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς ἰσομένης κρίσεως λόγον.

<sup>2</sup> c. Cels. l. iii. c. 29.

of the causes that tend to produce a conscious or unconscious hypocrisy in the reception of Christianity. Even in this period many such inducements were at hand, particularly in those longer intervals of peace, which the Church occasionally enjoyed. Says Origen—"There was always a great diversity among those who sought Jesus, since all did not seek him in the genuine way, for the sake of their own salvation, and to receive advantage *from Him*. There were those that sought Jesus from various improper motives; whence it was, too, that they alone found peace with Him who sought Him in the right way—of whom it may with propriety be said, that they sought Him as the *Word* which was in the beginning and was with God, and for the purpose of obtaining from him fellowship with the Father."<sup>1</sup> The charitableness of the Christians offered to many a strong temptation to unite themselves to the Christian community, without having become Christians by conviction and in the temper of their minds, as is evident from the passage before cited from Origen; and Clemens of Alexandria, too, speaks of those who hypocritically adopted the Christian profession for the sake of temporal advantages.<sup>2</sup>

But besides these pretended Christians, there would be some even among those within whose hearts some seed of the Gospel had been lodged, whose case would be represented by our Lord's parable of the sower. It was not in every heart where the seed fell, that it found the congenial soil in which it would spring up immediately and bring forth fruit. In this period, as at all times, there would be those who had been for a moment touched by the power of truth, but who, neglecting to follow up the impressions they had received, proved faithless to the truth, instead of consecrating to it their whole life; or who, wishing to serve at one and the same time God and the world, soon became once more completely enslaved to the world. Whoever failed to watch over his own heart—whoever failed of seeking earnestly and constantly, with fear and trembling, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, to distinguish and separate in his inmost being what was

<sup>1</sup> Orig. T. xix. in Joh. § 3: Εἰσὶ γὰρ καὶ κατὰ μυρίας ἀποπειστικῆς τοῦ καλοῦ προθέσεως ζητοῦντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

<sup>2</sup> Stromat. i. f. 272: Μεταλήψεις χάριν τῶν κοσμικῶν προστάσεων, κοινωνικοὺς τῶν ἰπιτηδείων μαθόντες τοὺς καθωσιωμένους τῷ Χριστῷ.

of the Spirit from what was of the world, exposed himself to the same causes of dangerous self-deception, and consequently to the same fall, as Christians were liable to in other times. There are general sources of self-deception, having their seat in human nature itself, to which general sources all particular forms of it may be ultimately referred, and these manifest themselves outwardly in different ways according to different circumstances. There are also particular sources of self-deception belonging to different ages of the world. Everything in fact without us, even what in itself considered may be for man's highest advantage, is yet capable, if the true light has not risen within him, or if he does not watch over his own heart, of proving only an occasion of self-deception. Of nothing outward, no situation, relations, or circumstances, can it be unconditionally affirmed, that by these means *vital Christianity must necessarily* be promoted. That which may promote it in one man, may to another, who uses it otherwise than he ought, prove the occasion of his fall.

The contrast between Christianity and Paganism, which was so strongly marked in the life, contributed to preserve the Christian consciousness and life more pure, and to guard it against many a debasing mixture. But here also, what proved to some the means of awakening many Christian virtues, and, in general, served to promote the Christian temper of mind, became to others a source of self-deception;—to those, namely, who fancied that by a stern rejection of every thing pagan, they had quite satisfied the requisitions of Christianity, and made out of this an *opus operatum*;—when they were thus led to conceive of the warfare with the world in too outward a sense, and on this account the more easily overlooked the inner conflict with the inward world; and spiritual pride, uncharitable fanaticism, fastened at the root of their religion.

Many among the number who had been led along to Christianity by a profound sense of religious need, fell into a mistake, which hindered them from rightly appropriating to themselves the Gospel, and from giving themselves up to its divine intrinsic power. The longing after reconciliation with God and the forgiveness of sin often lay, in truth, as we have seen already, at the root of the superstition of this period; but this longing remained covered under a grossly material form. A craving of this sort



met with eagerness the annunciation of a Redeemer, the promise of the cleansing away of all sin by means of baptism ;—but this was the very source, too, of the delusion which led to the misapprehension—say rather the crass, material apprehension of what Christianity proposed. Such persons sought in Christ not a Saviour from sin, but the bestower of an outward and magical annihilation of sin. Bringing their pagan notions over with them into Christianity, they were seeking in baptism a magical illustration which could render them at once wholly pure. That outward view of the Church and the sacraments, of which we have spoken before, presented beyond doubt a convenient point of support for this erroneous notion. Hence it was that many who meant to embrace Christianity delayed their baptism for a long time, that they might meanwhile surrender themselves without disturbance to their pleasures, hoping to be made quite pure at last by the rite of baptism. Against such delusions Tertullian thus expresses himself :<sup>1</sup> “ How foolish, how wrong it is, to put off the duty of repentance, and yet expect the pardon of sin ; that is, to hold back the price, and yet reach out the hand for the goods : for it has pleased the Lord to affix *this* price to the forgiveness of sin. If those that sell, then, first examine the money for which they offered the goods, to make themselves sure that it is neither worn, filed, nor counterfeit, so we may conceive that the Lord also first makes trial of our penitence before he will bestow on us the inestimable treasure of eternal life. The divine grace, full and free forgiveness of sin, awaits those who will come to baptism ; but we also must do what belongs to our part, in order to qualify us to receive it. Thou mayst, it is true, obtain baptism easily,—by thy protestations deceiving him whose business it is to confer it on thee. But God guards his own treasure,—he will never suffer it to be surreptitiously obtained by the unworthy. In whatever darkness thou mayst veil *thy* work, God still is light. But many fancy that God is under a certain ne-

<sup>1</sup> In his book de pœnitentia, c. 6 : Quam ineptum, quam iniquum, pœnitentiam non adimplere et veniam delictorum sustinere, hoc est pretium non exhibere, ad mercedem manum emittere. Hoc enim pretio Dominus veniam addicere instituit, hac pœnitentiæ compensatione redimendam proponit impunitatem. Si ergo qui venditant, prius nummum, quo paciscuntur, examinant, ne scalptus, neve rasmus, ne adulter, etiam Dominum credimus, pœnitentiæ probationem prius inire, tantam nobis mercedem perennis scilicet vitæ concessurum.

cessity of performing even for the unworthy what he has once promised, and thus turn his free grace into an obligation." Tertullian appeals to experience to prove that in those who come in this spirit to baptism, the genuine effects of Christianity cannot be manifested, and that such individuals often fall away from their profession, since they built their house on the sand. With an eye to the same class, Origen remarks that the whole profit of baptism depends on the disposition of the recipient; that it is to be enjoyed by him only who comes to this ordinance with true penitence; that, on the other hand, baptism redounds only to the condemnation of him who is destitute of such penitence; that the spirit of renewal, therefore, which goes with baptism, is not shared by all.<sup>1</sup> To guard men against the mistake of such outward Christians, Cyprian, in his collection of Scripture proofs for a layman (*libri testimoniorum*), having laid down the position, that no man can attain to the kingdom of God, unless baptized and regenerated, adds: "It is, however, nothing for one to be baptized, and to receive the communion, who in his life gives no evidence of reformation."<sup>2</sup> And the passages he cites on this occasion from the New Testament go expressly to shew the vanity of such outward Christianity; 1 Corinth. ix. 24; Matth. iii. 10, v. 16, vii. 22; Philipp. ii. 15. He then proceeds to say, that "even the baptized person may lose the grace bestowed, and will do so unless he continues to remain pure from sin," citing in evidence the following passages of warning: John v. 14; 1 Corinth. iii. 17; 2 Corinth. ~~xv.~~ 2.

It belonged, indeed, to the peculiar essence of Christianity, that as it was capable of becoming all things to all men, of adapting itself to the most different and opposite positions of humanity, so it could let itself down even to those modes of apprehending divine things, which were as yet altogether sensuous and material; and thus, by the power of a divine *life*, beginning from within, transform them gradually from sensuous to spiritual apprehensions. We should take good care, then, in estimating the religious appearances of these primitive times, how, from the material habits of feeling and thinking which they brought along

<sup>1</sup> T. vi. Joh. c. 17.

<sup>2</sup> L. iii. c. 25, 26: Parum esse baptizari et eucharistiam accipere, nisi quis factis et opere proficiat.

from some earlier position, we make up our judgment respecting those who might really be wanting in nothing but the appropriate vessel to receive the transcendent divine element that had, in truth, filled their inner life. In this case, too, the great saying of the apostle might find its verification, that the divine treasure was received, and for a season preserved, in earthen vessels, that the abundant power might be of God and not of man. It would be, therefore, a very superficial and unjust proceeding, to conclude at once, that men who framed to themselves such strange conceptions of God, of the things of God and of his kingdom, could have nothing of the Christian life in them. But in the case of the class just described, when the sensuous element unduly predominated, and they would not yield themselves to the purifying influences of the Spirit of Christ, every motion of the higher life necessarily became vitiated by this sensuous element, and in the end suppressed. Every Christian quality was transformed into some shape of the flesh and secularized;—was thus divested of its true significancy. Thus they apprehended Christ and his kingdom. Even though the expectation of some future state of sensual bliss, of which their fanatical imaginations drew ravishing pictures to the fleshly sense, enabled them to deny the pleasures of the moment, and even to face tortures and death, yet they might be, notwithstanding all this, strangers to the true nature of the new birth, by which alone the kingdom of God can be entered;—might be wanting in the spirit of ennobling love.

Far be it from us, then, to be looking for any such appearance of the Church in which it was found without spot or blemish,—a condition of it never to be realized till the final consummation. Nor do the defenders of the cause of Christianity in this period deny the existence of such blemishes. They acknowledge that among those who called themselves Christians, were some whose lives contradicted the essential character of Christianity, and gave occasion to the heathen to blaspheme; yet they declared that such would not be recognised as Christians by the Christian communities; yet they challenge the heathen to judge every man by his life, and to chastise those whose morals deserved it, wherever they found them. Thus Justin Martyr and Tertullian express themselves.<sup>1</sup> Says the latter, “If you assert that the Christians

<sup>1</sup> Ad nationes, l. i. c. 5.

are, in avarice, in riotousness, in dishonesty, the worst of men, we shall not deny that some *are* so. In the purest bodies, some freckle doubtless may be discovered." But neither should we be led away by these blemishes that attached themselves to the surface of the Church, to overlook the heavenly beauty which shone through them all. When the eye is fixed exclusively on the one or the other, the picture may be easily coloured to an ideal perfection, or sunk to a distorted caricature. An unbiassed observation will shun both these extremes.

That which our Lord himself, in his last interview with his disciples, described as the test by which his disciples might always be distinguished—as the mark of their fellowship with him and the Father in heaven, the mark of his glory dwelling in the midst of them—namely, that they loved one another,—precisely this constituted the prominent mark, plain and striking to the pagans themselves, of the first Christian fellowship. The names, "brother" and "sister," which the Christians gave to each other, were not names without meaning. The fraternal kiss, with which every one, after being baptized, was received into the community, by the Christians into whose immediate fellowship he entered—which the members bestowed on each other just before the celebration of the communion, and with which every Christian saluted his brother, though he never saw him before,—this was not an empty form, but the expression of Christian feelings—a token of the relation in which Christians conceived themselves to stand to each other. It was this, indeed, as we have had occasion to remark already, which, in a cold and selfish age, struck the pagans with wonder,—to behold men of different countries, ranks, relations, stages of culture, so intimately bound together; to see the stranger who came into a city, and by his letter of recognition (his *epistola formata*) made himself known to the Christians of the place as a brother beyond suspicion, finding at once among those to whom he was personally unknown all manner of brotherly sympathy and protection.

The care of providing for the support and maintenance of strangers, of the poor, the sick, the old, of widows and orphans, and of those in prison on account of their faith, devolved on the whole Church. This was one of the main purposes for which the collection of voluntary contributions in the assemblies convened for

public worship was instituted; and the charity of individuals, moreover, led them to emulate each other in the same good work. In particular, it was considered as belonging to the office of the Christian matron to provide for the poor, for the brethren languishing in prison, to shew hospitality to strangers. The hindrance occasioned to this kind of Christian activity, is reckoned by Tertullian among the disadvantages of a mixed marriage. "What heathen," says he, "will suffer his wife to go about from one street to another to the houses of strangers, to the meanest hovels indeed, for the purpose of visiting the brethren? What heathen will allow her to steal away into the dungeon to kiss the chain of the martyr? If a brother arrives from abroad, what reception will he meet with in the house of the *stranger*?<sup>1</sup> If an alms is to be bestowed, storehouse and cellar are shut fast."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, he counts it among the felicities of a marriage contracted between Christians, that the wife is at liberty to visit the sick and relieve the needy, and is never straitened or perplexed in the bestowment of her charities.<sup>3</sup>

Nor did the active brotherly love of each community confine itself to what transpired in its own immediate circle, but extended itself also to the wants of the Christian communities in distant lands. On urgent occasions of this kind, the bishops made arrangements for special collections. They appointed fasts; so that what was saved, even by the poorest of the flock, from their daily food, might help to supply the common wants.<sup>4</sup> When the communities of the provincial towns were too poor to provide any relief in cases of distress, they had recourse to the more wealthy communities of the metropolis. Thus it had happened in Numidia, that certain Christians, men and women, had been carried away captive by neighbouring barbarians, and the Numidian churches were unable to contribute the sum of money required for their ransom; they therefore applied to the more wealthy communities of the great capital of North Africa. The

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian meant, probably, that a peculiar emphasis should be laid on the word "stranger,"—in *aliena domo*, in the house which, to a Christian, is a stranger's—when the house of a Christian matron ought not to be a stranger's house to him.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad uxorem*, l. ii. c. 4.

<sup>3</sup> L. c. c. 8: *Libere æger visitatur, indigens sustentatur, eleemosynæ sine tormento.*

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *de jejuniis*, c. 13: *Episcopi universæ plebi mandare jejunia assolent,—industria stipium conferendarum.*

bishop Cyprian of Carthage very shortly raised a contribution of more than four thousand dollars,<sup>1</sup> and transmitted the whole to the Numidian bishops, with a letter full of the spirit of Christian, brotherly affection.<sup>2</sup> "In afflictions of this sort," he writes to them, "who ought not to feel pained, who ought not to look on the distress of his brother as his own, when the Apostle Paul tells us, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and in another place says, 'Who is weak and I am not weak?' Wherefore in the present case also it becomes us to regard the captivity of our brethren as if it were our own, and the distress of those now in peril as our own distress, since we are united together by one bond of love. And not love alone, but religion, ought to urge and stimulate us to redeem the brethren who are our members. For when the Apostle Paul again, in another place, asks, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' we must be reminded here, if charity alone were not enough to impel us to aid our brethren, that it is the temple of God which has been made captive, and that it does not become us, by delay, and in neglect of our own distress, to suffer that temple to remain long in bondage. And when the same apostle tells us, that 'As many of you as are baptized have put on Christ,' we are bound, in our captive brethren, to see Christ, and to redeem him from captivity, who has redeemed us from death; so that he who delivered us from the jaws of Satan, and who now himself dwells and abides in us, may be rescued from the hands of the barbarians; and he be ransomed for a sum of money, who has ransomed us by his blood and cross. Meanwhile, he has suffered this to happen to try our faith—whether each one of us is ready to do for the other what, in like circumstances, he would wish to have done for himself. For who that respects the claims of humanity and of mutual love, ought not, if he is a father, to consider it as though his own children were among those barbarians, and if a husband, as though his own wife were there in captivity, to the grief and shame of the marriage bond? It is indeed our earnest hope, that you may never be visited again with a like affliction, and that our brethren may be saved by the mighty power of the Lord from the recurrence of

<sup>1</sup> Sestertia centum millia nummorum.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 60.

those dangers to which they are now exposed. But should any similar calamity again befall you, to try the love and faith of our hearts, delay not to inform us of it by letter; for be assured, it is the prayer of all the brethren here that nothing of the kind may again happen, but if it should, they are ready cheerfully and abundantly to assist you."

That from which such works took the impress of a truly Christian character was indeed nothing else than the temper—which here expresses itself—of Christian love simply following the impulse from within. This Christian character was no longer present in its purity when the charitable action had reference to an outward end; when it was converted into a ground of merit before God, into a means for extinguishing sin. And this disturbing element found entrance whenever the Christian consciousness became in any way diverted from its central point, so as to cease referring to Christ as the sole ground for salvation. In proportion as the reference to Christ, which the habit already noticed, of confounding the Church with a set of outward forms, had no tendency to encourage, was forgotten, in the same proportion rose the estimate which men placed on their own doings, and on the merit of good works. This also must be considered as belonging to the reaction of the Jewish principle, which had been overcome by the independent development of Christianity among the pagans, but which afterwards found means of again introducing itself. In the third century we may observe both modes of contemplating acts of charity running along side by side, and occasionally crossing each other; as for example, in the tract composed by Cyprian with a view to exhort Christians, many of whom had grown cold in brotherly love, to the exercise of this virtue—the tract *de opere et eleemosynis*. To the father of a family, who, when invited to some charitable act, excuses himself on the plea that he is obliged to provide for a large family of children, he says, "seek for your sons another father than the frail and mortal one, even an almighty and everlasting Father of spiritual children. Let him be your children's guardian and provider—let him, with his divine majesty, be their protector against all injustice of the world. You who are striving more to secure for them an earthly than a heavenly inheritance, seeking rather to commend your sons to Satan than to Christ, incur a double sin,

in neglecting to secure for your children the help of their heavenly Father, and in teaching them to prize their earthly inheritance more than Christ.

In times of public calamity, the contrast was strikingly displayed between the cowardly selfishness of the pagans and the self-sacrificing brotherly love of the Christians. Let us hear how the bishop Dionysius of Alexandria describes this contrast, as it was manifested in the different conduct of the Christians and the pagans during a contagious sickness, which, in the reign of the Emperor Gallienus, raged in that great capital. "To the pagans, this pestilence appeared a most frightful calamity that left nothing to hope for; not so to us. We regarded it as a special trial and exercise for our faith. It was true of most of our brethren that, in the fulness of their brotherly love, they spared not themselves. Their only anxiety was a mutual one for each other; and as they waited on the sick without thinking of themselves, readily ministering to their wants, for Christ's sake, with them they cheerfully gave up their own lives. Many died, after others, by their care, had been recovered from the sickness. Some of the best among our brethren, presbyters, deacons, and distinguished men of the laity, thus ended their lives—so that the manner of their death, being the fruit of such eminent piety and mighty faith, seemed not to fall short of martyrdom. Many who took the bodies of Christian brethren into their arms and to their bosoms, composed their features, and buried them with all possible care, afterwards followed them in death. But with the heathen it was quite otherwise; those who shewed the first symptoms of the disease, they drove from them; they fled from their dearest friends. The half-dead they cast into the streets, and left the dead unburied, making it their chief care to avoid the contagion, which, however, in spite of every precaution, they could hardly escape."<sup>1</sup>

In like manner, the Christians at Carthage distinguished themselves by their disinterested conduct from the pagan world, during the pestilence which, at a somewhat earlier period, in the reign of Gallus, ravaged North Africa. The pagans, in a cowardly manner, deserted their own sick and dying. The streets were covered

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. l. vii. c. 22.



with dead bodies, which none dared to touch. Avarice alone overcame the fear of death; abandoned men took advantage of the misfortunes of others to plunder them. Meantime the pagans, instead of being led by this calamity to reflect on their own guiltiness and corruption, accused the Christians, those enemies of the gods, as the cause of it.<sup>1</sup> But Cyprian exhorted his Church to look upon the desolating scourge as a trial of their faith.<sup>2</sup> "How necessary is it, my dearest brethren," said he to them, "that this pestilence which appears among us, bringing with it death and destruction, should try men's souls—should shew whether the healthy will take care of the sick; whether relations have a tender regard for each other; *whether masters will take home their sick servants.*" It was not enough, however, to satisfy a bishop who took the Great Shepherd for his example, that the Christians should simply shew the spirit of brotherly love towards each other. He called his church together, and addressed them as follows: "If we do good only to our own, we do no more than the publicans and heathen<sup>†</sup>. But if we are the children of God, who makes his sun to rise and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust, who scatters his gifts and blessings not barely on his own, but even on those whose thoughts are far from him, we must shew it by our actions, striving to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect, blessing those that curse us, and doing good to them that despitefully use us." Animated by his fatherly words, the members of the Church quickly divided the work among them. The rich gave of their substance, the poor contributed their labour; and in a short time the bodies which filled the streets were buried, and the city delivered from the danger of a universal infection.

There were opposite sinful tendencies which Christianity taught men to avoid, and between which the development of the Christian life had to make good its way. In these times of despotism it was no rare thing to find, united with a servile spirit that gave to the creature the honour which is due to God alone—with a slavish obedience that sprung only from fear, a contempt for the laws of the state where they bore hard on selfish interests and the restraint of fear was removed. But Christianity, by the *positive*

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian. ad Demetrianum.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. de mortalitate.

spirit which went forth from it, secured men against both these errors. By it was rendered an obedience that had its root in the love of God, and pointed ultimately to *him*,—therefore a free obedience, equally removed from the slavish fear of man on the one hand, and lawless self-will on the other. The same spirit of Christianity which inculcated obedience to man for the sake of God, taught also that God should be obeyed rather than man; that every consideration must be sacrificed, property and life despised, in all cases where human authority demanded an obedience contrary to the laws and ordinances of God. Here was displayed in the Christians that true spirit of freedom, against which despotic power could avail nothing. We have already had occasion, in the first section of this history, to observe the effects of the Christian spirit in both these directions. In this sense, Justin Martyr says,<sup>1</sup> “Tribute and customs we seek uniformly, before all others, to pay over to your appointed officers, as we have been taught to do by our Master; (Matth. xxii. 21.) Therefore we pray to God alone; but you we cheerfully serve in all other things, since we acknowledge you as rulers of men.” Tertullian boldly asserted, that what the state lost in its revenue from the temples, by the spread of Christianity, would be found to be made up by what it gained in the way of tribute and customs, through the honesty of the Christians, when compared to the common frauds resorted to in paying them.<sup>2</sup> He gives to those words of Christ in Matthew xxii. 21, which were ever on the lips and in the hearts of Christians, as a maxim of daily life, the following interpretation—in opposition to those who understood them, as he supposed, in too wide and indefinite a sense:—“Let the image of Cæsar, which is on the coin, be rendered to Cæsar; and the image of God, which is in man, be given to God—hence, give the money to Cæsar, but yourself to God; for what will be left for God, if all belongs to Cæsar?”<sup>3</sup>

The principles by which men were bound to act in this case could be easily laid down in theory, and easily deduced from the Holy Scriptures, and from the nature of Christianity. Hence, in

<sup>1</sup> Apolog. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Apolog. c. 42: Si inecatur (ratio), quantum vectigalibus pereat fraude et mendacio vestrarum professionum.

<sup>3</sup> De idololatria, c. 15.

theory, all Christians were agreed; but there was some difficulty in applying these principles to particular cases, and in answering the question in every instance, how the line was to be drawn between what belonged to Cæsar and what belonged to God—between what might be considered, in reference to religion, matters of indifference, and what not. The pagan religion was, in truth, so closely interwoven with all the arrangements of civil and social life, that it was not always easy to separate and distinguish the barely civil or social from the religious element. Many customs had really sprung from a religious source, whose connection, however, with religion had long been forgotten by the multitude, and, remembered only by a few learned antiquarians, lay too far back to be recalled in the popular consciousness.<sup>1</sup> The question here arose, whether such customs should, like others, be considered as in themselves indifferent; whether men might be allowed in such matters to follow the barely social or civil usages, or whether they should set aside all other considerations on the ground of the connection of such customs with paganism.

Again, Christianity, from its nature, must pronounce sentence of condemnation against all ungodliness, but, at the same time, appropriate to itself all purely human relations and arrangements, consecrating and ennobling, instead of annihilating them. But the question might arise, in particular cases, as to what *was* purely human, and adapted, therefore, to be received into union with Christianity; and what had sprung originally out of the corruption of human nature, and, being in its essence ungodly, must therefore be rejected. Christianity having appeared as the *new leaven* in the *old world*—and being destined to produce a *new creation* in an old one, that had grown out of an entirely different principle of life, the question might the more readily occur; which of the already existing elements needed only to be transformed and ennobled, and which should be purged wholly away? In what already existed, there might be many things which, through the particular turn and direction they had assumed in the corrupt world, might seem utterly at variance with the essence

<sup>1</sup> Consult, for example, what Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria have been able to draw from the stores of their own learning and the works of other literary men, concerning the religious meaning and reference of the custom of crowning,—things which assuredly would not easily occur to men in common life.

of Christianity; but which, at the same time, by receiving another turn and direction—by being applied in another way, might really admit of being easily brought into harmony with it. Now there might be some who, in condemning the abuse of these things, might also deny the possible good use of them; and others who, in conceiving of their possible good use, might be led to approve the existing abuse of them.

Finally, many customs may have existed, which would never have found any place in a state of things that had grown out of Christianity—which, in their origin and nature, were alien to pure Christianity—but which still, under the influence of the Christian spirit, might be so modified and applied, as to be divested of that which made them wholly incompatible with the religion of the Gospel. That religion which aimed nowhere to produce violent and convulsive changes from without, but led to reforms by beginning in the first place within,—whose peculiar character it was to operate positively rather than negatively—to displace and destroy no faster than it substituted something better, might, by virtue of this its law of action, suffer many of the existing customs to remain just as they were, in their old defective forms, aiming simply to infuse into them a new spirit, in trust that this would eventually throw off the unbecoming exterior, and create *all* things new.

Hence, notwithstanding that Christians were agreed as to general principles, disputes might arise among them with regard to the application of these principles in particular cases; according as they were led by their different positions and tendencies of mind to take a different view of the circumstances—disputes similar to those which at various periods afterwards were not unfrequently arising, relative to the management of missions among foreign tribes of men, to the organization of new churches, and to the disposition of matters not essential (*ἀδιάφορα*). Men were liable to err here on both extremes,—on that of too lax an accommodation to, or on that of too stern a repulsion of, existing usages. The aggressive or the assimilating power of Christianity, which should both be intimately united to secure the healthy development of life, might one or the other be allowed an undue predominance. The few excepted, who had already progressed farther in the genuine liberty of the Gospel, who to deep Christian

earnestness united the prudence and clearness of science, these few excepted, the better class of Christians were generally more inclined to the latter than to the former of these extremes; they chose rather to reject many of those customs, which as pagans they had once practised in the service of sin and falsehood, but which were capable also of another application, than run the risk of adopting with them the corruptions of heathenism; they were glad to let go everything which was associated in their minds with sin or with pagan rites; they chose rather to do too much than to forfeit a tittle of that Christianity which constituted their jewel, the pearl for which they were willing to sell all they had; as in general it is more natural for men, in the first ardour of conversion, the first glow of genuine love, to go to excess in opposing the world, than in yielding to it. The Church at large has to pass through periods of development as to this matter, analogous to those of the individual Christian. Hence, in the commencing development of the Christian life, the extreme aggressive element must first predominate.

As regards the controversy between the two parties described, one class appealed to the rule, that men are bound to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,—that in matters pertaining to civil order, they are bound to obey the existing laws,—that they ought not unnecessarily to give offence to the heathen, nor afford them any occasion for blaspheming the name of God,—that in order to win all to embrace the Gospel, it was necessary to become all things to all men. The other party could not deny that these were Scripture principles; but, said they, while we are to consider all outward, earthly possessions as belonging to the emperor, our hearts and our lives certainly must belong wholly to God. That which is the emperor's ought never to be put in competition with that which is God's. If the injunction that we should give the heathen no occasion to blaspheme the Christian name must be so unconditionally understood, it would be necessary to put off Christianity entirely. Let them continue to blaspheme us, provided only we give them no occasion for so doing by our unchristian conduct, provided they blaspheme in *us* only what belongs to Christianity. We should indeed, in every proper way, become all things to all men; but yet in no such sense as to become worldly to worldly men; for it is also said, "If I yet pleased men, I

should not be the servant of Christ."<sup>1</sup> We see plainly that each of these two parties were correct in the principles they would maintain; the only question to be determined was, where these principles found their right application.

While one of these classes believed that they ought to avoid every thing which excited attention among the pagans, and which might invite them to resort to persecuting measures, the other condemned all such prudence and reserve, as a disposition that was either ashamed or afraid of public confession. Clement of Alexandria rebuked those who, whenever they met in the street, publicly saluted each other with the fraternal kiss, and would thus every where draw attention to themselves as Christians. He calls it a foolish provocation of the pagans.<sup>2</sup> He charges them with falsely wearing that Christian love for a show, which is an inward sentiment, and of not knowing how to suit their actions to the time; in doing which, it must be admitted, he makes a wrong application of the words of Paul in the fifth chapter to the Ephesians.<sup>3</sup>

Whoever followed a trade or occupation which was contrary to the generally received Christian principles, was not admitted to baptism till he had pledged himself to lay it aside.<sup>4</sup> He must enter on some new occupation to earn the means of subsistence; or if not in a situation to do this, he was received into the number of the poor maintained by the Church. To these occupations were reckoned all that stood in any way connected with idolatry, or which were calculated to promote it; those, for instance, of the artists and handicraftsmen who employed themselves in making or adorning images of the gods. There were, doubtless, many who, wishing to pursue these trades for a subsistence, excused themselves on the ground that they did not worship the idols, that they did not consider them as objects of religion, but

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, de idololatria.

<sup>2</sup> Strom. iii. f. 257: Οἱ κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς τῶν ἀγαπήτων ἀσπασμοὶ παρρησίας ἀνοήτου γίμναι, καταφανῶν τοῖς ἑκτὸς εἶναι βουλομένων οὐδὲ ἑλαχίστης μετίχουσι χάριτος.

<sup>3</sup> That they should *μυστικῶς φιλοφρονῆσθαι ἑννοθεῖν, ἰσαγοραζομένους τὸν καιρὸν.*

<sup>4</sup> Apostol. Constit. l. viii. c. 31. Also, Council of Elvira, can. 62: Si auriga et pantomimus credere voluerint, placuit, ut prius actibus suis renuntient et tunc demum suscipiantur, ita ut ulterius ad ea non revertantur. Qui si facere contra interdictum tentaverint, projiciantur ab ecclesia.

simply as objects of art; though, in these times, it assuredly argued a peculiar coldness of religious feeling, to distinguish thus what belonged to art and what belonged to religion. Against such excuses Tertullian exclaimed with pious warmth,<sup>1</sup>—"Assuredly you *are* a worshipper of idols, when you help to promote their worship. It is true you bring to them no outward victim, but you sacrifice to them your mind; your sweat is their drink-offering,—you kindle for them the light of your skill." With these employments were reckoned the various kinds of astrology and of magic, a species of self-deception or of fraud which was at that time so prevalent and so lucrative.

A remarkable proof how far the moral and humane feelings of our nature could be blunted by the force of education and custom, how a narrow-hearted political tendency could suppress the sentiment of a common humanity, is presented in that favourite sport of the Roman people, the bloody gladiatorial shows; exhibitions given them by men who claimed to be cultivated, and which many even of the legislators, statesmen and self-styled philosophers, countenanced and encouraged. But the feeling of universal philanthropy, roused into life and action by Christianity, must have struggled from the first against this cruel custom, justified and sanctioned as it was by the established laws, and by the prevalent habits of thinking among the Romans. Whoever frequented the gladiatorial shows and the combats of wild beasts was, by the general principle of the Church, excluded from its communion. Irenæus names it with abhorrence as the last denial of the Christian character, when certain individuals (belonging to the wildly fanatical and antinomian sects of the Gnostics) did not even refrain from participating in those bloody shows, alike hateful to God and to men.<sup>2</sup> Cyprian, describing the joy of a Christian who has just escaped from the polluted heathen world, and looks back upon it from his new position, says:<sup>3</sup> "If you cast your eye on the cities, you behold an assembly of men, presenting a more melancholy sight than any solitude. A combat of gladiators is in preparation, that blood may appease the lust of cruel eyes.

<sup>1</sup> De idololatria, c. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Irenæus, l. i. c. 6: 'ὡς μὲν δὲ τῆς παρὰ θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις μεμισσημένης τῆς τῶν θειομαχῶν καὶ μονομαχίας ἀνδροφόνου θεῷ ἀπίχισθαι ἴλιος αὐτῶν.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. ad Donat.

A man is killed for the amusement of his fellow-men ; murder is turned into an art, and crime not only perpetrated, but taught as a profession." Tertullian says to those pagans who defended the gladiatorial sports,<sup>1</sup> and who probably drew one of their arguments from the fact, that criminals condemned to death by the laws were sometimes employed as the actors in them : "It is well that criminals should be punished ; as who else than a criminal can deny ? And yet no innocent man can find pleasure in witnessing his neighbour's punishment ; it behoves him rather to grieve when a man, his fellow, has become so guilty as to subject himself to so cruel a death. But who is my voucher, that it is always the guilty who are thrown to the wild beasts, or condemned to other kinds of death ; that innocence also does not sometimes meet with the same fate, through revenge on the part of the judge, weakness in the advocate, or the force of torture ? The *gladiators* at least, as you must allow, come to the combat, not as criminals, but as an offering to the public pleasure. And however the case may be with *those who are condemned* to the gladiatorial combats, yet consider what is this—that punishment, whose tendency *should be* to reform those who are guilty of minor offences, should tend in fact to make them murderers ?"

But it was not the participation in these cruel sports alone, which to the Christians appeared incompatible with the nature of their calling ; the same censure extended to all the different public exhibitions of that period ; to the pantomimes, the comedies and tragedies, the chariot and foot-races, and the various amusements of the circus and the theatre. Such was the prevailing and passionate fondness of the Romans at that time for theatrical entertainments, that many were known to be Christians simply from the fact that they absented themselves wholly from the theatre.<sup>2</sup> The spectacles, in the first place, were considered as an appendage of idolatry, by virtue of their origin from pagan rites, and of their connection with several of the pagan festivals. Among the pomps of idolatry or devil-worship (*πομπή διαβόλου*), which the Christians, when enrolled at their baptism into the service of God's kingdom, were obliged to renounce (the sacra-

<sup>1</sup> De spectaculis, c. 19.

<sup>2</sup> De spectaculis, c. 24 : Hinc vel maxime ethnici intelligunt factum Christianum de repudio spectaculorum.



mentum militiae Christi), *these spectacles* were particularly included. In the next place, many things occurred in them which were revolting to the Christian sense of propriety; and where this was not the case, yet the occupying of one's self for hours with mere nonsense—the unholy spirit which ruled in these assemblies—the wild uproar of the congregated multitude, seemed unsuited to the holy seriousness of the Christian, priestly character. The Christians did, in truth, consider themselves as priests, consecrated, in their whole life, to God; as temples of the Holy Spirit; every thing, therefore, which was alien to this Spirit, for which they should always keep in readiness the dwelling in their hearts, must be avoided. “God has commanded,” says Tertullian,<sup>1</sup> “that the Holy Spirit, as a tender and gentle Spirit, should, according to its own excellent nature, be treated with tranquillity and gentleness, with quiet and peace;—that it should not be disturbed by passion, fury, anger, and emotions of violent grief. How can such a spirit consist with the spectacles? For no spectacle passes off without violently agitating the passions. When one goes to the play, one thinks of nothing else than to see and to be seen. Can one, while listening to the declamation of an actor, think on the sentence of a prophet, or in the midst of the song of an effeminate stage-player, meditate on a psalm? If every species of immodesty is abominable to us, how should we allow ourselves to hear what we cannot feel at liberty to speak; when we know that every idle and unprofitable word is condemned by our Lord?”

To Tertullian, who was inclined to look upon all art as a lie, a counterfeiting of the original nature which God created, the whole system of spectacles appeared merely as an art of dissimulation and falsehood. “The Creator of truth,” said he,<sup>2</sup> “loves nothing that is false,—all fiction is, to him, falsification. He who condemns every thing in the shape of hypocrisy, cannot look with complacency on him who dissimulates voice, sex, age, love, anger, sighs, or tears.”

Weak-minded individuals, who allowed themselves to be so far carried away by the power of prevailing custom, which contradicted their Christian feelings, as to visit such scenes, might be

<sup>1</sup> De spectaculis, c. 15.

<sup>2</sup> L. c.

wounded by impressions thus received, and permanently robbed of their peace.

We find examples of a distempered state of mind, like the demoniacal, which had been brought on by such inward distraction.<sup>1</sup> Others, after they had been prevailed upon once or twice by the love of pleasure, and in spite of their conscience, to indulge in these amusements, contracted a new taste for them, and by their passionate fondness for the theatre, were, in the end, gradually drawn back again to heathenism.<sup>2</sup>

The pagans and the more thoughtless class of Christians were in the habit of urging the seriously disposed with arguments like the following: Why should they withdraw themselves from these public amusements? Such *outward* pleasures, addressed to the eye and ear, might be quite consistent with religion in the heart. God is not injured by man's enjoyment, which in its proper time and place may be partaken of without sin, as long as the fear and the reverence of God remain in the heart.<sup>3</sup> Thus Celsus invites the Christians to join in the public festivals. "God," he says to them, "is the common God of all,—he is good, stands in need of nothing, is a stranger to all jealousy. What then should hinder men, however much they may be devoted to him, from participating in the sports of the people?"<sup>4</sup> Thus it is, that the cold frivolity of a worldly mind, when it comes in contact with a character of deeper moral earnestness, commonly assumes the airs of the philosopher. To such arguments Tertullian replies, the very point to be shewn is, how these amusements can agree with true religion and with true obedience towards the true God.

<sup>1</sup> For examples, see Tertullian de spectaculis, c. 26: A woman who visited the theatre came home from there in the sad condition of a person demoniacally possessed. The evil spirit, having been adjured to tell why it had taken possession of the soul of a Christian, said, or rather the patient, who imagined herself to be speaking in the name of the demon,—“I in this did perfectly right, for I found her where my own kingdom is.” Another, the night following her visit to the theatre, had a frightful vision, and it was perhaps in consequence of the alarm into which she was thrown by it, that five days afterwards she died.

<sup>2</sup> L. c. c. 26: Quot documenta de his, qui cum diabolo apud spectaculo communicando a Domino exciderunt!

<sup>3</sup> L. c. c. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Orig. c. Cels. l. viii. c. 21.: "Ὁ γὰρ μὴν θεὸς ἅπασιν κοινὸς ἀγαθὸς τε καὶ ἀπροσδιχτός, καὶ ἕξω φθόνου. Τί οὖν κωλύει τοὺς μάλιστα καθωσιωμένους αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν δημοτικῶν ἰσχυρῶν μεταλαμβάνειν."

Others, infected with the passion for these trifles, who were seeking for reasons by which to hush their conscientious scruples as Christians, argued that nothing was made use of in the public spectacles but God's gifts, which he had bestowed on men that they might enjoy them. No particular passage of Scripture could in fact be shewn where the shows were expressly forbidden. As to the chariot race, there could assuredly be nothing sinful in it, since Elijah rode in a chariot to heaven. The music and dancing of the theatre could not be forbidden, for we read in the Scriptures of choirs, stringed instruments, cymbals, trumpets, and shawns, harp and psaltery; we see King David dancing and playing before the ark; and the Apostle Paul, in exhorting Christians, borrows images from the stadium and the circus.<sup>1</sup> At this sophistry Tertullian exclaims, "Ah, how adroit a reasoner does human ignorance imagine itself, particularly when it fears that it may lose some of the pleasures and amusements of the world!" In answer to the first of these arguments he says: "To be sure, all things are God's gifts; but the question is, for what end has God given them, and how may they be so used as to answer their true end? What is the original creation, and what the abuse of sin? for there is a wide difference between nature in its original purity, and nature corrupted; between the Creator and the Creator's counterfeiter." In reply to the second, he says: "Though in Scripture there may be found no express prohibition of theatrical exhibitions, yet it contains the general principles, from which this prohibition follows of itself. All which is there said generally against the lusts of the flesh and of the eye, must be applied also to this particular kind of lust. When we can maintain that wrath, cruelty, and rudeness are permitted in Scripture, then may we be at liberty to visit the amphitheatre. If we are such as we call ourselves, then let us, if we can, take delight in the shedding of human blood." Against such as wrested the Scriptures after the manner above described, the author of the treatise "On Spectacles," in the works of Cyprian, uses the following language: "I can truly say, it were better that such persons knew nothing of the Scriptures than to read them thus; for the language and illustrations employed to exhort men to the virtue of the Gospel, they pervert to the defence of vice; for it

<sup>1</sup> The tract de spectaculis, among the works of Cyprian.

was so written for the purpose of inflaming us with a livelier zeal in things profitable, while the heathens display so much earnestness on trifles. Reason itself can draw from the general rules laid down in Scripture those conclusions, which are not expressly unfolded by the Scriptures themselves.<sup>1</sup> Let each take counsel only of himself,—let each confer only with that person whom, as a Christian, he ought to represent; he will then never do any thing unbecoming the Christian, for that conscience which depends on itself, and not on another, will then preponderate.”<sup>2</sup>

Tertullian invites the Christians to compare with those empty pleasures of the pagan world, the true, spiritual pleasures which had become theirs through faith.<sup>3</sup> “Tell me, pray, have *we* any other desire than that which was also the desire of the apostle, to depart from the world, and be with the Lord? Your pleasures are in the direction of your wishes. But why are you so unthankful, that you are not satisfied with, that you do not recognise, the pleasures so many and so great, which even now are bestowed on you by the Lord. For what is there more joyous than reconciliation with God, your Father and Lord; than the revelation of truth, the knowledge of error, the forgiveness of multitudes of past sins? What greater pleasure than the despising of such pleasures, the contempt of the whole world; than true freedom, the pure conscience, the guiltless life, and fearlessness of death; than that you can tread under foot the gods of the pagan world, that you can expel evil spirits, heal diseases, and pray for revelations? These are the pleasures, these the entertainments of the Christian; holy, everlasting, not to be purchased with money. And what must those be which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive?” In like manner, the author of the above-cited treatise in the works of Cyprian, remarks: “He can never look with wonder on the works of man, who has come to know himself as a child of God. It were letting himself down from his noble pre-eminence, to look with wonder upon any thing else than the Lord. Let the faithful Christian apply him-

<sup>1</sup> Ratio docet, quæ scriptura contineat.

<sup>2</sup> Unusquisque cum persona professionis suæ loquatur et nihil unquam indecorum geret. Plus enim ponderis habebit conscientia, quæ nulli se alteri debet, nisi sibi.

<sup>3</sup> De spectaculis, c. 29.

self with all diligence to the Holy Scriptures, and in them he will find the worthier spectacles of faith,—exhibitions which even he who has lost his eyesight may enjoy.

If the mere attending as a looker-on at these theatrical entertainments was considered a wrong thing by the Christians, much more would they reprobate the profession of an actor. In the time of Cyprian, there was the case of an actor who became a Christian, and then for the sake of a living set up a school to instruct boys in the art which he formerly practised. The bishop Cyprian was asked whether such an individual could be suffered to remain in the communion of the Church, and he declared strongly against it. If a man, said he, is even forbidden (Deut. xxii. 5) to put on the garment of a woman, and a curse is pronounced on any one who does this, “how much more criminal must it appear, to form the *man*, by an immodest art, to effeminate and unseemly gestures, to falsify the image of God by the tricks of the devil?” “In case such an one,” he adds, “pleads the necessity of his poverty, he may assuredly find relief from that necessity amongst the rest who are maintained by the Church, provided that he can be satisfied with a homelier but more innocent fare. He must not, however, suppose, that he is to be hired to leave off sinning, since he does this not for our sake but for his own. If the church where he resides is too poor to support him, let him come to Carthage; here he may receive whatever is necessary for his support in food and clothing, provided only he teach not others who are without the pale of the Church what is pernicious, but learn himself within the Church what tends to salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

Among those social relations which were alien to the nature of Christianity, and which Christianity found existing at the time of its first propagation, belonged *slavery*. By the estrangement of humanity from God, its original unity was disturbed. Mankind, destined to be one, split asunder into a multitude of nations, each striving to assert itself as the whole, and each taking an opposite direction to the other in its course of development. Thus the consciousness of possessing a common human worth was lost; and it became possible for man to be placed in that relation to his fellow in which nature alone should stand to humanity,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 61, ad Euchrat.

and his own nature to the individual.<sup>1</sup> A relation so unnatural could find its justification only by assuming the position, that the difference among nations,—which took place at a later period, and originated in sin,—*that* difference, by virtue of which there exists so great a disparity of intellectual and moral power, was something original. Hence men could no longer recognise the fundamental identity of human nature, and believed one class destined by nature itself to be the tools of another, and without any will of their own. Thus was this relation a necessary result of the position held by antiquity, when state and nation constituted the absolute form for the realization of the highest good; and thus it could happen, that the nation which was most ardent for civil liberty, still employed thousands only as slaves.<sup>2</sup> And though their situation was often rendered more tolerable through the influence of manners and the pure sentiments of humanity,—which, breaking through unnatural restraints would introduce a heartier fellowship between master and slave,<sup>3</sup>—yet the contradiction between this whole relation and man's essential dignity could not thus be set aside; and in general it still continued to be the prevailing habit, to regard slaves not as men gifted with the same rights as all others, but as things. In a judicial process, slaves who were acknowledged to be implicated in no guilt, might still be subjected to all the tortures of the rack, for the purpose of extorting confessions from them. If a master was murdered by one of his slaves, the terrible severity of the Roman laws required the sacrifice of all the slaves, male and female, which were in the house when the crime was committed; and this, too, whatever might be their number, and even though they were not liable to the slightest suspicion.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So says he who has most distinctly defined the ethical and political conceptions which presented themselves at the position gained by the ancient world. So says Aristotle, Eth. Nicomach. l. ix. c. 13. The relation between master and slave is like that between the artisan and his tools, the soul and the body, the man and his horse or ox; *ὁ δούλος ἔμφυχον ὄργανον, τὸ δ' ὄργανον ἄψυχος δούλος*. In this relation, to speak of a *δικαίον*, a *φιλία*, would be out of place.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 46, the way in which Aristotle seeks to justify this relation, to shew that it is one aimed at by nature herself.

<sup>3</sup> Even Aristotle, Eth. Nicomach. l. ix. c. 13, makes this distinction in reference to the relation between master and slave: *ἡ μὲν οὖν δούλος, οὐκ ἔστι φιλία πρὸς αὐτὸν, ἡ δ' ἄνθρωπος, δοκεῖ γὰρ εἶναι τι δίκαιον παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ πρὸς πάντα τὸν δυνάμιον κοινωνῆσαι νόμου καὶ συνθήκης καὶ φιλίας δὴ, καθ' ὅσον ἄνθρωπος*.

<sup>4</sup> Tacitus, Annal. l. xiv. c. 42, et seq. relates how, in a case of this sort, when the

But Christianity brought about that change in the consciousness of humanity, from which a dissolution of this whole relation, though it could not be immediately effected, yet by virtue of the consequences resulting from that change, must eventually take place. This effect Christianity produced, first by the facts of which it was a witness; and next by the ideas which, by occasion of these facts, it set in circulation. By Christ, the Saviour, belonging to all mankind, the antagonisms among men resulting from sin were annulled; by him the original oneness was restored. These facts must now continue to operate in transforming the life of mankind. Masters as well as servants were obliged to acknowledge themselves the servants of sin, and to receive in the same manner, as a gift of God's free grace, their deliverance from this common bondage,—the *true, the highest freedom*. Servants and masters, if they had become believers, were brought together under the same bond of an heavenly union, destined for immortality; they became brethren in Christ, in whom there is neither bond nor free, members of one body, baptized into one spirit, heirs of the same heavenly inheritance. Servants often became teachers of their masters in the Gospel, after having practically exhibited before them the loftiness of a divine life, which must express itself even under the most constraining of relations, and shine forth the more conspicuously by the contrast.<sup>1</sup> The masters looked upon their servants no longer as slaves, but as their beloved brethren; they prayed and sang in company; they could sit at each other's side at the feast of brotherly love, and receive together the body of the Lord. Thus, by the spirit and by the effects of Christianity, ideas and feelings could not fail of being widely diffused, which were directly opposed to this relation, so consonant with the habits of thinking that had hitherto prevailed. Christianity could not fail to give birth to the wish, that every man might be placed in such a relation as would least hinder the

blood of so many innocent persons of every age and sex was to be shed, the compassion of the people was roused, and it was necessary to use force to prevent an insurrection.

<sup>1</sup> The example of Onesimus often recurred. Tertullian refers to cases in which a master, who had for a long time patiently endured the vices of a slave, but who, on observing that he had suddenly reformed, and being at the same time told that *Christianity* had wrought this change in him, out of hatred to this religion, sent him off to the house of correction. Apologet. c. 3: *Servum jam fidelem dominus olim mitis ab oculis relegavit.*

free and independent use of his intellectual and moral powers, according to the will of God. Hence the Apostle Paul, speaking to the servant, says (1 Cor. vii. 21), "If thou mayst be made free, use it rather." Yet Christianity nowhere began with outward revolutions and changes, which, in all cases where they have not been prepared from within, and are not based upon conviction, fail of their salutary ends. The new creation to which Christianity gave birth was in all respects an inward one, from which the outward effects gradually, and therefore more surely and healthfully, unfolded themselves to their full extent. It gave servants first the true, inward freedom, without which the outward and earthly freedom is a mere show, and which, wherever it exists, can be cramped by no earthly bond, no earthly yoke. The Apostle Paul says, "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman." Tertullian, wishing to shew how much superior this heavenly freedom is to the earthly, observes:<sup>1</sup> "In the world, they who have received their freedom are crowned. But thou art ransomed already by Christ, and indeed bought with a price. How can the world give freedom to him, who is already the servant of another? All is mere show in the world, and nothing truth. For even then thou wast free in relation to man, being redeemed by Christ; and now thou art a servant of Christ, although made free by a man. If thou deemest *that* the true freedom which the world can give thee, thou art, for that very reason, become once more the servant of man, and the freedom which Christ bestows, thou hast lost, because thou thinkest it bondage." The bishop Ignatius of Antioch writes to the bishop Polycarp of Smyrna:<sup>2</sup> "Be not proud towards servants and maids; but neither must they exalt themselves; but they must serve the more zealously for the honour of God, so that they may receive from God the higher freedom. Let them not be eager to be redeemed at the expense of the church, lest they be found slaves of their own lusts."<sup>3</sup> One of the imperial slaves, Euelpistus by name, who was arraigned with Justin Martyr and other Christians before the tribunal, expressed himself thus: "I too am a Christian; I

<sup>1</sup> De corona militis, c. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The genuineness of the letter is here of no importance. At all events, we find a witness of the Christian mode of thinking in the first century.



have obtained my freedom from Christ ; and through the grace of Christ, I am a sharer of the same hope.”<sup>1</sup>

On the question whether a Christian could properly hold any civil or military office, especially the latter, opinions were divided. As the pagan religion of the state was closely interwoven with all political and social arrangements, every such office might easily place one in situations where joining in the pagan ceremonies was a thing not to be avoided. For this, all Christians were agreed, no necessity whatever constituted an excuse. On this point, Tertullian’s remark was assuredly spoken from the soul of every believer,—“ To be a Christian is not one thing here and another there. There is one Gospel and one Jesus, who will deny all them that deny him, and confess all them that confess God. With him the believing citizen is a soldier of the Lord, and the soldier owes the same duties to the faith as the citizen.”<sup>2</sup>

But independent of this was the *question*, whether such an office, considered in itself, was compatible with the Christian calling ; which was answered by one party in the affirmative, by another in the negative. We must here take into view the circumstances in which the Church found itself placed. The prevailing idea of the Christian life was—to follow in humility, in self-denial and the renunciation of all earthly good, a Redeemer who had made his outward appearance in poverty and a low estate,—had veiled his glory under the form of a servant. The glory of the Christian was with his Saviour in heaven ; as to his earthly appearance, what was lowly, what was without pomp or show, like the appearance of his Saviour, whom he loved to follow in every particular, best suited his wishes. He despised the power and the glory of this world, above which he felt himself elevated by the consciousness of sharing in another power and another glory. It is true this renunciation of earthly things consisted essentially in the temper of the heart ; and this, under different external circumstances, might still remain the same ; the *outward* possessions of earthly property, of earthly splendour, such as the tem-

<sup>1</sup> Acta Mart. Justini.

<sup>2</sup> De corona militis, c. 11 : Apud hunc tam miles est paganus fidelis, quam paganus est miles infidelis. I have translated on the supposition that fidelis is the true reading, —a correction warranted perhaps by what Tertullian has just before said respecting the fides pagana. Still the common reading gives also a good sense : The unbelieving soldier, who violates the duties of Christian fidelity, is to him as a pagan.

poral relations might require, the exercise of earthly power and authority in an earthly calling, were not thereby necessarily excluded; all this might be, and indeed was to be, sanctified by Christianity. But the first glow of conversion did not allow those with whom the living feeling was the predominant power, soberly to distinguish what pertained simply to the idea and disposition in itself, and what to the manifestation of it and the outward conduct. They were inclined to take the figure—of following their Lord, who appeared in the form of a servant—in an outward sense, to refer it to an identity of outward circumstances with those in which he had lived. Thus wealth, worldly power, and glory,—which too they so often saw arrayed against the kingdom of God,—seemed to be shut out from them, and the first fervour of their zeal led them to disdain all this as alien to their calling.<sup>1</sup> It is in this spirit Tertullian says:<sup>2</sup> “Thou art bound as a Christian to follow thy Lord’s example. He, the Lord, went about in humility and loneliness, without a certain home, for he says, ‘The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;’ in poor apparel, or he would not have said, ‘Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses;’ without beauty or comeliness of appearance, as Isaiah had foretold (cap. 53.) If he exercised his right of authority over none, not even his own disciples, for whom he performed the most menial service; if, finally, conscious of his *own* royal dignity, he refused to become a king, he gave his disciples the most perfect example to shun all that is lofty and great in earthly power and dignity. For who was better entitled to use these things than the Son of God? What fasces, and how many of them, must have gone before *him*; what purple flowed from his shoulders; what gold gleamed on his brow—had he not judged that the glory of this world was alien both to himself and to his? What he rejected, therefore, he condemned.”<sup>3</sup>

Many Christians, again, from a conscientiousness in itself worthy

<sup>1</sup> Hence the pagan in Minucius Felix, c. 8, describes the Christians as men who, half-naked themselves, despise honour and the purple, honores et purpuras despiciunt, ipsi seminudi.

<sup>2</sup> De idololatria, c. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, one of the sternest representatives, it must be allowed, of this mode of thinking, and in whom it appears, like everything else that had seized and animated him, to have been pushed to the utmost extreme, says (Gloriam seculi) quam damnavit, in pompa diaboli deputavit.

of all respect, thought themselves bound to take passages like Matth. v. 39, in the literal sense. That tone of mind very generally prevailed, which, in leading men to take such words of Christ as positive commands, hindered them on this very account from understanding them rightly, according to their spirit,—as the expression of that which is rooted in the essence of Christianity, of that new life and law of living which proceeds from Christ by an inward necessity. That which ought to have been applied as referring immediately to the disposition alone, was referred to the outwardness of the act. It revolted their Christian feelings to suffer themselves to be employed as instruments of pain to others, to serve as the executors of laws which, in all cases, were dictated and animated by the spirit of rigid justice, without any mixture of mercy or love.<sup>1</sup>

In general, the Christians became accustomed by their circumstances at that time to consider the state as a hostile power, standing in opposition to the Church; and it was as yet, in the main, quite remote from their ideas to expect that Christianity could and would appropriate to itself also the relations of the state.<sup>2</sup> The Christians stood over against the state, as a priestly, spiritual race; and the *only* way in which it seemed possible that Christianity could exert an influence on civil life, was (which it must be allowed was the purest way) by tending continually to diffuse more of a holy temper among the citizens of the state. When Celsus called on the Christians to take up arms like other subjects for the protection of the emperor's rights, and fight in his ranks, Origen replied: "We are rendering the emperors a divine assistance, when we put on a divine armour, wherein we follow the command of the Apostle; 1 Tim. ii. 1. The more devout the man, the more is it in his power to render the emperor

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, where he treats this matter, in the first place separates those cases in which a Christian could not be allowed, *under any circumstances*, to administer a civil office: *Jam vero quæ sunt potestatis, neque judicet de capite alicujus vel pudore, feras enim de pecunia, neminem vinciat, neminem recludat aut torqueat, si hæc credibile est fieri posse.* The council of Elvira, can. 56, decreed that magistrates, during the years in which, as Duumvirs, they had to decide on matters of life and death, ought not to attend church.

<sup>2</sup> So far from Tertullian's mind was the thought, that the emperors themselves would at some future day be Christians, that in *Apologet. c. 21*, he says: *Sed et Cæsares credidissent super Christo, si aut Cæsares non essent sæculo necessarii aut si Christiani potuissent esse Cæsares.* Comp. above, p. 171.

a far better service than can be done by ordinary soldiers. Again, we might thus reply to the heathen: Your priests keep themselves pure, that they may present the customary offerings to the gods with hands unstained by blood. In war, you do not compel them to take the field. As priests of God, it is their duty to fight, by prayer to him, for those who are engaged in a just war, and for the lawful emperor, that all opposition to those who do right may be put down. The Christians render greater service to their country than other men, by forming the hearts of the citizens, and teaching them piety towards that God on whom the well-being of the state depends, and who receives those who in the meanest cities have led a good life, into a city which is heavenly and divine."<sup>1</sup> To another proposal made by Celsus to the Christians, namely, that they should undertake the administration of civil affairs in their country, Origen replies: "But we know, that in whatever city we are, we have another country which is founded on the word of God; and we require those who, by their gift of teaching and by their pious life are competent to the task, to undertake the administration of the offices of the Church."

They, on the other hand, who maintained that the Christians were at liberty to assume the civil and military offices, appealed to examples from the Old Testament. But here the difference between the two stages of religious development was held up in reply. Tertullian maintains against such, that for the higher stage of Christianity the *claims* rise also higher.<sup>2</sup> Again, the defenders of the military profession quoted in their defence the instance of John the Baptist, who did not bid the soldiers that came to him to relinquish their former calling, but prescribed to

<sup>1</sup> In vindication of the translation given above to the passage at the end of the eighth letter against Celsus, I must add a few critical remarks. In Origen's words, the reading *εις τον πολεια θεον* seems to me to be the correct one,—the reading *εις τον των ολων θεον*, false. It admits of being easily explained how the predicate, which was an unusual one in the Christian sense, might be altered into the phraseology common among the Christians; but not so easily how the latter could be changed into the former. But that Origen himself, speaking from his own Christian position, should apply the term *πολεις* to God, cannot appear singular, as the comparison with the *Zeus πολεις* was hovering before his mind. The word *πολεις*, which occurs so often in this sentence, favours the supposition of such an allusion. If this reading is adopted, the allusion makes it probable that *αναλαμβάνοντες* should be read instead of *αναλαμβάνοντα*.

<sup>2</sup> De idololatria, c. 18: Scito non semper comparanda esse vetera et nova, rudia et polita, cœpta et explicita, servilia et liberalia.

them certain rules, by which they might pursue it in a manner well-pleasing to God; but it was replied to them, that John stood on the dividing line between the two economies. But when they brought forward in their defence the example of the centurion, whose faith Christ himself had commended (Luke vii.), and especially the example of the believing Cornelius, the force of such an appeal could be more readily felt by their opponents; and Tertullian himself, that zealous antagonist of the military profession amongst Christians, believed it could not be wholly condemned, in the case where such as had become Christians while they were soldiers persevered in the calling they had once chosen, so far as it could be done consistently with their steadfastness in the faith.<sup>1</sup> Against the profession of arms was also quoted the command to Peter, in Matth. xxvi. 52, to put up again his sword into its place.<sup>2</sup> This command, the opponents of the military calling, in despite of the context and of the manifest end for which it was given, would consider as addressed to all Christians.

Christianity, beginning with the consciousness of redemption, the central point of all that is distinctively Christian, aimed to assimilate and to appropriate whatever belongs purely to man and to his worldly relations, for the kingdom of God. All this was to be pervaded with the divine life, all this was to be ennobled by it. This Christian mode of appropriating the world manifested itself in opposition to the method in the two previous stages of human development; one of which was a secularizing of the spirit, a confounding it with the world and a deification of the worldly, in paganism; the other, opposition to the world, arising out of the consciousness of the inward schism of sin, when the world presented itself to the consciousness only as that which is without God and contrary to God—the Jewish, legal position. Contemplated from both these positions, the Christian life was unintelligible in its true import and significance. Contemplated from the legal position, it appeared as something too free, verging near to paganism; and from the heathen position, as something too *unfree*, too constrained. The Christian life could not fail

<sup>1</sup> De corona milit. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> De idololatria, c. 19: Omnem postea militem Dominus in Petro exarmando discinxit.

to be reproached as a being righteous overmuch, as the *immodica superstitio*, the *nimum pietatis*,<sup>1</sup>—sheer pictism. The Christians must have seemed a race that hated the light, that were dead to the world, and hence of no use in it.<sup>2</sup>

To this charge, laid against the Christians, Tertullian replies :<sup>3</sup> “How is it possible they should be such, who live in the midst of you, have the same food and clothing, the same necessaries of life as yourselves ? For we are no Brahmins, or Indian gymnosophists, no dwellers in the woods, no recluses retired from the haunts of men. We well understand what thanks we owe to God, our Lord and Creator ; we despise not the enjoyment of his works. We only moderate that enjoyment that it may not degenerate into excess or abuse. With you, therefore, we inhabit this world, not without markets, baths, inns, workshops, fairs, and whatever else is considered necessary to the intercourse of life. We also pursue with you the business of navigation, OF WAR, of agriculture, of commerce ; we share in your employments, and contribute of our labour, to your profit, for the public service.”<sup>4</sup>

Yet while it was true that the Christians by no means withdrew themselves from the intercourse of life, they were, at the same time, in the frequent habit of setting apart certain days for the purpose of self-examination and quiet devotion, for the purpose of renewedly consecrating their lives to God ; so that they might return back, with fresh zeal and vigour and renovated powers of holy living, to their ordinary avocations. These days of holy consecration, of penitence and prayer, which individual Christians appointed for their own use, were oftentimes also a sort of fast-days. That they might be less disturbed by sense whilst their

<sup>1</sup> In an epitaph which Gilbert Burnet discovered at Lyons, and published in the first of his letters, the pagan husband says of his wife, a Christian, “*quæ, dum nimia pia fuit, facta est impia.*”

<sup>2</sup> See the words cited above, on page 125: “*natio latebrosa et lucifuga,*” and the rest.

<sup>3</sup> Apologet. c. 42.

<sup>4</sup> How far remote the idea of the later monachism lay from the apprehension of Christians generally, is evident from a passage in Irenæus, where he is speaking of their dependence for the means of support on the heathens among whom they lived, l. iv. c. 30: *Etenim, si is qui tibi hæc imputat, separatus est a gentiliùm cœtu, et nihil est alienorum apud eum, sed est simpliciter nudus, et nudis pedibus et sine domo in montibus conversatur, quemadmodum aliquot ex his animalibus, quæ herbis vescuntur, veniam merebitur, ideo quod ignoret necessitates nostræ conversationis.*

minds were intent on holy things, they were accustomed on such days to confine their bodily wants within stricter limits than usual, or else to fast entirely; where we must take into consideration the peculiar nature of that hot climate in which Christianity first began to spread. Whatever they saved by their abstinence on these days was appropriated to the maintenance of the poor brethren. There were also many who, in the warmth of their first love, after being baptized, immediately gave a large portion of their earthly property, or all that they had, to the church fund or to the poor, feeling themselves constrained to express, in the strongest manner, their contempt of the earthly things by which their hearts had been hitherto enslaved; to declare most decidedly,—what now had full possession of their hearts,—the wish to sacrifice, to give away anything, so they might but win the heavenly pearl. It was to them as though the words of our Lord were addressed directly to themselves: “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.” Within the bosom of the Church they led a quiet, retired life, maintained themselves by the labour of their hands, and remained unmarried, that, without being disturbed by earthly cares, they might devote themselves to prayer, to the study of the Scriptures, to holy meditations, and to active labours for the kingdom of God; and all that remained from the earnings of their industry, after barely satisfying the most necessary wants of life, they devoted to objects of Christian charity. Such Christians were called the *Abstenients*, the zealous seekers after Christian perfection, continentes, ἀσκήται.<sup>1</sup> There were many others again who, through the influence of a pious Christian education, had from the earliest years imbibed such a love for divine things as made them solicitous to loosen to the utmost every tie which bound them to the earth. Individuals of this class were to be found belonging to both the sexes;—the females were called distinctively παρθενοί, virgins.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ἀσκήτων, ἀσκήτης, a current word among pagans and Christians in this period, to denote a peculiarly rigid moral discipline.

<sup>2</sup> Of such Tertullian speaks, de cult. femin. l. ii. c. 9: Aliqui abstinentes vino, et animalibus esculentis, multi se spadonatu obsignant propter regnum Dei;—and Justin. Mart. Apolog. ii.: Πολλοί τινες καὶ πολλαὶ ἕξοντοῦτοι καὶ ἐδουλοῦντοῦτοι, οἱ ἐκ παιδῶν

Amongst the pagans themselves, it was then the custom of those who led lives consecrated to meditation, to be ascetics in the sense above given. Philosopher and ascetic were synonymous expressions.<sup>1</sup> The term “philosophy” was to denote the direction and bent of the whole life. But it must be admitted that among the pagans this had already become also a mask for hypocrisy, as for example, with the notorious pseudo-cynics. Now it sometimes happened, that these pagan ascetics were led, in their earnest strivings after perfection, to embrace Christianity; and after having become Christians, still adhered to their former habits of life, which, in themselves, contained nothing repugnant to Christianity; or that others, in whom Christianity first produced a more serious turn of life, adopted these habits, as a token of the change that had been wrought in them. They could avail themselves of the attention they attracted by publicly appearing in the garb of these philosophical ascetics,—the philosopher’s cloak,<sup>2</sup>—and of the respect paid to them by the multitude on account of their mode of life, to enter into philosophical and religious conversation with those who, out of respect or curiosity, gathered round them in the public walks or places of resort; and thus to present to them Christianity as the new and heavenly philosophy,<sup>3</sup> which had come from the East. It was assuredly a picture taken from the very life of those times, where we are told by Justin Martyr,<sup>4</sup> that early one morning, as he made his appearance on the public walk, he was presently accosted by several with the salutation, “Good morrow, philosopher;”<sup>5</sup> whilst one of them added, that he had received it as a lesson from his master in philosophy; never to slight the philosopher’s cloak, but to welcome with every civility those that appeared in it, and endeavour to draw them into conversation. This led to a dialogue on the marks of true religion, and on Christianity. “Joy to thee,” exclaims Tertullian to the philosopher’s cloak,<sup>6</sup> “a better philosophy

ἰμαθῆτιτύθησαν τῶ Χριστῶ, ἄφθοροι διαμίνουσι,—which, indeed, is not to be so understood as if all these had from the first purposely adopted such a mode of life.

<sup>1</sup> See *c. g.* Artemidor. oneirocrit. iv. where he speaks of an Ἀλιζανδρος ὁ φιλόσοφος, ἔμιλι δὲ αὐτῶ, ὄντι ἀνδρὶ ἀσκήτη οὔτε γάμου οὔτε κωνωνίας, οὔτε πλούτου—*and v. 18:* Ἐφιλοσόφησιν ἐντόνως καὶ τοῖς λόγοις καὶ τῇ ἀσκήσει χρησάμενος ἀπολούθος.

<sup>2</sup> Τριβῶν, τριβῶνιον, pallium.

<sup>3</sup> Φιλοσοφία τῶν βαρβάρων.

<sup>4</sup> Dial c. Tryph. Jud.

<sup>5</sup> Φιλόσοφε, χαῖρε!

<sup>6</sup> In his tract de pallio.



has deigned to wrap itself in thy folds, since thou hast begun to be the garb of the Christian."

While spiritual pride could so easily attach itself to this mode of life, the spirit of Christian love and humility, in such a form, shines forth with the more splendour, as in the example of that Alcibiades, who was one of the imprisoned confessors at Lyons.<sup>1</sup> Having accustomed himself as an ascetic to live on bread and water, he continued to observe the same habits in the prison; when, by the inward voice of the Spirit it was revealed to Attalus, one of the other confessors, that Alcibiades was wrong in refusing to enjoy what God had created, and thus giving occasion of offence to other Christians. To this admonition, Alcibiades immediately submitted, and without further scruple partook indiscriminately of all that was set before him, giving God thanks.<sup>2</sup>

Now, though *such* ascetics were fully penetrated with a Christian spirit,—a spirit of love and humility,—yet we cannot fail to perceive even here a one-sided tendency, which, in the earlier stages of the development of Christian life, might easily become excessive. Christianity was designed to be the *world-subjecting principle*. It was to take up into itself and appropriate to its own ends all that belongs to man,—all that is of the world. But to bring this about, it was necessary that it should first enter into a conflict with what had hitherto been the world-subjecting principle,—into a conflict with sin and the principle of heathenism and everything connected therewith, concerning which necessary conflict we have had occasion to speak elsewhere. The clearing away of these hindrances must therefore be the first aim of Christianity; although indeed this was an object that could not be really accomplished without the positive appropriation of the purely human element. In the development, in time, the negative, aggressive tendency must needs appear first; and of this there might easily come to be an undue predominance, while the positive appropriating element, without which the problem of Christianity could never be resolved, might retreat out of sight. Hence a one-sided ascetic tendency easily introduced itself into the earliest stages, into the first *stadium*, of the development of the Christian life, and more particularly in the case of those who

<sup>1</sup> See above, page 152, and the following.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. v. c. 3.

embraced Christianity with their whole soul. Wherever this religion awakened in the first place disgust at the worldly pursuits which had previously swallowed up the life, enkindled the holy flame of love for the divine, of aspiration after eternal life, this first movement would readily assume an ascetic shape. With this, other elements might now intermingle, that had formed themselves, independent of Christianity, out of the previous process of the world's development, and which, without the creative influence of Christianity, would have taken a much wider sweep, and which could be finally subdued only by the might of this new principle of life. The sprightly, youthful life of the pagan world had passed over at length into the sense of inward disunion, of schism, and had given place to the dualistic and ascetic tendencies coming from the East. Accordingly, Christianity at its first appearance found such tendencies already existing, and these, which found a point of contact and union in the deep-felt breach, would have pressed onward to a still more extravagant length, if the consciousness of redemption proceeding from Christianity had not, in proportion as it unfolded itself, deprived them more and more of this point of union. But beyond a doubt, this already existing tendency to a misconceived renunciation of the world and of sense, might mix in with the one-sided negative tendency, which, as we have seen, would first become prominent in the development of Christian life, and might in this way assume a Christian shape and colouring.

Thus arose an undue estimation of the ascetic, contemplative life—of celibacy—which could go to the extreme of awarding to such life a much more exalted stage of future blessedness.<sup>1</sup> It was here that the mistaken apprehension of our Saviour's language to the rich found its support—that a perfection, surpassing that ordinary standard of the Christian life which is occupied in fulfilling the duties of one's earthly calling, was denoted by those words—which perfection consisted in the renunciation of every earthly good (the germ of the doctrine of the *concilii evangelici*.) Now in this manner it became possible, that an opposition which belonged to the fundamental principles of antiquity,—but which by the consciousness of redemption, of the principle of

<sup>1</sup> As is done expressly by Origen, *Homil. xix. in Jerem. § 4.* Comp. Cyrian, *de habitu virginum.*

the divine life destined to ennoble *all* that belongs to humanity, was overcome and banished,—should imperceptibly gain admission once more into the evolution of Christianity itself;—we mean, that opposition between the common and the higher, the practical and the contemplative life—between divine and human virtue. It is clear how this apprehension must have coincided with the notion of a caste of priests, pre-eminently consecrated to God, who must hold themselves aloof from all intercourse with the world; and so too the opinion might have had its birth, that celibacy belonged to the perfection of the spiritual order.<sup>1</sup>

This falsely conceived opposition to the world had already become the mask for a worldly temper, which would affect the appearance of holiness, or sought to gain an easier life at the expense of the Church.<sup>2</sup> Cyprian had to write a tract of admonition and warning against the showy dress and display which had crept in among the rich virgins, at Carthage, who had consecrated themselves to God.<sup>3</sup> And thus it happened, that in disdaining what is in harmony with nature,—which is also what corresponds to Christianity,—men devised unnatural forms of relation between the two sexes; and in this case, nature, so proudly disdained, could easily exercise a dangerous reaction, and sensuality corruptly intermingle with the spiritual state; as in the cohabitation of such virgins with unmarried ecclesiastics, under the pretence of a purely spiritual connection.<sup>4</sup>

And while thus the secluded life of ascetics and ecclesiastics

<sup>1</sup> The council of Elvira (A.D. 305.)—from which, however, no inference can be drawn with regard to the general practice of the Church. This council, where the one-sided ascetic spirit spoken of above prevailed to an eminent degree, decreed already, can. 33, that bishops, presbyters, and deacons, living with their wives, should be deposed from their places.

<sup>2</sup> See what Tertullian, who was now a violent, over-heated accuser of the Catholic Church indeed, but who must have felt that he had some ground for such charges, says against many *virgines*: *Æmulatio illas non religio producit, aliquando et ipse venter, Deus eorum, quia facile virgines fraternitas suscipit.* De idololatria, c. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. the tract de habitu virginum.

<sup>4</sup> The *συβίσακτοι*, as they were afterwards called, subintroductæ. Against them, Cyprian, ep. 62, ad Pompon. Though Cyprian elsewhere speaks, even in extravagant terms, of the obligations which were connected with the entrance into such a mode of life as a *connubium spiritale cum Domino*, yet he expresses himself here with becoming moderation: *Si autem perseverare nolunt vel non possunt, melius est, ut nubant, quam in ignem delictis suis cadant.* But the council of Elvira decreed, in their 13th canon, that such fallen virgins who refused to return back to their former condition, should be refused communion, even in the article of death.

was extolled above the common life of Christians, another mischievous consequence resulted. They who were occupied in the common business of life forgot the greatness of their Christian calling, and thought they were entitled to lower very much the requisitions as to their own daily living.

As early as the time of Clement of Alexandria there were those who, on being advised not to put themselves on a level with the pagans in their rage for the public shows, but to ponder well what belonged to the seriousness of the Christian calling, were accustomed to repel such exhortations, and excuse themselves by saying, "We cannot all be philosophers and ascetics; we are ignorant people; we cannot read; we understand nothing of the Holy Scriptures; why should we be subjected to such rigorous demands?"<sup>1</sup>

Yet we observe many indications, too, that a sound Christian spirit opposed itself to this false ascetic tendency. Such we find in an ancient writing known by the name of the Shepherd, which is said to have been composed by a certain Hermas, and had great authority in the first centuries. In regard to fasting, it is here said:<sup>2</sup> "Above all, exercise thy abstinence in this, to refrain both from speaking and from hearing what is wrong; and cleanse thy heart from all pollution, from all revengeful feelings, and from all covetousness; and on the day thou fastest, content thyself with bread, vegetables, and water, and thank God for these. But reckon up what thy meal on this day would have cost thee, and give the amount to some widow or orphan, or to the poor. Happy for thee if, with thy children and whole household, thou observest these things." Clement of Alexandria notices the fact, that many kinds of pagan worship required celibacy and abstinence from meat and wine in their priests; that there were rigid ascetics among the Indians, namely the Samaneans, and hence argued that usages which may exist also in other religions, and even be combined with superstition, cannot, in themselves considered, be peculiarly Christian. He then adds,—“Paul declares that the kingdom of heaven consists not in meat and drink, neither therefore in abstaining from wine and flesh, but in righteousness and

<sup>1</sup> Ἄλλ' οὐ πάντες φιλοσοφούμεν, γράμματα οὐκ ἔμαθον. Clemens Pædagog. l. iii. f. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. iii. Similitud. v.

peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. As humility is shewn, not by the castigation of the body, but by gentleness of disposition, so also abstinence is a virtue of the soul, consisting not in that which is without, but in that which is within the man. Abstinence has reference not to some one thing alone, not merely to pleasure, but it is abstinence also to despise money, to tame the tongue, and to obtain by reason the dominion over sin."<sup>1</sup>

When those people of whom we have spoken above, excused themselves from the more severe requisitions regarding their daily walk, with the plea, we are not all philosophers, not of the spiritual order, he replies to them: "But are we not all striving after life? What sayest thou? How art thou then a believer? How lovest thou God and thy neighbour? Is that not philosophy? Thou sayest, I have never learned to read. But if thou hast not learned to read, thou canst not excuse thyself thus, for *not having heard*; for there is no need of any one's teaching thee this. (All hear the preached word, hear the Scriptures read in the church assemblies.) But faith is not the possession of the wise of this world, but of the wise in God. Faith is taught also without writing; and its writing, which is adapted even to the knowledge of the ignorant, is still divine, and is called love. Even the business of the world may be managed in an unworldly, in a godly manner."<sup>2</sup> Thus Clement insists on the common spiritual and priestly calling of all believers, and he requires even of those engaged in trades, and of publicans, that they should exhibit philosophy in their practice.<sup>3</sup> It was for the purpose of correcting the opinion of those who considered the renunciation of all worldly goods as true Christian perfection, misunderstanding Christ's language to the rich young man, that the same Clement wrote his beautiful tract on the question, "What must be the rich man's character, in order that he may be saved."<sup>4</sup> In this tract, he endeavours to shew that in Christianity the disposition of the heart is the essential thing. "Our Saviour," says Cle-

<sup>1</sup> Clemens Strom. l. iii. f. 446, et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Πίστις δὲ οὐ σοφῶν τῶν κατὰ κόσμον, ἀλλὰ τῶν κατὰ Θεὸν ἐστὶ τὸ κτῆμα, ἡ δὲ καὶ ἄνευ γραμμάτων ἐκπαιδεύεται καὶ τὸ σύγγραμμα αὐτῆς, τὸ ἰδιωτικὸν ἄμα καὶ Θεῖον, ἀγάπῃ κέκληται. Ἄλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐν κόσμῳ κοσμίως (a play upon words which cannot be exactly rendered), κατὰ Θεὸν ἀπάγειν οὐ κινώλονται.

<sup>3</sup> Καὶ ταυτῆ φιλοσοφούντων οἱ ἀγοραῖοι καὶ οἱ κάπηλοι. Pædagog. l. iii. f. 255.

<sup>4</sup> Τίς ὁ σωζόμενος πλούσιος; § 11.

ment, "does not, as many groundlessly assume, command us to throw away our earthly goods, but to banish the *opinion* of money, the passion for it—that canker of the soul—the cares, the thorns of *worldly* life, which choke the seed of the *divine* life. What does our Lord teach as something new, as the only life-giving doctrine, of which those who came before him knew nothing! What is it that is peculiarly his own, and the new creation? Not some outward act, that others also have done; but something higher, more divine, more perfect, intimated only by the outward act, that *all which is foreign* should be torn up, *root and branch*, and cast forth from the soul. For even those before him despised outward things, and in fact gave away their earthly goods; but the inward passions of the soul only became the stronger, for they were filled with vanity, pride, and contempt for other men, as if they had done something themselves beyond the reach of humanity. A man may have thrown away his earthly possessions, and still retain the desire of them in his heart; thus subjecting himself to the double disquietude of having to regret his prodigality, and of feeling himself deprived of the necessaries of life. What means would be left of communicating one to another, if none had the means to bestow? And were *this* the doctrine of our Lord, how could it fail to be at variance with many other glorious doctrines of his? Earthly property should be considered in the light of a staff, an instrument for good uses, to be turned to the proper account by those who know how to use it rightly."

Clement recognised a divine order and arrangement in the unequal distribution of property, which was to serve as a material for Christian virtue. Community of goods appears to him as a thing repugnant to the divine plan.<sup>1</sup> "As food does not advantage us in God's sight," says he, "so neither does the married or the unmarried life without knowledge, but virtuous action done with knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

When the Montanists would have imposed new fasts and new laws of abstinence on the Church, the spirit of evangelical freedom among the Christians took strong ground against them.

<sup>1</sup> Ὡς ἐξ ἑναντίων ὁ κόσμος σύγκριται, ὅσπερ ἐκ θερμοῦ καὶ ψυχροῦ, ξηροῦ τε καὶ ὑγροῦ, οὕτω καὶ τῶν δίδόντων καὶ τῶν λαμβανόντων. Stromat. l. iii. f. 449.

<sup>2</sup> Stromat. l. iv. f. 533.

They were accused of not duly distinguishing between the economies of the Old and of the New Testament; of making laws where, according to the spirit of the Gospel, all should be free, where every one should act without constraint, according to his own peculiar temperament and his own individual necessities. The only fasts prescribed by God was fasting from bosom sins.<sup>1</sup>

Like others whose language we had occasion to cite above, Commodian also rebuked the extravagant estimation in which martyrdom was held as an *opus operatum*. He shewed that whoever was a martyr in disposition, whoever exercised love, humility, patience, was equal to the martyr, without shedding a drop of blood.<sup>2</sup> "Many err," said he, "when they say, we have conquered the enemy by our blood; and they will not conquer him, if he comes to assault them (if he plunges them into temptations of another kind.)"<sup>3</sup> Thou, then, who wouldst become a martyr by the confessions of thy mouth, robe thyself in time of peace with all goodness, and rest secure."

If the ascetic tendency was but a transient moment of excess on one side in the development of the Christian life; we see, on the other hand, from the first, in that which presents the strongest contrast to it, in the ennobled family relation, the power of the Christian principle of life in its healthy development. And this great effect resulted first from the fact that the true import of marriage was realized by Christianity;—its import as the harmonious union of two individuals separated by sex, in a higher spiritual oneness of life, by the communication of a divine life destined to reconcile all antitheses. Connected with this was the fact,

<sup>1</sup> See Tertullian, *de jejniis*.

<sup>2</sup> *Instruct.* 48 :

Multa sint martyria, quæ fiunt sine sanguine fuso,  
Alienum non cupere, velle martyrium habere.  
Linguam refrænare, humilem te reddere debes,  
Vim ultra non facere, nec factam reddere contra,  
Mors (which gives no good sense) patiens fueris, intellige te martyrem esse.

<sup>3</sup> *Instruct.* 62 :

Multi quidem errant dicentes, sanguine nostro,  
Vicimus iniquum, quo manente.

(Which may be referred either to the nearest subject iniquus, as I have rendered, or the more remote sanguis;—they do not want that victory which is won without blood.)

Tu ergo, qui quæris martyrium tollere verbo,  
In pace te vesti bonis et esto securus.

that wherever Christianity found entrance, the equal dignity and worth of the female sex, as possessing a nature created in the image of God and allied to the divine no less than the male, was brought distinctly before the consciousness; and that the sex was invested with the rights belonging to it—in opposition to the principle of the ancient world, particularly in the East, where the woman was placed in an altogether subordinate relation to the man.<sup>1</sup> Thus Clement of Alexandria gives prominence to the Christian import of marriage and of the family life, in opposition to those who were given to the excessive ascetic tendency. “The genuine Christian,” says he, “has the apostles for his example; and in truth, it is not in the solitary life one shews himself a *man*; but *he* gets the victory over other men, who, as a husband and father of a family, withstands all the temptations that assail him in providing for wife and children, servants and substance, without allowing himself to be turned from the love of God. The man with no family escapes many temptations; but as he has none save himself to care for, he is of less worth than the man, who has more to disturb him, it is true, in the work of his own salvation, but accomplishes more in social life, and, in truth, presents, in his own case, a miniature of providence itself.”<sup>2</sup> Describing the Christian matron, he says;<sup>3</sup> “The mother is the glory of her children; the wife of her husband; both are the glory of the wife, and God is the glory of them all.” And Tertullian:<sup>4</sup> “What a union is that between two believers, having in common one hope, one desire, one order of life, one service of the Lord? Both, like brother and sister, undivided in spirit or body, nay, in the true sense, twain in one flesh, kneel, pray, and fast together, mutually teach, exhort, and bear with each other; they are not separated in the Church of God, and at the Lord’s supper; they share each other’s troubles, persecutions, joys; neither has any thing to hide from the other; neither avoids the other; there is free liberty to visit the sick, to sustain the needy; the harmony of psalms and hymns goes up between them, and each vies with the other in singing the praise of their God. Christ rejoices to behold and hear such things, and sends them his peace.

<sup>1</sup> Also in the Ethic. magn. of Aristotle, l. i. c. 34: *Καίρον ἢ γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀνδρός.*

<sup>2</sup> Stromat. l. vii. f. 741.

<sup>3</sup> Paedagog. l. iii. f. 250.

<sup>4</sup> Ad uxorum, l. ii. c. 8.



Where there are two, there he is also; and where he is, the spirit of evil cannot enter."

It was required of the Christian mistress of a family, that, by the sobriety of her whole demeanour, by the decency and simplicity of her dress,<sup>1</sup> she should shew the spirit that ruled within, and thus let her very appearance shine as a light, in an age characterised by excessive display, luxury, and corruption of manners.

But here again there were two opposite parties. While to some, poverty of apparel seemed inseparably connected with the essence of humility, and to be implied in the idea of the *servant form* of the Christian life, others said, "It is enough to have the disposition which becomes Christian women. God looks on the heart—the outward appearance is nothing. Why make a display of the change that has been wrought in us? Far rather are we bound to furnish the heathens no occasion for blaspheming the Christian name, and to accuse Christianity of being irreconcilable with the customs of the world."<sup>2</sup> These earthly goods are in *our* possession; why may we not use them? Why may we not enjoy what we have? For whom were these precious objects created, if not for us? Who are to enjoy the *costly* articles, if all prefer the *cheap*?"<sup>3</sup> To the latter argument, Clement of Alexandria replied: "Even though all things are *given* us, though all things are *allowed* us; though all things are *lawful* for us, yet, as the Apostle says, all things are not expedient. God has created our race for doing good and communicating; he has created every thing for all; everything, therefore, is a common good; and the more wealthy should not make of it an exclusive possession. Such reasoning, therefore, is not humane, does not correspond with our social affections. Love will rather speak thus: 'I have it—why should I not bestow it on the needy?'"<sup>4</sup>

Tertullian says: "What reasons can you have for going about in gay apparel, when you are removed from all with whom this is

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Commodian. *instructioes*, 59,—the satiric remarks directed against the gaudy apparel of the Christian women.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian *de cultu feminarum*, particularly l. ii. c. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Clemens *Pædagog.* l. ii. c. 12.

<sup>4</sup> The same thing is said by Tertullian, in the works above referred to, and by Cyprian, *de habitu virginum*. Perhaps Tertullian and Cyprian had both read this work of Clement.

required? You do not go the round of the temples; you ask for no public shows; you have nothing to do with pagan festivals. You have no other than serious reasons for appearing abroad. It is to visit a sick brother, to be present at the communion, or a sermon; and if offices of courtesy or friendship call you among pagans, why not appear in your own peculiar armour—especially as you are to mix with unbelievers,—that so the difference may be seen between the servants of God and of Satan, that you may serve for an example to them, and that they may be edified by you?"

Adhering strictly to that religious and moral point of view in which the marriage relation was first presented by Christianity, many believed that where there was no union of hearts by the bond of religion, where there was rather disunion in regard to the highest concerns of the inward life, the true significancy of marriage could not be realized. Hence they discountenanced all marriage relation between Christians and pagans. Tertullian labours to shew how inevitably the pious Christian woman, who regarded Christianity as the soul of her life, who belonged to the Church as one of its living members, and felt herself happy in its communion, must, in a thousand ways, be checked and disturbed in her religious duties, and injured in her feelings, by living with a heathen. "Is there a meeting for prayer," says he, "the husband will devote this day to the use of the bath; is a fast to be observed, he will on this day make a banquet for his friends. Never will more hindrances arise from the business of the household, than precisely when the duties of Christian charity call the wife to go abroad. (Next follows the passage, which we have already quoted, relating to those duties of the Christian mistress of a family, in the performance of which she is hindered by her pagan husband.) What shall her husband sing to her, or she to her husband? Would she like to hear anything from the theatre, or from the tavern? What mention is there of God, what invocation to Christ? Where is the nourishment for faith, by the quoting of Scripture in their conversation?<sup>1</sup> Where is there refreshment of spirit; where the divine blessing?"

<sup>1</sup> Ubi fomenta fidei de scripturarum interjectione? according to the reading in Rigaltius' edition. According to the reading in that of Pamelius, "interlectione,"—"by the intermingled reading of the Holy Scriptures." It hardly admits of being determined which is the correct reading. As the whole passage relates to quotations in con-

In the cases just mentioned, the question related to a marriage that was to be contracted, where, as yet, no pledge had been given. It was different, where a connection, which was not to be dissolved but sanctified by Christianity, already existed, and one of the parties became a convert. This case Tertullian expressly distinguishes from the former. "It is different with those who, when they came to the faith, found themselves already connected in marriage with pagans. If such a marriage is valid with God, why should it not go on with his blessing, so that it may continue to be spared from many afflictions, disquietudes, and stains, enjoying, as it does on one side, the protection of divine grace. But where one enters voluntarily and uncalled into forbidden relations, that is another thing." "The manner in which his wife was converted to Christianity," continues Tertullian, "may have a strong impression on the heathen husband himself, so that he may be cautious how he disturbs her too much, or watches her too narrowly. He has witnessed a great event, he has seen the proofs of what God has wrought, he knows that she has become better for the change. Thus are those the more easily gained over to the faith, to whom the grace of God is become familiar." It is true, the observance of such a change did not always make this favourable impression. Many a blind devotee to paganism, when he observed that his wife, whose manners he was before obliged to watch with an anxious scrutiny, had become all at once so domestic and exemplary,—but, at the same time, that Christianity had produced the change,—spurned from him the wife whose vices he had before tolerated. The case sometimes occurred, too, where the Christian woman who was married to a vicious heathen, and previously, when a heathen herself, had been the pander of his vices, was now, as a Christian, forbidden by her conscience to persist in this course. She endeavoured first, by exhortations and remonstrances, to lead him in a better way. But as these would be indignantly rejected, she found herself compelled, in order to avoid participating in his sinful life, to obtain a separation from him; and this proved the occasion of not a few persecutions, excited by exasperated husbands.<sup>1</sup>

versation, the first reading is to the point. And even if this is the right one, it follows from it that husband and wife must possess a familiar acquaintance with the Bible.

<sup>1</sup> See Justin Mart. apolog. ii.

It resulted from this Christian point of view in the consideration of marriage, that it early became a custom to add the *sanction* of the Church to the civil contract. The presiding officers of the Church and the deaconesses were convoked. It was to be understood that the marriage was contracted by the will of God, and not by the impulse of passion, and that all was done to the glory of God.<sup>1</sup> Bride and bridegroom sat down together at the Lord's table, and partook of the communion. They presented a common offering to the Church, and, in return, the blessing of God was specially implored on this new marriage in the prayer of the Church connected with the communion. What importance was attached by the Christians to the sanction of the Church, appears from the following passage of Tertullian:<sup>2</sup> "In what language can we express the happiness of that marriage which is concluded by the Church, sealed by the communion, and consecrated by the benediction; which the angels announce and God the Father ratifies?"

The soul of the whole Christian life was considered to be prayer. Even they who otherwise differed widely in bent of mind, or habits of thinking on many important points, were agreed in acknowledging this. Where the spirit of Christianity brings together the most opposite natures, it would be difficult to find a stronger contrast, than that between the practical realism of Tertullian, so inclined to reduce everything to forms of sense, and the speculative turn of Origen, who was quite too prone to sublimate everything into spirit. But both appear equally penetrated with a living Christianity, when they come to discourse of prayer; both seem to speak from their own inward experience, and in both, the essential Christian spirit presses through all individual peculiarities. Tertullian, in accordance with a prevailing view of those early Christian times, contemplates prayer as an exercise of the priestly office of Christians. "It is the spiritual sacrifice," says he,<sup>3</sup> "which has superseded the sacrifices of the old covenant. (Is. i. 11). This passage informs us what God does *not* seek; but the Gospel teaches us what he *does* seek—'The hour cometh,

<sup>1</sup> Ignat. ep. ii. ad Polycarp, § 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ad uxor. l. ii. c. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. 28, de orat. in the piece published first by Muratori, T. iii. Anecdotor. bibl. Ambros.

and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for God is a spirit.' We are the true worshippers, and the true priests, who pray in the spirit, and thus offer the sacrifice which is befitting God's nature, and well-pleasing in his sight,—that sacrifice which he has sought. And what is there which the God who seeks this prayer can withhold from the prayer that springs from the spirit and from truth? How much do we read, hear, believe, of the proofs of its efficacy!" He then proceeds to describe the peculiar efficacy of *Christian* prayer; to shew how it should correspond to the peculiar nature of the religious constitution under the New Testament; how *Christian* prayer reveals its true power, *not in delivering men miraculously in the hour of death and of suffering, but in making them capable of enduring death and suffering with composure and cheerful resignation.* "By virtue of imparted grace it dulls not the sense of pain, but arms him who suffers the pain with strength to bear it. The prayer of the Christian draws down no retribution from heaven, but it averts God's anger; it watches for its enemies; it intercedes for the persecutors; it obtains the forgiveness of sins; it dispels temptations; it comforts the feeble-minded; it refreshes the strong. *Prayer is the bulwark of faith.*" Origen says:<sup>1</sup> "How much has each one among us to say about the efficacy of prayer, when we would thankfully record the benefits received from God? Souls which had long lain barren, and which became conscious of their dearth, rendered fruitful by the Holy Spirit through persevering prayer, have given forth words of salvation full of the intuitions of truth. What mighty enemies, aiming at the overthrow of our divine faith, have, time and again, been brought to shame! Our confidence was in those words, 'Some trust in chariots and in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God;' and verily we experienced that the horse is a vain thing for safety. The power also of bewildering arguments, which might indeed stagger many who are accounted believers, has been often vanquished by him who trusts in prayer. How many instances are there of those who have fallen into temptations difficult to be overcome, but suffered no injury in them, and come forth unharmed, without being even touched by the smell of the hostile flames! And what shall I further say? How often has it hap-

<sup>1</sup> De orat. § 13.

pened, when they have been thrown before ravenous beasts, or exposed to malignant spirits and cruel men, they have reduced them to silence by their prayers, so that their teeth could not touch us, who were the members of Christ! We know that many who had departed from the precepts of our Lord, and lay already in the jaws of death, have been rescued by the prayer of penitence."

The same Father contemplates prayer in its inseparable unity with the entire life, when he says: <sup>1</sup> "He prays without ceasing, who suitably unites prayer with action; for active duty is an integrant part of prayer; since it would be impossible to understand the words of the Apostle, 'Pray without ceasing,' in any practicable sense, unless we represented to ourselves the whole life of the believer as one entire and connected prayer,<sup>2</sup> of which prayer, commonly so called, forms but a part."

We recognise here a mode of thinking grounded in the essence of primitive Christianity, intimately connected with the consciousness of the universal Christian priesthood, which distinguishes the Christian standing ground as well from the pagan as from the Jewish—the view of prayer as an act embracing the *whole* life—making the entire Christian life a continuous prayer. In this reference, Origen says in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer: <sup>3</sup> "We ought not to think that a set of words has been taught us which we are to repeat at certain stated seasons for prayer. If we duly understand what was said in regard to the duty of 'praying without ceasing,' then our whole life—if we do thus pray without ceasing—must express 'Our Father which art in heaven;' such a life having its conversation, not on earth, but always in heaven, and we being thrones of God, inasmuch as the kingdom of God has its seat in all who bear the image of the Man from heaven, and have thus become heavenly themselves." Clement of Alexandria says: <sup>4</sup> "Prayer, if I may speak so boldly, is intercourse with God. Although we do but lisp, although we address God without opening the lips, in silence, we cry to him in the inward recesses of the heart; for when the whole direction of the inmost soul is to him, God always hears."<sup>5</sup> Again, when

<sup>1</sup> De orat. c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Εἰ πάντα τὸν βίον τοῦ ἀγίου μίαν συνάπταμένην μεγάλην εἴποιμεν εὐχὴν.

<sup>3</sup> De orat. c. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Stromat. l. vii. f. 722.

<sup>5</sup> Πᾶσαν γὰρ τὴν ἰνδιάθετον ὁμιλίαν ὁ Θεὸς ἀδιάλειπτος ἰσακούει.

he is wishing to present the ideal of a devout Christian, arrived at the maturity of knowledge, the same writer says :<sup>1</sup> " He will pray in every place, but not openly, to be seen of men. He prays in every situation, in his walks for recreation, in his intercourse with others, in silence, in reading, in all rational pursuits. And although he is only thinking on God in the little chamber of *the soul*, and calling upon his Father with silent aspirations, *God is near him*, and with him, while he is yet speaking."<sup>2</sup>

Tertullian's description, above quoted, of the blessedness of a Christian marriage, shews that uniting together in spiritual songs and the reading of Scripture belonged to the daily edification of Christian families. In like manner, Clement of Alexandria recommends union in prayer and the reading of the Bible,<sup>3</sup> as a daily morning employment for Christian heads of families. The controversial writings of Tertullian concerning matters of church life and morality, where he conceives of laymen as his opponents, prove that even they were well acquainted with the Scriptures, and were used to judge concerning the relations of life from them.

The Christians were, in general, accustomed to fall in with the customary seasons of prayer already fixed upon among the Jews ; namely, the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours of the day, as it was then divided ; or at nine, at twelve, and at three in the afternoon ; not that they wished to confine the duty of prayer to any stated times, but as Tertullian explained,<sup>4</sup> " for the purpose of reminding those of their duty who might be drawn away from it by their worldly business." Yet the Christians were accustomed to sanctify with prayer all the more important portions of the day, and all the more important transactions of life, whether relating to the mind or the body ; since even the concerns of the world were to be made holy by receiving a heavenly direction. " It behoves the faithful," says Tertullian, " neither to take food, nor to enter a bath, without interposing a prayer ; for the nourishing and refreshing of the spirit should have precedence of the nourishing and refreshing of the body, the heavenly of the earthly." Thus, too, a Christian who had received into his house

<sup>1</sup> Stromat. l. vii. f. 728.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ο δὲ ἰγγύς ἐστι λαλοῦντος πάριστιν.

<sup>3</sup> Εὐχὴ καὶ ἀνάγνωσις. Pædagog. l. ii. f. 194, D.

<sup>4</sup> De erat. c. 25.

a brother from a distant land, and entertained him with all the bodily refreshments in his power, was not to dismiss him without prayer; he was to treat him no otherwise than if he saw in the stranger the Lord himself; and the guest was not to look upon the earthly refreshment which he had received from his brother as of more value than the heavenly which he bestowed on him at parting.<sup>1</sup> On pressing emergencies, affecting either the Church in general or individual members of it in whom all felt a special interest, the whole Church assembled for prayer; and all general deliberations were opened with prayer. It was in prayer that the brotherly fellowship, the mutual sympathy of the members of the One Body was to be specially expressed; each was to pray in the spirit of all, and to present the interests of all the brethren, which he regarded as his own, before the great Head of the Church, and through him, before Eternal Love. Thus Cyprian, in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer, says: "The teacher of peace and of mutual fellowship was desirous, not that each individual should pray for himself alone, but that each should pray for all. We say not, *my* Father, but *our* Father; nor do we pray, each for the forgiveness of *his own sins* alone, nor for *himself alone*, that he may not be led into temptation, and that he may be delivered from the evil. Ours is a common prayer; and when we pray, we pray not for individuals, but for the whole Church, because, being members of the Church, we are all one; that God who is the author of peace and of union, would have each individual pray for all, even as he, in one, has borne us all." And when Cyprian the bishop, in the pressure of persecution, was encouraging his Church to prayer, he wrote to them:—"Let each of you pray to God, not for himself alone, but for all the brethren, as the Lord has taught us to pray."

Convinced that the things of God were to be understood only

<sup>1</sup> The passage in Tertullian, *de orat.* c. 26, which is not without its difficulties, I will here present translated: "But he himself too (the brother from abroad), after having been entertained by the brethren,"—I suppose in this place *exceptus* should be read instead of *exemptis*,—must not value the earthly refreshments more highly than the heavenly; for thy faith would at once be sentenced (*i. e.* he would thereby evince his unbelief, if he valued the parting prayer, the blessing of the Christian brother his entertainer, as of no account compared with the bodily refreshment bestowed); or how shalt thou say, according to the Lord's precept, Peace be with this house! unless thou returnest to those in the house the blessing (previously received from them.)



in the light of God's Spirit, and that the heavenly fountain was opened to man by prayer, the Christians regarded this exercise as the necessary means to the knowledge of divine things and to the right understanding of Scripture. When Origen, that great teacher of the Church, who had availed himself of every human aid accessible in his time for the understanding of the Scriptures and for the unfolding of the doctrines therein contained, and turned to this purpose all the resources of his vast learning and profound speculations, was exhorting his disciple, the young Gregory (afterwards called Thaumaturgus) to diligent "seeking and knocking" in the study of Scripture, he added, "Be not content, however, with seeking and knocking, to gain insight into the things of God; prayer is the most necessary means of all.<sup>1</sup> Inciting us to this, our Saviour did not say alone, 'Knock and it shall be opened to you; seek and ye shall find;' but also, 'Pray and it shall be given you.'"

On those days which were specially consecrated to the remembrance of Christ, *the Risen*, the Christians were accustomed to pray standing erect, to signify that Christ had raised up to heaven those who were fallen and sunk in the mire of the earth; on all other days they prayed kneeling. Yet Origen warned Christians against the self-delusion which, in the outward form, forgot the temper of the heart; he pointed them from the latter to the former, and laboured to shew that the latter was utterly without significance unless connected with the former; was, in itself considered, an indifferent matter. "Before one stretches out his hands to heaven," he says,<sup>2</sup> "one must lift his soul upward; and before one raises up his eyes, one must lift up his spirit to God; for there can be no doubt, that among a thousand possible positions of the body, outstretched hands and uplifted eye are to be preferred above all others, as imaging forth those directions of the soul which are befitting in prayer. We are of opinion that this posture should be preferred where there is nothing to forbid it; for there are certain circumstances, as sickness, where one may pray even sitting or lying. And under-certain circumstances, as for example, on board ship, or in situations which would not allow one to retire for the purpose of offering up the suitable

<sup>1</sup> Αναγκαιοτάτη γὰρ καὶ ἡ πρὸς τοῦ νοῦν τὰ θεῶν εὐχή.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. 21.

prayer, one may pray without seeming to do so. And since the bowing of the knee is required when a man is confessing before God his own sins, and imploring the forgiveness of them, he should know that this posture is the sign of a bowed down and humble spirit." Origen supposes the passage in Philip. ii. 10, to refer to such a spiritual bowing the knee in self-humiliation at the name of Jesus. Tertullian and Cyprian explain, that prayer does not consist in the pomp of outward gestures, but in the direction of the heart to God. "God hears not the voice, but the heart," says Cyprian. "He who discerns the thoughts of men needs not be reminded of their cry; thus Hannah, in the book of Kings, presents the type of the Church. She supplicated God, not with noisy prayer, but in the silent depths of the heart. Her prayer was in silence, but her faith was known to God."

In Commodian's Collection of rules for the Christian life, we find this laid down with the rest: that prayer, not accompanied with works of Christian love, is nothing.<sup>1</sup>

We now pass from the consideration of the Christian life, generally, and of family devotion, to the forms of public worship.

## II. PUBLIC AND COMMON WORSHIP OF GOD.

### I. CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN WORSHIP GENERALLY.

That in which the peculiar character of the Christian worship was really grounded, and by which it was clearly distinguished from every other kind of religious cultus, was that same fundamental intuition out of which the entire Christian life originally sprang,—the idea of the universal Christian priesthood—of that worship of God in spirit and in truth, which is confined to no special time or place, and to no particular class of actions, but embraces in like manner all the actions of the whole life. This distinguishing character of the Christian worship developed itself among the communities of pagan Christians founded by the

<sup>1</sup> Instruct. 79 :

Orantem si cupias exaudiri de cœlo,  
Rumpe de latibulis nequitie vincla;  
Aut si benefactis ores miseratur egenis,  
Ne dubites quin quod petieris detur oranti.  
Tu sane si nudus benefactis Deum adores,  
In totum ne facias sic orationes inepte.

Apostle Paul, first, in contradistinction to Judaism, and afterwards in opposition likewise to paganism. Later, indeed, and as the result of that revolution of Christian views which we adverted to in speaking of the history of the Church constitution, a reaction of the Jewish principle began to manifest itself in the forms of worship, as the opposition to that principle became more feeble. The simple and spiritual character of the Christian worship was, from the first, a very singular and striking phenomenon to the pagans—particularly the fact that nothing of that outward pomp and show was to be seen in it which in all other religions was considered to be so essential—“no temples, no altars, no images!” When Celsus taunted the Christians on this peculiarity, Origen replied: “In the highest sense, God’s temple and image are in the humanity of Christ;—next, in all actuated by the spirit of Christ;—living images these, with which no Jupiter of Phidias is worthy to be compared!”<sup>1</sup> Christianity led men to withdraw from the bustle of the world to the still retirement of the sanctuary within, there to pour out their hearts before Him who chose *this* for his peculiar dwelling; but it also kindled in the hearts of individuals flames of love which sought after communion, after the means of mutually lending strength to one another, and rising upward in one common holocaust to heaven. *Fellowship* in prayer and devotion was considered a means of promoting holiness, since it was known that the Lord was present with his Spirit, in the midst of those who were assembled together in his name; but nothing could be more distant from the thoughts of Christians generally than to attribute any special sacredness to the place of meeting. Such a fancy seemed to savour of paganism; and it was the less possible for Christians to be led into such a mistake at the beginning, because their earliest places of assembly were ordinary rooms in private houses, such as any member of the Church, who had a dwelling suited to the purpose, could furnish. Thus Gaius of Corinth is called, Rom. xvi., the host of the whole Church; because the Church was accustomed to assemble in a room of his house. Origen says:<sup>2</sup> “The place where believers assemble for prayer has something about it wholesome and profitable;” but it is the importance of *this spiritual* fellowship only which he aims to impress.

<sup>1</sup> c. Cels. l. viii. § 17.

<sup>2</sup> De orat. c. 31.

“Christ, with the host of angels,” he supposes, “attends the assembly of the faithful; and hence such assemblies for prayer should not be despised or neglected, since they had a peculiar power for him who joins in them with a sincere heart.” “It is not the place, but it is the congregation of the elect which I call the Church,” says Clement of Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> Tertullian remarks:<sup>2</sup> “We may pray in every place which the occasion or which necessity may furnish; for the apostles, who prayed to God and sang his praise in the prison within the hearing of the keepers, surely did nothing contrary to the commands of our Lord, any more than did Paul when in the ship and before the eyes of all, he consecrated the Lord’s supper;” Acts xxvii.

It could not fail to happen, indeed, that the principle which tended to make religion an outward thing, confined to particular times and places,—which principle Christianity had overcome,—would once more find entrance into the Christian life; but the power of the pure Christian spirit caused itself to be felt against such deprivations when they threatened to spread farther. Of such a thing, Clement of Alexandria testifies when he says:<sup>3</sup> “The disciples of Christ ought so to appear and so to shape their conduct in their daily living, as, for the sake of propriety, they strive to appear in the Church; they should really *be*, and not merely *seem* to be such,—so gentle, so devout, so amiable. But I know not how it is that, with the place, they change their appearance and their manners, just as it is said of the polypus, that it changes its colour with the roots to which it clings. They lay aside the spiritual demeanour which they assumed in the Church, as soon as they leave it, and put themselves on a level with the multitude with whom they mingle. They convict themselves of insincerity, and shew what was really the temper of their hearts, by laying off their assumed mask of decorum. They profess to honour the word of God, but leave it behind them in the place where they heard it.”

<sup>1</sup> Οὐ γὰρ νῦν τὸν τόπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἄφροισμα τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκκλησίαν κέλω. Stromat. l. vii. f. 715, B.

<sup>2</sup> De orat. c. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Pædagog. l. iii. f. 257.

## II. THE PLACES OF ASSEMBLY USED BY THE CHRISTIANS.

We have already said that the place where the congregations assembled was at first a room in the house of some member of the Church. In large towns where such a place of assembly could not accommodate all, it became necessary that smaller portions of the community dwelling at a distance, should choose other places for their meeting on the Sunday. When a man distinguished for the talent of communicating doctrinal instruction settled down in a town, he also might form a circle in the Church, who would assemble at his dwelling for the purpose of hearing his spiritual discourses. Thus the passages in Paul's epistles concerning churches in the house of Aquilas and of others will become intelligible;<sup>1</sup> and to this Justin Martyr alluded, when, in the audience which he had with the prefect of Rome, in answer to the question, "Where do you assemble?" he replied, "Where each man can and will. You believe, doubtless that we all meet together in one place. But it is not so; for the God of the Christians is not confined to one spot, but his invisible presence fills heaven and earth, and in all places he is worshipped by the faithful." Justin then adds, that whenever he came to Rome, it was his custom to take up his residence in one particular spot, where those Christians who were instructed by him,<sup>2</sup> and who

<sup>1</sup> The church in his house, *ἡ κατ' οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἐκκλησία*. In such passages, the reference certainly cannot be to places of assembly for entire congregations, since in several instances this *ἡ κατ' οἶκον τινος ἐκκλησία* is expressly distinguished from the whole community; 1 Cor. xvi. 19 and 20,—the church at Ephesus assembling in the house of Aquilas and Priscilla, is first mentioned, and then besides, *all* the brethren, which, according to the above supposition, would be the same thing. Coloss. iv. 15, is another case of the same sort. Again, an objection presents itself against this explanation, from the fact that the same Aquilas should have the church meet in *his* house, when he resided at Rome, his ordinary home, and when he abode at Ephesus; comp. Rom. xvi. 5, and 1 Corinth. xvi. 19. But it is very unlikely that the community would have constantly changed its place of meeting on the arrival of Aquilas. It is more easy to conceive, that men, who, like the tent-maker Aquilas, were obliged, on account of their occupation, to provide themselves with large and commodious dwellings wherever they took up their residence, were in the habit of giving up *one* apartment of their house for the assembling of a portion of the community; especially when such a person was also fitted, as probably Aquilas was, by his gift of teaching, to conduct the exercises of *small* assemblies, in the capacity of a *διδάσκαλος*. Comp. above, page 252, and my History of the Planting, &c. Bd. i. S. 208.

<sup>2</sup> This was accordingly *ἡ κατ' οἶκον τοῦ Ἰουστίνου ἐκκλησία*.

wished to hear his discourses, were accustomed to assemble. Other places of assembly he had not visited.

Gradually such arrangements were made in those places of assembly, as the proprieties of Christian worship required. An elevated seat was constructed for the reading of the Scriptures and the delivering of the sermon;<sup>1</sup> and a table set for the distribution of the supper, to which, so early as the time of Tertullian—perhaps not without some mixture of the foreign Old Testament idea of sacrifice, at least not without furnishing a pretext for the speedy admission of this idea—was given the name of altar; *ara*, *altare*. As the communities became larger and wealthier, church buildings were erected expressly for the use of the Christians. This appears to have been the case as early as the third century, for mention is made already of the *ἁγιοθέσιοι τόποι* (places of worship) of the Christians, in the edict of Gallien.<sup>2</sup> In the time of the outward prosperity of the Church, under the reign of Diocletian, many splendid church structures had already arisen in the large cities.

*The use of images* was originally foreign to the worship and excluded from the churches of the Christians; and so in general it continued to be in this period. The confounding of religion and art in paganism, made the early Christians suspicious of art. As at the pagan position the sense for the beautiful had often appeared at variance with, and even opposed to, the moral taste, so the early warmth of Christian zeal was inclined to reverse the relation. The religious consciousness easily took an opposite direction to the æsthetic principle of the ancient world; and the Holy disdained the beautiful form which had been allied to the unholy. The idea of the appearance of the godlike in the form of a servant, an idea so well suited to the oppressed condition of the afflicted Church of this age, men were inclined to push to an undue extreme, rather than to seek to ennoble the divine by the beautiful form. This exhibits itself more particularly in the uni-

<sup>1</sup> *Suggestus*, *pulpitum*.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 191, and the following. If any confidence is to be placed in the narrative of the Chronicle of Edessa, cited in *Assemani Bibliotheca orientalis*. T. i. f. 391 (see above, p. 108), there was a Christian church structure in Edessa as early as the year 302; and if the explanation of that passage by Michaelis, *Orientalische und exegetische Bibliothek*, Theil. x. S. 61, is made out, this Church was separated thus early into three parts, according to the pattern of the Jewish temple.

versal opinion of the primitive church, according to which Christ veiled his intrinsic divine majesty under an uncomely appearance, which served to conceal it; an opinion for which they found authority in the Messianic passage, Isa. liii. 2, too literally understood. Thus Clement of Alexandria admonishes the Christians against placing too high a value on beauty of person, by reference to the example of Christ. Our Lord himself is said to have been *without comeliness* in his outward appearance; and who is *better* than our *Lord*? But if he did not reveal himself in that personal beauty which is perceptible to sense, he appeared in the true beauty, both of soul and of body; of the soul, in goodness; and of the body, in its destination for an imperishable existence.”<sup>1</sup>

Church teachers of the most opposite bent of mind, those inclined to a more sensuous and those to a more spiritual mode of conceiving divine things—Realists and Idealists, who, on account of these different intellectual tendencies, might be expected to have different views in relation to this matter, as we find that different views of the same did result from such diverse intellectual tendencies in later times—were yet united on this point by their common repugnance to that practice of confounding the natural with the divine in paganism, and by their efforts to preserve pure and uncontaminated the worship of God in spirit and in truth. Clement of Alexandria is as little favourable to religious images as Tertullian. “We must not cling to the sensuous,” he remarks, when speaking against the pagan use of images, “but we must rise to the spiritual. The familiarity of daily sight lowers the dignity of the divine, and to pretend to worship a spiritual essence through earthly matter, is to degrade that essence to the world of sense.” It is evident, from these remarks, how foreign, on the whole, to the notions of Christians in this age must have been images of Christ. Pagans, like Alexander Severus,<sup>2</sup> who recognised something of a divine nature in Christ, and sects which confounded paganism with Christianity, were the first to intro-

<sup>1</sup> *Pædagog.* l. iii. c. 1: Τὸν κύριον αὐτὸν τὴν ὄψιν αἰσχρὸν γεγονέναι, διὰ Ἡσαίου τὸ πνεῦμα μαρτυροῦν.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius says, likewise, *hist. eccles.* l. vii. c. 18, that *pagans* were the first to provide themselves according to their heathen notions, with painted images of *Christ*, *Peter*, and *Paul*, as benefactors of mankind. This admits of being easily explained from the religious eclecticism of that period.

duce images of Christ; as for example, the gnostic sect of the Carpocratians, who placed such images beside the busts of Plato and Aristotle.

It was not in the Church, but in the family, that religious images first came into use among the Christians. In their daily intercourse with men, the Christians saw themselves everywhere surrounded by the objects of the pagan mythology, or, at least, by objects offensive to their moral and Christian sentiments. Representations of this sort covered the walls in shops, were the ornaments of drinking vessels, and seal-rings, on which the pagans frequently had engraven the images of their gods, so that they might worship them when they pleased. It was natural that in place of these objects, so offensive to their religious and moral sentiments, the Christians should wish to substitute others more agreeable to them. Thus they preferred to have on their goblets the figure of a shepherd, carrying a lamb on his shoulder, which was the symbol of our Saviour rescuing the repentant sinner, according to the Gospel parable.<sup>1</sup> And Clement of Alexandria says, in reference to the seal-rings of the Christians,<sup>2</sup> "Let our signets be a dove (the symbol of the Holy Spirit) or a fish,<sup>3</sup> or a ship sailing towards heaven (the symbol of the Christian Church, and of the individual Christian soul), or a lyre (the symbol of Christian joy), or an anchor (the symbol of Christian hope), and he who is a fisherman will not be forgetful of the Apostle Peter, and of the children taken from the water;<sup>4</sup> for no images of gods should be engraved on the rings of those who are forbidden all intercourse with idols; no sword nor bow, on the rings of those who strive after peace; no goblets, on the rings of those who are the friends of sobriety." Yet religious emblems passed from domestic use into the churches, perhaps as early as the end of the third century. The walls of them were painted in this manner. The Council of Elvira, in the year 303, opposed this innovation

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, de pudicitia, c. 7: *Procedant ipsæ picturæ calicum vestrorum.* Cap. 10: *Pastor, quem in calice depingis.* The figure of Christ on the cup seems not to have been pleasing to the Montanistic asceticism.

<sup>2</sup> *Pædagog.* l. iii. f. 246 and 247.

<sup>3</sup> The same allusion as in the case of the fishermen,—also an allusion to the anagram of Christ's name, ΙΧΘΥΣ = 'Ιησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ.

<sup>4</sup> The Christians, whom the divine teacher, the Θεῖος παιδαγωγός,—Christ, leads through baptism to regeneration.





as an abuse, and forbade "the objects of worship and adoration to be painted on the walls."<sup>1</sup> The visible representation of the cross may, doubtless, have early found its way among the Christians, both in their domestic and ecclesiastical life. This token was peculiarly common with them. It was the sign of blessing when they rose in the morning and when they retired at night, when they went out and when they came in; employed, indeed, in all the transactions of daily life. It was the sign which the Christians unconsciously made, in all cases of sudden surprise.<sup>2</sup> It was a sensible expression of the truly Christian idea, that all the transactions of Christians, as well as their whole life, should be sanctified by the faith in Christ crucified, by being referred to him; that this faith was the most effectual means of obtaining the triumph over, and securing protection against all evil. It was but too easily, however, that men confounded this idea with the symbol which represented it; and the efficacy of the faith in Christ crucified was transferred to the outward sign, and a supernatural, sanctifying, protecting power attributed to this—an error, the vestiges of which may be traced as far back as the third century.

We now pass from the consideration of places of public worship, to that of the seasons of worship and the festivals of the Christians.

### III. SEASONS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP AND FESTIVALS.

What we have said in general respecting the essential character of Christian worship, is also to be applied to the feasts in particular; namely, that the spirit of universality in Christianity abolished all separative and particularizing limitation; the Christian worship of God claiming for itself the entire life flowing out from a commerce with heaven, that clung no longer to the elements of the world, was no longer to be confined either to any

<sup>1</sup> Ne, quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur. Concil. Illibert. can. 36. It must be admitted that the interpretation of this canon cannot be settled with entire certainty. There is a twofold ambiguity. The phrase "quod colitur et adoratur," may be understood as referring to objects of religion generally, or more *strictly* to objects of proper worship, to images of Christ, or symbolical representations of God,—of the Trinity. The term "walls," may also be understood in two different senses, either as referring to the walls of the house or those of the church.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Tertullian, de corona milit. c. 3.

particular place or to a particular time. In the New Testament fulfilment, *i. e.* the keeping holy of the entire life as a life consecrated every day alike to God, the Old Testament law of the Sabbath must find its resolution. Not barely the observance of Jewish feasts, but all forms and modes of particularizing the Christian life by reference to certain times, is reprobated by the Apostle Paul, as a Jewish practice,<sup>1</sup> a descent to servile dependence on the elements of the world. But if men did, notwithstanding, now select certain days for the purpose of associating with them the remembrance of the great facts connected with the history of redemption, to which the whole Christian life was ever to be referred for the purpose of making these occasions central points of Christian fellowship, yet this was by no means inconsistent with that Christian tendency and intuition which were at bottom. It was only a descent from the elevation of the pure spirit, at which even the Christian, still partaking of a double nature, cannot always sustain himself, to the position of sensuous weakness,—a descent which must become the more necessary, in the same proportion as the fire of the first enthusiasm, the glow of the first love, abated. But even in this respect, as well as in reference to the idea of the priesthood, the particularizing spirit of the Old Testament dispensation introduced a disturbing influence, by fastening itself on that which had sprung originally from the purer development of the Christian life.

When the Montanists were wishing to introduce new fasts *by law*, which were to be confined to *stated times*, what Paul had written in the Epistle to the Galatians against the Jewish observance of times was very justly quoted against them; but Tertullian, the defender of Montanism, whom we have described above as standing on the dividing line between the early Christian, the purely evangelical period, and the Christian Jewish period which was now about to commence, already shews himself incapable of rightly distinguishing the two positions, that of the Old and that of the New Testament; for he conceives the Judaizing spirit, reprobated by St Paul, to consist simply in the observance of *Jewish festivals*, and not in *the whole relation corresponding to the Jewish position of particular days*,—whatever days they might be,—to the religious consciousness. According to his view,

<sup>1</sup> See my History of the Planting, &c. Bd. i. S. 215, ff.

it would savour in no respect of Judaism, if feasts which had reference to what is simply Christian, were placed in *such a relation* to the religious consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

The *weekly* and *yearly* festivals of the Christians originated in the same fundamental idea, which formed the centre of the whole Christian life,—the idea of imitating Christ, the crucified and the risen,—imitating him in his death, by appropriating, through faith and repentance, the effects of his death, by dying to self and to the world,—imitating him in his *resurrection*, by rising with him, in faith, and through the power which he imparts, to a new and holy life, consecrated to God, commencing here in the germ, and unfolding itself to maturity in another world. Hence, the *jubilee* was the *festival of the resurrection*; and the preparation for it, the remembrance of Christ's sufferings with penitence and crucifixion of the flesh, was the day of fasting and penitence. Accordingly, in the week, the jubilee or festival of joy was Sunday; the preparation for it were the days of fasting and prayer consecrated to the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ, and of what preceded them, on Thursday and Friday. Accordingly, the *yearly festivals* were in remembrance of the resurrection of Christ, and of his works after his resurrection and ascension;—the preparation for these were the remembrance of Christ's sufferings and the fasts. Having presented this general view, we shall now proceed to consider, more in detail, the several weekly and yearly festivals.

The opposition to Judaism early led to the special observance of Sunday in place of the Sabbath. The first intimation of this change is in Acts xx. 7, where we find the Church assembled on the first day of the week;<sup>2</sup> a still later one is in Rev. i. 10, where, by the "Lord's day," can hardly be understood the day of judgment. Thus, in the catholic epistle ascribed to Barnabas at the close of the 15th chapter, Sunday is designated as the day of jubilee in remembrance of Christ's resurrection and ascension

<sup>1</sup> Against this objection of conforming to Jewish practices, "Galaticari," Tertullian, de jejuniis, c. 14, replies: Galaticamur plane, si Judaicarum ceremoniarum, si legalium solennitatum observantes sumus, illas enim Apostolus dedocet, comspescens veteris Testamenti in Christo sepulti perseverantiam. Quodsi nova conditio in Christo, jam nova et solennia esse debebunt.

<sup>2</sup> See my History of the Planting, &c. vol. i. p. 215, f.

to heaven,<sup>1</sup> and of the new creation which then commenced; and in the epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, it is presupposed<sup>2</sup> that even the Jews who had come over to Christianity substituted Sunday in place of the Sabbath. As the Sabbath was regarded as representing Judaism, Sunday was contemplated as a symbol of the new life consecrated to the risen Christ, and grounded in his resurrection. Sunday was distinguished as a day of joy, by being exempted from fasts, and by the circumstance that prayer was performed on this day in a standing and not in a kneeling posture, as Christ, by his resurrection, had raised up fallen man again to heaven. But as we have already observed in Tertullian a confounding of the Jewish with the Christian view of feasts, so we find also in him indications of the transfer of the law of the Jewish Sabbath to Sunday; for by him, attending to any business on Sunday seems to have been regarded as sinful.<sup>3</sup>

Again, the Friday of every week—this day in particular—and the Thursday were specially consecrated to the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ and of the preparatory circumstances. On these days there were meetings for prayer, and fasts till three o'clock in the afternoon; yet nothing in regard to these arrangements was defined by law. Every one took a part in these observances according to his own particular necessities and his inclination. Such fasts, united with prayer, the Christians—who were fond of comparing their calling to a militia Christi,—called *stationes*,<sup>4</sup> as if they constituted the sentry duties of the

<sup>1</sup> Considering the close connection in which the resurrection of Christ and his ascension to heaven stood with each other in the Christian consciousness,—since his resurrection was regarded as but a transition point to his entire exaltation above the region of earth in this new, glorified form of existence,—I cannot lay so great stress on the manner in which the writer of this letter expresses himself with regard to Sunday: “*ἡν ἢ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνίσταται ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ φανερωθεὶς ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς.*” Nor can I think myself authorised to infer from it, either that according to the author's opinion, Christ's ascension also occurred on Sunday, or that he conceived the fact to have been that Christ rose to heaven immediately after his first appearance to Mary, as the risen Saviour.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. 9: *Μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες.*

<sup>3</sup> As is to be inferred from Tertullian's language, *de orat.* c. 23: *Solo die dominico resurrectionis non ab isto tantum (the bowing of the knee), sed omni anxietatis habitu et officio cavere debemus, differentes etiam negotia, ne quem diabolo locum demus.*

<sup>4</sup> We find the word *statio* used in this sense, first in *Hermas Pastor*, l. iii. *Similitud.* v.—often in Tertullian. *Statio* was the technical designation for this half-fast, as contradistinguished from the proper *jejunia*. Tertullian, *de jejuniiis*, c. 14.

soldiers of Christ ;—hence both these days were named *dies stationum*.<sup>1</sup>

Those churches, however, which were composed of Jewish Christians,<sup>2</sup> though they admitted, with the rest, the festival of Sunday, yet retained also that of the Sabbath ; and it was from these that the custom became general in the Eastern Church of distinguishing this day, as well as Sunday, by the exclusion of fasts, and by the standing position in prayer ; while in the Western, and especially in the Roman Church, where the opposition against Judaism predominated, the custom, on the other hand, grew out of this opposition, of observing the Sabbath also as a fast day.<sup>3</sup> This difference in customs became striking whenever members of Eastern churches passed their Sabbaths in churches

<sup>1</sup> *Feria quarta et sexta*, probably = *feria diei quartæ, sextæ* ; hence the signification of the word *feria* in the Latin phraseology of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> From the language of the passage, which has already been cited, Ignat. ep. ad Magnes : *Οἱ ἐν παλαιαῖς πράγμασιν ἀναστραφίντες, — μηδέτι σαββατίζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζῶντες ζῶντες*, it might be inferred, indeed, that the Jewish Christians had substituted Sunday in place of the Sabbath ; the inference, however, thus generally expressed, assuredly cannot be true.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, de jejun. c. 14 : *Quoniam vos etiam sabbatum si quando continuatis, nunquam nisi in Paschate jejunandum*. He objects, as a Montanist, to his Roman opponents, that they had deprived the Sabbath of its due celebration, and sometimes continued the fast on Friday over into the Sabbath, when properly the only exception to be made here was in the case of the passover. The same practice of continuing the fast on Friday over into the Sabbath, which Tertullian the Montanist here attacks, we find mentioned by Victorinus, bishop of Petabio in Pannonia (now Pettau in Steiermark), near the close of the third century, in the fragment on the History of the Creation, first published by Cave hist. lit. He calls this continuation “superpositio jejunii.” Fasting on the Sabbath appears in this case to have been a preparation for the jubilee of the communion on Sunday, as opposed to the Jewish celebration of the Sabbath, which had been abrogated by Christ. *Hoc die solemus superponere ; idcirco, ut die dominico cum gratiarum actione ad panem (the sacrament of the supper) exeamus. Et parasceve superpositio fiat, ne quid cum Judæis sabbatum observare videamus*. Galland. bibl. patr. t. iv. and Routh reliquiæ sacræ, vol. iii. pag. 237. Oxon. 1815.

The council of Elvira opposed to the error of the Sabbath celebration, such a continuation of the fast on Friday over into the Sabbath ; Can. 26 : *Errorem placuit corrigi, ut omni sabbati die superpositiones celebremus*. This canon may, without question, be differently understood, according as we refer the phrase “errorem corrigi,” to something not expressly stated, but supplied by the mind, or to the following context. If it is referred to the last, the council must be understood as declaring itself expressly *opposed* to these *superpositiones*. But the analogy of the whole style of expression in the other canons of this council would rather favour the first interpretation. At a later period, when the point of view from which the subject was regarded in the early Christian times had passed out of mind, and the cause of that custom in the Roman Church, of fasting

of the West. But too soon, the principles of the apostolic Church, which amidst all the differences in outward things, abode firmly by the unity of faith and of spirit in the bond of love, was departed from, and *uniformity* in such matters was *required*. Tertullian, previous to his conversion to Montanism, spoke on this disputed point with Christian moderation. He said of the few advocates of the Eastern custom,<sup>1</sup> "The Lord will bestow his grace, so that they will either yield, or else follow their own opinion without giving offence to others." As early as the beginning of the third century the learned Hippolytus was led to write on this controversy between the Eastern and Western Church.<sup>2</sup>

From the same point of view originated the first *yearly festivals* among the Christians; yet here, that opposition between the communities composed of Jewish and those composed of Gentile Christians, which had such important influence on the unfolding of the life of the Church as well as of its doctrines, was strongly manifested at the very beginning. The former retained, with the whole Jewish ceremonial law, all the Jewish festivals, although gradually they ascribed to them such Christian import as might naturally present itself. On the contrary, among the churches of Gentile Christians, there were probably, from the first, no yearly festivals whatever, as may be inferred from the epistles of St Paul.<sup>3</sup> This then must have been the case also with the churches of Asia Minor, which assuredly were founded by the Apostle Paul. But from *these churches* started the controversies in the second century respecting the time of the passover; and they appealed to the authority of an ancient usage introduced by the Apostle John. In regard to this point, thus much of truth may doubtless lie at bottom; that the changes which took place in these churches after the times of St Paul in the particular form of worship and the introduction of the annual feast,—which we must

on the Sabbath, was no longer obvious, fables were invented in explanation of the matter; as, for example, that Peter had fasted on this day to prepare himself for the dispute with Simon Magus.

<sup>1</sup> De orat. c. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. Hieronymus ep. 72, ad Vital.

<sup>3</sup> The passage, 1 Corinth. v. 7, contains in no sort, any allusion to a celebration of the passover in the Corinthian Church, which was peculiar to the Christians, but simply opposes that cleansing of the heart which is the result of faith, to the *outward* Jewish celebration of the feast. Comp. my History of the Planting, &c. vol. i. p. 230.

assume, and search for its cause,—might be derived from the Apostle John, whose longer residence in Asia Minor must have had a lasting influence on the state of the churches there. As it regards him, it is in itself probable, that as he had been accustomed heretofore to celebrate the Jewish annual festival, and as the feast of the passover, which called to mind the great facts of which he had been an eye-witness, must have had a peculiar significance for him, he may have introduced its celebration when he took up his permanent residence among the churches of that region. Thus it is explained how it happened that men were guided there wholly by the chronology of the Jewish passover.

Now, in modern times it has become the prevailing opinion<sup>1</sup> that the paschal supper which the Christians of Asia Minor observed in remembrance of the last paschal supper of Christ, was the point by which they determined the time of the Christian paschal supper. But it may be questioned, whether the most reliable and the oldest document on this controversy,—the letter of the bishop Polycrates of Ephesus,<sup>2</sup>—favours this view.<sup>3</sup> From

<sup>1</sup> The first start to which was given by the Dissertation published by myself in the 2d Hefte des Kirchenhistorischen Archiv's von Vater, J. 1823. See the history of the treatises on this subject,—a subject rendered obscure and difficult by the deficiency of ancient accounts and the ambiguity of the term *Pascha*,—in Illgen's Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie, Bd. ii. 4tes Stück, J. 1832, by Dr Rettberg.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. v. c. 24: The fragment, preserved to us in the Chronicon paschale Alexandrinum, from a work by Apollinaris of Hierapolis, on the feast of the Passover, of which I have made much use in the Dissertation just referred to, is, to say the least, suspicious; since in the ancient lists of the writings of Apollinaris, in Eusebius, in Jerome, and in Photius, no such work is mentioned; and it were singular if in the district where he wrote, the usage of the church in Asia Minor was not followed.

<sup>3</sup> Polycrates, in the letter referred to, says of his predecessors: Πάντες ἐτήρησαν τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτης τοῦ πάσχα κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. This, to say the least, would be singularly expressed, if it is to be understood as referring only to the paschal supper to be held on the evening of this day, which supper, according to the Gospel narrative relating to the last paschal supper of Christ, it was believed should be held at the beginning of the Jewish feast of the passover, on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan. Afterwards it is said: Πάντοτε τὴν ἡμέραν ἤγαγον οἱ συγγενεῖς μου, ὅταν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὁ λαὸς ἤρηνε τὴν ζύμην. What sense would this afford, if the subject of discourse were the paschal supper? It is, in fact, evident of itself, that the *paschal supper* could be held only on the day when the Jews removed the leaven from their houses. This would be idem per idem. On the other hand, every thing is consistent, if we suppose that the writer is speaking of the celebration in remembrance of Christ's passion, on the fourteenth of the month Nisan. The source of proof appealed to here was the Gospel, by which may be understood, either the evangelical history generally, or the Gospel of John in particular.

the language used in this document, it might much rather be inferred that in the churches of Asia Minor, the Christians who followed the Johannean tradition went on the supposition that the 14th day of the month Nisan ought to be regarded as the day of Christ's passion. Hence it was believed that this day ought ever to be appropriated to the remembrance of Christ's passion, since also the paschal lamb, slain by the Jews on this day, was considered a foretype of the offering of Christ.<sup>1</sup> At all events, then, it is settled, that in Asia Minor the celebration of the passover was established wholly according to the Jewish chronology. Hence it might come about, that the remembrance of Christ's passion was celebrated on another day of the week than Friday, the remembrance of Christ's resurrection on another day than Sunday. When, on the other hand, in the course of the second century, annual feasts were introduced also into the Western Churches, men proceeded from an altogether different point in determining their times. Following the same method according to which the weekly festivals had been arranged, Christians held it necessary that a Friday should always be consecrated to the memory of Christ's passion, a Sunday to the memory of Christ's resurrection.

This difference of outward use existed at first, without being deemed of sufficient importance,—since it was an external thing,—to be made a matter of dispute; it was still kept in mind, that the kingdom of God consists neither in meat nor drink, nor any other kind of external action.

This diversity, together with several other differences, between the Church of Asia Minor and the Church of Rome, first came into discussion when, in the year 162, the bishop Polycarp of Smyrna made a visit to Anicetus, bishop of Rome.<sup>2</sup> Polycarp alleged that he himself had observed such a passover with the Apostle John, whose disciple he was. Anicetus alleged that his

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Justin M. Dial. c. Tryph. Jud. f. 259, and f. 338. ed Colon.

<sup>2</sup> At any rate, if we may judge from the language of Irenæus, cited by Eusebius, the object of Polycarp's journey to Rome was not to settle the disputes respecting the feast of the passover. No disputes on this question had as yet arisen; and the conversation upon it was only cursorily introduced, while the parties were speaking on the points in which the churches differed. Neither is it by any means clear, although it is possible, that the object of the journey was to discuss those other differences. More importance has been sometimes attributed to this visit than it can be proved historically to have had.



predecessors (in a church consisting of Gentile Christians from the school of Paul, and in which there were originally no yearly feasts at all<sup>1</sup>) had introduced nothing of that sort. But as it was not supposed that the apostles were agreed in respect to such outward matters, nor that they would have considered uniformity in regard to such things as necessary, it was believed that without prejudice to the fellowship and unity of Christians, a difference on these points might be suffered to remain. As a token that the bond of Christian brotherhood was not to be disturbed by such, and, as it seems, other still more important points of difference, Anicetus permitted Polycarp to preside in the church in place of himself at the celebration of the Lord's supper.

If two books which, about the year 171, the bishop Melito of Sardis wrote upon the passover,<sup>2</sup> referred to this dispute, it must about this time have broken out anew; yet it does not admit of being proved that the work contained any reference of that sort. The typical explanation of the Jewish passover might also have led to the composition of such a work, independent of this controversy.

But about the year 290, when Victor was bishop of the Roman Church,<sup>3</sup> the controversy broke out afresh. On the one side stood the Church of Rome, together with the Churches of Cæsarea in Palestine, of Jerusalem, of Tyre, and of Alexandria; on the other were the Churches of Asia Minor, headed by the bishop Polycrates of Ephesus.

The Roman bishop, actuated by that hierarchical spirit which, as we have already observed, had already begun to shew itself in the Roman Church,<sup>4</sup> published sentence of excommunication

<sup>1</sup> The matter is obscure, as we have in our hands only a disconnected fragment of the letter of Irenæus. Perhaps there was not as yet even then in the Roman Church any yearly feast; perhaps the difference *at that time* had reference to this very point, —the conflict between the ancient rites according to Paul, and the more recent ones according to John. I speak here only by way of conjecture.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. l. iv. c. 26.

<sup>3</sup> I once inferred, from the fact that Irenæus, in his letter to Victor, holds up only those Roman bishops who preceded Soter, as patterns of toleration, that a change had already taken place under the latter; but if we mark how the phrases in Irenæus, *οἱ* (*πρὸ*) *Σωτῆρος* *πρεσβύτεροι* and *οἱ* *πρὸ* *σου* *πρεσβύτεροι*, answer to each other, it becomes evident that no stress can be laid on the former of them. Irenæus means simply to say, that difference, and withal that tolerance, did not first begin under the last bishops, but existed already before Soter.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 291.

against the Churches of Asia Minor on account of this trivial point of dispute; but this unchristian proceeding could not fail to encounter decided resistance in an age when some portion of the Gospel spirit still remained. Irenæus, in the name of the churches at Lyons and Vienna, wrote him a letter, in which he sharply rebuked this method of procedure. He endeavoured to make Victor ashamed of his conduct, by comparing it with the example of his predecessor, Anicetus, and declared to him, "Notwithstanding these differences, we live together in peace, and our disagreement with regard to the regulation of fasts serves only to make our unity of faith the more clearly evident." In the same letter, or another document originating in the same controversy, he said, "The apostles have directed us to let no man judge us in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon or of Sabbath days. Why then these disputes, why these divisions? We observe fasts, but with the sour leaven of malice and cunning, rending the Church of God; we observe the externals, so as to let go those weightier matters of faith and love. We have learned from the prophets, however, that such feasts and such fasts are an abomination to the Lord."

As Friday was customarily considered a day of penitence and fasting preparatory to the celebration of the resurrection Sunday, it was the practice of these churches, where one Friday in the year was consecrated to the remembrance of the passion, and one Sunday to the remembrance of the resurrection of Christ, to make this Friday a day of penitence and fasting preparatory to the greatest Christian festival, the celebration of the remembrance of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. Yet with respect to the duration of this season of fasting nothing was determined. In order to imitate the temptation of Jesus during forty days in the wilderness, this fast was extended in some districts to forty hours, which led afterwards to the forty days,<sup>1</sup> or Quadragesimal fast.

After the feast of the resurrection followed the feast of Pentecost (Whitsuntide), in remembrance of Christ risen and glorified, as he thus revealed himself to the faithful, and at length actively manifested himself, in a self-subsistent community of divine life, in the effusion of the Holy Spirit. All this was embraced as one included sum of the activity and self-revelation of the ascended and glorified Redeemer, in this prolonged celebration of fifty days.

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, in Euseb. l. v. c. 24.

It is evident from this how closely connected in the Christian consciousness of this period were the conceptions of Christ ascended and glorified.<sup>1</sup> This entire period was observed as Sunday; that is, there was never any fasting; prayers were made in the standing and not in the kneeling posture; it was perhaps the case also (in many of the churches at least), that the congregations daily assembled and celebrated the communion.<sup>2</sup> Afterwards, two special events were selected out of this whole period, the ascension of Christ, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit, to which the celebration of Pentecost was confined.

*These feasts*, as it appears from the passage cited out of Origen, were the only ones generally observed in this period. That fundamental view of the whole Christian life, which referred everything to the sufferings, resurrection, and glory of Christ, and the accommodation or opposition to the Jewish observances, were reasons that these in particular constituted the only general festivals. The idea of a *birth-day* festival was foreign to the Christians of this period generally; they regarded the second birth as the man's true birth. So far as it concerned the birth of the Saviour, the case must have been somewhat different, indeed. By him,

<sup>1</sup> This mode of contemplating the subject was still adopted also by Origen, and accounts for the manner in which he places in juxtaposition with the weekly feasts, the *παρασκευαί* and *κυριακαί*, the yearly feasts, the *πάσχα* and the *πεντηκοστή*, regarding the feast of the resurrection as the point at which the feast of Pentecost began. Hence he observes: "Whoever in sincerity of heart can say, God has raised us up and set us with him in heavenly places, celebrates constantly the feast of Pentecost." (*Ὁ δυνάμενος μετὰ ἀληθείας λέγειν, συνανίστημι τῷ Χριστῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ συνήγειρε καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τοῖς ἰουραναίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, αὐτὸ ἴσθιν ἐν ταῖς τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἡμέραις.*) Orig. c. Cels. l. viii. c. 22.

<sup>2</sup> We might infer from Tertullian, *de orat.* c. 23, where he had said that worldly business on Sunday was deferred, and where he subsequently transfers the entire celebration of Sunday to the pentecost, that the former practice was observed also through the whole of Pentecost; which, however, can hardly be credited. *De idololatria*, c. 14, he says, wishing to withhold Christians from taking any part in the heathen festivals: *Excerpe singulas sollemnitates nationum, Pentecosten implere non poterunt.* The first trace of a limitation of the Pentecost to one day, is to be found perhaps in the 43d canon of the council of Elvira. This certainly very obscure canon seems most naturally to admit of being understood as meaning that some had selected out of the whole time of pentecost merely the feast of ascension. On the other hand, by the pentecost the council understands only the feast of the effusion of the Holy Spirit; and hence requires that it should be celebrated fifty days after Easter. It charges the former, who did but wrongly apply the name of pentecost, of departing from the authority of Scripture. *Ut cuncti diem Pentecostes post Pascha celebremus, non quadragesimam, nisi quinquagesimam.*

human nature was to be sanctified from its earliest development. But this fact could not at first present itself in so prominent a point of light to the early Christians, so many of whom had embraced Christianity when now advanced in years, and after a decisive crisis of their life. It was, moreover, only by degrees that Christianity could pass over into all the relations of domestic life. Besides, it was, in truth, unknown at what definite time the celebration of the remembrance of Christ's birth should be placed, as nothing definite was ascertained respecting the date of his birth. The case was entirely different with those more ancient annual feasts.

Yet we find even in this period some trace, probably of the festival of *Christmas*. The history of it is closely connected with the history of another kindred festival, the festival of the *manifestation of Jesus* in his character as the Messiah, his consecration to the office of Messiah at his baptism by John, and the beginning of his public ministry, called afterwards the ἐορτὴ τῶν ἐπιφανιῶν, τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ. We find in later times, that these festivals spread in opposite directions; the former extended itself from the West to the East, and the latter from the East to the West.<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria simply notices, that the Gnostic sect of the Basilidians kept the latter festival in his time at Alexandria. It can hardly be admitted, however, that this sect invented the festival, interested as they were in observing it on the ground of their doctrines; for we cannot suppose that the Catholic Church would ever have received it from the Gnostics. They had most probably borrowed it from Jewish Christian churches in Palestine or Syria. With Jewish Christians it probably originated; for to their peculiar mode of thinking, this

<sup>1</sup> The feast of Epiphany, considered as the feast of Christ's baptism, stood in high consideration towards the close of the fourth century at Antioch, while the introduction of the Christmas festival, coming from the West, met there with a good deal of opposition. Several Eastern churches, where men became first acquainted with the festival of Christmas in the last part of the fourth century, or still later, but where the feast of Christ's baptism had been longer known, afterwards united both feasts together; just as in the Western churches a somewhat different meaning was given to the recent feast of Epiphany, which came to them from the East. The Donatists refused to adopt the feast of Epiphany, considering it as an innovation coming from the *Eastern* church. Quia nec orientali ecclesie, ubi apparuit illa stella, communicant. Augustini Sermo, 202, § 2. These are only preliminary remarks, introduced here in confirmation of the conjecture above expressed; the subject will be resumed in the following period.

moment in the life of Jesus must have appeared most important. The Gnostics afterwards gave it their own interpretation. Clement speaks, at the same time, of individuals who were disposed to calculate not only the *year* but also the *day* of the nativity of Jesus, and indeed seems to censure such inquiries as idle and unprofitable, in which, moreover, it was impossible to arrive at any certainty. He does not state, indeed, that they observed the day which they attempted to determine, as a festival; yet it is probable that the day which they took so much pains to reckon they also observed; and the general shaping of the passage in Clement would seem to indicate that this was his meaning.<sup>1</sup> He could not have alluded, however, to the Gnostics, of whom he speaks afterwards, for with *their* system the festival of Christmas stood in direct contradiction. Thus these two feasts answer to two stages of Christian intuition, a lower and a higher; that which attached itself immediately to Judaism, and the Christian stage carried forward to an independent development; the view of Jesus as the anointed of the Holy Spirit, armed with divine powers for his work as the Messiah, and of Jesus as the god-man, the Word become flesh, whose humanity was from the beginning filled with the divine essence. We pass now to consider the several acts of Christian worship.

#### IV. THE SEVERAL ACTS OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

The nature of the single acts of Christian worship will be evident from what we have remarked respecting its essence generally. As the elevation of the spirit and heart of the united church to God was the end of the whole, so instruction and edification by uniting in the common contemplation of the divine word, constituted, from the first, a principle part of Christian worship. The mode in which this was done might, like the form of the church constitution, be closely connected with the arrangement of the assemblies of the Jewish communities in the synagogues.<sup>2</sup> As in the synagogue assemblies of the Jews the reading of portions from the Old Testament formed the basis of religious in-

<sup>1</sup> Clemens Stromat, l. i. f. 340: *Εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ περιεργότερον τῆ γενέσει τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν οὐ μόνον τὸ ἔτος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν προστιθέντες, οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ Βασιλείδου καὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος αὐτοῦ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐορτάζουσι.*

<sup>2</sup> See my *History of the Planting*, &c. vol. i. p. 39.

struction, so the same practice passed over into the Christian assemblies. The Old Testament was read first, particularly the prophetic parts of it, as referring to the Messiah ; next, the Gospels, and finally the apostolic Epistles.

The reading of the Scriptures was of the greater consequence, since it was desired to make every Christian familiar with them ; and yet, on account of the rarity and high price of manuscripts, and the poverty of a great proportion of the Christians, or because all could not read, placing the Bible itself in the hands of all was out of the question. The frequent *hearing* of the word must therefore, in the case of many, be a substitute for their own *reading* it. The Scriptures were read in a *language* that all could understand. This, in most of the countries belonging to the Roman empire, was either the Greek or the Latin. Various translations of the Bible into Latin made their appearance at a very early period ; since every one who had but a slight knowledge of Greek, felt the want of thus making himself familiar with the word of God in his native tongue.<sup>1</sup> In places where the Greek or the Latin language was understood by only a part of the community, the men of education, the rest being acquainted only with the ancient dialect of their country, which was the case in many cities of Egypt and Syria, church interpreters were appointed, as they were in the Jewish synagogues,<sup>2</sup> who immediately translated what was read into the provincial dialect, that it might be universally understood.<sup>3</sup>

As early as the third century it was the practice, as we learn from the complete liturgies of the fourth which are known to us, for the deacons, before the Anagnost began to read, to exhort the community in a certain customary form of words, to attention and devotion in listening to the divine word.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Augustin. de doctrina christiana, l. ii. c. 11.

<sup>2</sup> The ⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓⲛⲁⲓ, Dragomans.

<sup>3</sup> Ἐρμηνευταὶ γλώσσης εἰς γλῶσσαν ἢ ἐν ταῖς ἀναγνώσεσιν, ἢ ἐν ταῖς προσομιλίαις. Epiphan. exposit. fid. Cathol. c. 21. Procopius, the martyr, in the persecution of Dioclesian, united in his own person, at Scythopolis in Palestine, the offices of Anagnost, exorcist, interpreter (from the Greek into Syriac.) See his Acta.

<sup>4</sup> As we may see from the words of Commodian, against the speaking, particularly of the female sex, in the church :

Buccina præconum clamat, lectore legente,  
Ut pateant aures et tu magis obstruis illas.

L. c. c. 76.

The reading of the Scriptures was followed, as in the Jewish synagogues, by short, and originally very *simple addresses*, in familiar language, such as the heart prompted at the moment, which contained the exposition and application of what had been read. On this point Justin Martyr expresses himself as follows:<sup>1</sup> “The presiding officer of the Church gives a word of exhortation, and incites the people to exemplify in their lives the good things they had listened to.” It was among the Greeks, who were more given to the culture of rhetoric, that the *sermon* first began to take a wider scope, and to assume an important place in the acts of worship.<sup>2</sup>

*Church psalmody*, also, passed over from the synagogue into the Christian Church. The Apostle Paul exhorts the primitive churches to sing spiritual songs. For this purpose were used the psalms of the Old Testament, and partly *hymns composed expressly for this object*, especially hymns of praise and of thanks to God and to Christ; such having been known to Pliny, as in customary use among the Christians of his time. In the controversies with the Unitarians, at the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries, the *hymns* were appealed to, in which from early times Christ had been worshipped as God. The power of church melody on the heart was soon acknowledged; and hence such as were desirous of propagating peculiar opinions of their own, like Bardasanes or Paul of Samosata, seized upon this as an instrument well adapted to their purpose.

The *visible Church* required *visible signs*, for the spiritual facts on which its inward essence rests. Hence Christ, who meant to found a visible Church, instituted *two outward signs*, as symbols of the invisible fellowship between him, the *Head* of the spiritual body, and its members, the believers, and of the union of these members not only *with himself*, but *with one another*—visible means of representing the invisible heavenly benefits to be com-

<sup>1</sup> Apolog. ii.

<sup>2</sup> When Sozomen, hist. eccles. l. vii. c. 19, who wrote in the first half of the fifth century, says that the practice of preaching did not exist in the Roman Church, the remark could in no case have reference to the *early times*; but, supposing the statement is to be depended upon, it would simply amount to this, that by the predominance of outward show and liturgical pomp, the sermon was finally pushed out. But the fact may have been, that this Eastern writer was deceived by false accounts from the West. And the mistake may have arisen from some observation, that the sermon in the Roman Church did not occupy so important a place in the worship, as in the Greek Church.

municated by him to the members of this body; and with the believing use of these signs furnished to the *outward* man of *sense* in behalf of the *inward spiritual* man, was to be connected the enjoyment of that fellowship and of those heavenly benefits. As in Christianity and all Christian life, there is nothing which stands separate and insulated, but all forms one whole, radiating from a common centre, so in the present case, what is represented by these outward signs was to be something which should proceed on through the whole inward Christian life; something which, from one single moment of that life, should be diffused over the whole of it; and again, from other single moments, should be specially awakened and carried still farther onward. Such was *baptism*, the sign of the first entrance into fellowship with the Redeemer and with the Church, the first appropriation of the benefits which he bestowed on mankind—the forgiveness of sins and the inward union of life thence resulting—the participation in a sanctifying, divine spirit of life; and such was the *Lord's* supper, the sign of a constantly progressive perseverance in this fellowship and in the appropriation and enjoyment of these benefits; both representing the essentials of the whole Christian life within, in its first rise and its progressive development. The whole peculiar spirit of the Christian worship, invariably stamped itself upon the mode in which these outward signs of divine realities were administered; and again the mode of their administration powerfully reacted upon the character of the worship. The connection of the moments represented by these outward signs with the whole of the Christian life, the union of the inward and divine things with the outward transactions, were present to the lively Christian feelings of the early believers; but it was here a source of great practical mischief—just as we observed in the case of the doctrine concerning the Church—that men neglected duly to separate and distinguish in their conceptions, what was connected together in their feelings. It was from the same source that the outward conception, not merely of the Church, but also of those symbols which were so closely connected with the being of the Church, proceeded. And one kind of outward conception reacted upon the other.

We shall speak first of baptism. At the beginning, when it was important that the Church should rapidly extend itself, those



who confessed their belief in *Jesus* as the *Messiah* (among the Jews), or their belief in one God, and in *Jesus* as the *Messiah* (among the Gentiles), were immediately baptized, as appears from the New Testament. Gradually it came to be thought necessary that those who wished to be received into the Christian Church should be subjected to a more careful preparatory instruction, and to a stricter examination.<sup>1</sup> This whole class were denominated *κατηχούμενοι, ἀκροαταί*, *auditores* or *audientes*. By these appellations they were designated as those who were receiving their first instruction in Christianity, and who could only be permitted to hear the reading of the Scriptures and the preaching of the word. The period of probation must have been determined by the different conditions of individuals; yet the Council of Elvira decided generally on a period of two years. Originally there was but one common name for all who had not as yet received baptism, but were in the state of probation and preparation. But as different stages and gradations were here distinguished, these were also designated by particular names. Accordingly in Origen we find these catechumens distinctly separated into two divisions.

1. Those who were for the first time receiving private instruction,

<sup>1</sup> The assertion advanced by Dr Rothe, in his interesting tract (*De disciplina arcani, quæ dicitur, in ecclesia Christiana origine*. Heidelberg, 1841), that the instruction and examination of catechumens related in the first place to matters of practice only, and that an important change took place when, at a later period, the instruction and examination was directed to matters of theory,—this assertion I cannot think established on good and sufficient grounds. Both were, from the beginning, united together, as Christianity required. This is clear also from the passage in the greater Apology of Justin Martyr, § 61, where he says of those who are preparing themselves for baptism: "Ὅσοι ἂν πεισθῶσι καὶ πιστεύουσιν ἀληθῆ ταῦτα τὰ ὑφ' ἡμῶν διδασκόμενα καὶ λεγόμενα εἶναι καὶ βιοῦν οὕτως δύνασθαι ὑπισχνῶνται. Here instruction in doctrine is assuredly presupposed, and the corresponding conduct of the life derived from it, and both supposed to be so united with each other, that those who wished to receive baptism should declare themselves convinced of the truth of the doctrines they had been taught, and bind themselves to rule their lives by them,—the same method of uniting doctrine and practice which must prevail at all periods in the instruction of catechumens. It is beyond my power to conceive what conclusion can be drawn from the words of Celsus, l. iii. c. 50, with regard to the instruction of catechumens; for these words are totally foreign to the subject, having reference simply to the mode which the Christians adopted of seeking first to gain access to the uneducated, to slaves and youth, and bring them over to Christianity. Neither has the relation of Clement's two works (the *Pædagogus* and the *Stromata*) to each other, anything to do with the present subject; it answers to the relation of the *πίστις* to the *γνώσις*, among the Alexandrians; and the *Gnosis* assuredly could not be taught to catechumens. Instruction in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is quite another thing.

and, 2. Those who were admitted to the meetings of the Church, and who were immediately prepared for baptism.<sup>1</sup>

For the private instruction of these catechumens, a distinct office was instituted in the Church. At Carthage the duty was devolved after a period of probation, on some individual who had distinguished himself among the church readers. At Alexandria, where it often happened that men of education, even the learned, and those habituated to philosophical reflection, applied to receive instruction in Christianity, it was necessary that the catechists should be men of liberal education, qualified to meet the objections and doubts of pagans, and to follow them on their own position. Able and learned laymen were therefore selected here; and this class of catechists led afterwards to the formation of an important theological school among the Christians.<sup>2</sup>

Some traces of a *confession of faith*, which was made at baptism, are to be found even in the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> Such confessions of faith were afterwards more fully drawn out, in opposition to Jews, to pagans, and to heretics. These confessions were intended to embrace those essentials of Christianity wherein all the churches were agreed. It was believed that the doctrine expressed in these confessions of faith proceeded from the apostles; that it was the doctrine which they preached in living words and in their writings; but it was by no means the opinion in the beginning, that the apostles had drawn up any such confession in words. In *this* sense it was called the *κῆρυγμα ἀποστολικόν*, the *παράδοσις ἀποστολική*; the misconception of this phraseology afterwards gave birth to the fiction, that the apostles had verbally

<sup>1</sup> Origen. c. Cels. l. iii. c. 51, says, that to those who wished to embrace Christianity, private instruction was first imparted (by this circumstance he explains their name, *ἀκροαταί*.) For when they had sufficiently held to their purpose of leading a Christian life, they would be introduced into the community; *τοσηνικᾶς αὐτοὺς εἰσαγούσιν, ἰδίᾳ μὲν ποιήσαντες τάγμα τῶν πρὶν ἀρχομένων καὶ εἰσαγομένων καὶ οὐδίπω τὸ σύμβολον τοῦ ἀποκεικασθῆναι ἀνιληφότων*. The last distinction shews evidently that these should be distinguished from the baptized, who are afterwards spoken of. It was only the moral oversight to be extended to the baptized members of the congregation, which forms the subject of discourse afterwards. And so Origen describes, not three, but two classes of catechumens.

<sup>2</sup> More on this whole subject hereafter, in the section relating to the Alexandrian school.

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Pet. iii. 21.—1 Tim. vi. 12, is not so clear, as this might refer to a profession voluntarily made by Timothy, from the impulse of his own feelings, on a special occasion, when he was chosen and consecrated as a missionary to the heathen.

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composed such a confession.<sup>1</sup> This formula of confession was then designated by the distinctive term of *Symbolum*. It may be a question, whether, in this use of the word *Symbolum*, the allusion was to its general meaning of “a sign,” in the sense that the words of the confession were a characteristic, representative sign of the faith, or whether a particular application of this meaning was intended, having reference to the *σύμβολον στρατιωτικόν*, the *tessera militaris*; so that the confession was, as it were, the watchword of the *miles Christi*, communicated to every one on his admission into the *militia Christi*. So far as we can trace the history of the phrase, the first seems to be the more probable supposition; for where the word *Symbolum* first occurs in connection with baptism, it has only that general signification.<sup>2</sup>

The very significant word *σύμβολον*, *symbolum*, would now give occasion to many different religious allusions; the one that soon became predominant was that which fixed on the favourite comparison among the early Christians of their vocation to a military service (*militia*.) In the Alexandrian Church, on the other hand, where a taste prevailed for tracing analogies with the pagan mysteries, and sometimes, indeed, in a way but little suited to the simple character of the Gospel, the term was compared to the watchword of the initiated.<sup>3</sup> Others fixed on another meaning of the word “*Symbolum*,” namely, a commercial compact; as if the pledge of a spiritual fellowship was the thing designed to be represented.<sup>4</sup> Again, the fable recorded by Rufi-

<sup>1</sup> Rufin. *exposit. symbol. apostol.*

<sup>2</sup> As, for example, where Tertullian, *de pœnitentia*, c. 6, says, that baptism, which by its nature should be a *symbolum vitæ*, becomes to those who receive it without the right disposition, a *symbolum mortis*. So in his work, *contr. Marcion*, l. v. c. 1, *symbolum* is used by him as equivalent to mark, sign, generally. So in the letter of Firmilian of Cæsarea, where the “*symbolum trinitatis*” is expressly distinguished from the confession of faith, and employed as a designation of the formula of baptism, (*Baptismus*) *cui nec symbolum trinitatis nec interrogatio legitima et ecclesiastica defuit*. Again, ep. 76, Cyprian, *ad Magnum*: “*eodem symbolo baptizare*,” to baptize with the same formula. Perhaps this word was originally nothing more than a designation of the formula of baptism, and became subsequently transferred to the confession of faith.

<sup>3</sup> *Stromat.* l. v. f. 582. The *λοῦτρον* compared with the *καθαρίσις* of the pagan mysteries. In the designation “*φωτισμός*,” borrowed from the New Testament, we can find, however, no reference to the mysteries; for this is assuredly a designation borrowed from the New Testament.

<sup>4</sup> Augustin, *Sermo* 212: *Symbolum inter se faciunt mercatores, quo eorum societas pacto fidei teneatur, et vestra societas est commercium spiritualium.*

nus,<sup>1</sup> which ascribed the authorship of a confession of faith to the apostles, gave currency afterwards to the notion, that this confession had been formed by contributions from each of the apostles; and so the meaning of the word *σύμβολον*, *συμβολή*, a contribution, was applied in the present case to denote a confession which had grown out of the contributions of the several apostles.

This confession was put into the hands of the catechumens as a document which contained the essentials of Christianity. Many who had been led to embrace the faith after much inquiry, after consulting different religious writings, and reading the Scriptures for themselves, of course did not need it to keep them in the knowledge of Christianity. It could only serve in their case as a means of convincing them, that the Church with which they wished to become connected, agreed in doctrine with the holy Scriptures, from which they had already derived their faith. Thus Clement of Alexandria invites the heathen to convince themselves what the true Christian doctrine is, by searching the Scriptures, where it was to be found, if they would but apply their mental powers to distinguish the true from the plausible, the doctrine really derived from the Scriptures from that which merely attached itself to them in appearance.<sup>2</sup>

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Others, however, obtained their first knowledge of Christianity from the instruction contained in the confession of faith and imparted in connection with it, without finding themselves in a situation, till some time afterwards, of comparing with the Scriptures what they had thus received from human tradition. It was of these, the Gnostic Heracleon remarked:<sup>3</sup> "They are led first to believe on the Saviour by the testimony of men; but when they come to his own words, they believe no longer on the ground of human testimony alone, but for the sake of the truth itself;" and, in reference to the same class, Clement of Alexandria says:<sup>4</sup> "The first saving change from heathenism is *faith*, that is, a compendious knowledge of all that is necessary to salvation. On this

<sup>1</sup> In his expositio in symbolum apostolorum.

<sup>2</sup> Stromat. l. vii. f. 754 et 55: *Δι' αὐτῶν τῶν γραφῶν ἰκμανθάνειν ἀποδιδικτικῶς.*—*Διακρίνειν τι τῆ καταληπτικῆ θεωρίᾳ* (comprehending intuition), *καὶ τῆ κυριωτάτῃ λογισμῶ* (right thinking), *τὸ ἀληθὲς ἀπὸ τοῦ φαινομένου.*

<sup>3</sup> Orig. Tom. xiii. in Joann. § 52.

<sup>4</sup> Stromat. l. vii. f. 732, Lit. D.

foundation is built the *Gnosis*, which is a solid demonstration, derived from the doctrine of our Lord, of that which has been received by faith." Others, who were wholly uneducated, and unable to read any writing, could only learn from the mouth of others, and never come themselves to the fountain of God's word; but still the divine doctrine, which they imbibed from the lips of others, proved itself independently a divine power in their hearts. Where the word but once found admission, an independent Christian consciousness was capable of being thereby awakened. "Many of us," says Clement of Alexandria, "have received the divine doctrine, without the use of writings, in the power of God through faith."<sup>1</sup>

The few words of this confession of faith needed not, of course, to be communicated in *writing*. They were to pass into the heart of the catechuman; to pass from the living word into his life; to be expressed by him as the deep conviction of his heart. Was it wished to attach to this custom, which arose so naturally, of orally communicating the confession of faith, some higher meaning? The interpretation most readily presenting itself was, that the Christian doctrine should not come to men from without, through the medium of letters, but should be written in their hearts by the Spirit of God, and propagate itself there as a living principle; (Jer. xxxi. 33.)<sup>2</sup> In later times, a disposition to dip into mysteries quite alien from the spirit of the simple Gospel, which disposition had first found entrance into the Alexandrian Church from her leaning to an accommodation with the pagan mysteries, and from the influence of the Neo-Platonic mysticism, gave to this custom the meaning, that the most sacred things ought not to be intrusted to writing, lest they should be produced among the uninitiated, and thereby become profaned;<sup>3</sup>—while yet the Scriptures, the holiest tradition of the divine, might come

<sup>1</sup> Stromat. l. i. f. 319: Οἱ δὲ καὶ ἄνευ γραμμάτων δυνάμει τὸν περὶ Θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως περιλήψαμεν λόγον.

<sup>2</sup> So Augustin, Sermo 212: Hujus rei significandæ causa audiendo symbolum discitur, nec in tabulis vel in aliqua materia, sed in corde scribitur.

<sup>3</sup> The like play and parade about mysteries, to which more importance came to be attached than they originally possessed, afterwards led to the invention of the obscure, vague, and unhistorical idea of a disciplina arcani, of which, from its very vagueness and want of foundation, men could make whatever they pleased.

into the hands of every heathen; while the apologists felt no scruples in presenting before the heathen the inmost mysteries of Christian doctrine!

This confession of faith was made by the catechumens at baptism, in answers to distinct questions.<sup>1</sup>

With the oral confession of faith was also connected the avowal of a moral engagement. The transaction was looked upon in the following light: the candidate for baptism separated himself from the kingdom of sin, of darkness, of Satan, which, as a heathen devoted to his lusts, he had hitherto served, and came over to the kingdom of God and of Christ. He was now, therefore, solemnly to renounce all fellowship with that kingdom of which he had before been a subject. Giving his hand to the bishop, he solemnly declared,<sup>2</sup> that he renounced the devil and all his pomps,—meaning particularly by these the pagan shows and things of the like nature—and his angels—an expression probably based on the notion, that the heathen gods were evil spirits, who had seduced mankind.<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the favourite comparison already alluded to, this pledge was regarded as the Christian's military oath, the *sacramentum militiæ christianæ*, whereby he bound himself to live and fight as a *miles Dei et Christi*.

This form of renunciation, which we meet with in the second century, should be distinguished from the *exorcism*, which could not have sprung so early out of the prevailing mode of thinking in Christian antiquity. It is true, the idea of a deliverance from the dominion of the evil spirit in a moral and spiritual respect, of a separation from the kingdom of evil, and of a communication by the new birth of a divine life, which should be victorious over

<sup>1</sup> According to the most natural interpretation, 1 Pet. iii. 21, has reference already to the question proposed at baptism. 'Ἐπερώτημα, metonymice for the pledge in answer to the questions. Tertullian, de corona milit. c. 3: *Amplius aliquid respondentes, quam Dominus in evangelio determinavit*. Again, Tertullian, de resurrect. c. 48, respecting baptism: *Anima responsione sancitur*. The council of eighty-seven bishops in the time of Cyprian, respecting these questions: "*Sacramentum interrogare*" (*sacramentum* is here equivalent to *doctrina sacra*.) In a letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, cited in Eusebius, l. vii. c. 9: 'Ἐπερωτήσεις καὶ ὑπακρίσεις. Cyprian, ep. 76, ad Magnum, cites one of these questions: *Credis remissionem peccatorum et vitam æternam per sanctam ecclesiam?*

<sup>2</sup> According to Tertullian, de corona milit. c. 3,—twice,—first, before he went to baptism, perhaps on his first admission to the church assemblies, next at baptism itself.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ἀποτάσσεισθαι τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τῇ πομπῇ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ.

the principle of evil, is to be reckoned among the number of original and essential Christian ideas ; but the whole act of baptism was to be in truth precisely a representation of this idea ; there was no need, therefore, that any separate act should still be added to denote or to effectuate that which the whole act of baptism was intended to denote, and to the believer truly and effectually to represent. The case was different with the form of renunciation. This, like the confession of faith, had reference to what the candidate was bound, on his part, to do, in order to enjoy the benefit of baptism. As in Christianity faith and life are closely conjoined, so the renunciation accompanied the confession. Hence we find in the second century no trace as yet of any such form of exorcism against the evil spirit. But the tendency to confound the inward with the outward, the inclination to the magical, the fondness for pomp and display, caused that *those* forms of exorcism which had been employed in the case of the energumens or demoniacally possessed, should be introduced in the baptism of all heathens. Perhaps the fact also had some connection with this change, that exorcism, which in earlier times was a free *charisma*, had become generally transformed into a lifeless mechanical act, attached to a distinct office in the Church. In the apostolic constitutions, we find neither the one nor the other. The first unequivocal trace of exorcism in baptism is found in the acts of the council of eighty-five or eighty-seven bishops, which convened at Carthage in the year 256.<sup>1</sup>

In respect to the form of baptism, it was in conformity with the original institution and the original import of the symbol, performed by immersion, as a sign of entire baptism into the Holy Spirit, of being entirely penetrated by the same.<sup>2</sup> It was only with the sick, where the exigency required it, that any ex-

<sup>1</sup> The North African bishop Cæcilius of Bilita, goes on the supposition, by his vote in this case, that exorcism belonged essentially to the whole act of baptism. So too the votum of the fanatical Vincentius a Thibari, that the manuum impositio in exorcismo must precede the baptism of heretics. But from the 76th letter of Cyprian ad Magnum, the presence of exorcism in baptism generally cannot be proved ; he is speaking there simply of exorcism in the case of energumens, and it is rather Cyprian's object to shew that baptism is far mightier than exorcism. Spiritus nequam ultra remanere non possunt in hominis corpore, in quo baptizato et sanctificato incipit spiritus sanctus habitare.

<sup>2</sup> See my Hist. of the Planting, &c. vol. i. p. 222.

ception was made ; and in this case baptism was administered by sprinkling. Many superstitious persons,<sup>1</sup> clinging to the outward form, imagined that such baptism by sprinkling was not fully valid ; and hence they distinguished those who had been so baptized by denominating them the *clinici*. The bishop Cyprian expressed himself strongly against this delusion.<sup>2</sup> “It is otherwise,”—he says,—“the breast of the believer is washed, the soul of man is cleansed by the merits of faith. In the sacraments of salvation, where necessity compels and God gives permission, the divine thing, though outwardly abridged, bestows all that it implies on the faithful.<sup>3</sup> Or if any one supposes that they have obtained nothing because they have been merely *sprinkled* with the water of salvation, they must not be so deceived themselves as to think that they ought therefore to be baptized over again in case they recover from their sickness. But if those who have once been consecrated by the baptism of *the church* cannot again be baptized, why fill them with perplexity in regard to their faith and the grace of the Lord ? Or is it admitted that they have indeed become sharers of the grace of the Lord, but in a smaller measure of the divine largess and of the Holy Spirit, so that they must be considered as Christians indeed, but yet not placed on the same level with the rest ? No ; the Holy Spirit is not given by measure, but poured out in full on the faithful. For if the day breaks alike on all, and if the sun pours his light on all in equal measure, how much more shall Christ, the true sun and the true day in his Church, distribute the light of eternal life with unstinted equality !”

The formula of baptism, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is cited as the traditional one by Justin Martyr, is perhaps not the oldest ; but the older is perhaps the shorter formula which refers only to Christ, to which there is allusion in the New Testament, which Marcion also insists on in his attempt to bring about a restoration of the original Gospel, and which, amid the disputes concerning the baptism of heretics, still received special recognition. At all events, this shorter formula contains

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 76 ad Magnum.

<sup>3</sup> The passage rendered here according to the sense, to make it intelligible : “Totum credentibus conferunt divina compendia.”



within it, as must be allowed, all that which in the longer one is but more fully analyzed and unfolded.<sup>1</sup>

Baptism was administered at first only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from apostolic institution,<sup>2</sup> and the recognition of it which followed somewhat later, as an apostolical tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis. Irenæus is the first church teacher in whom we find any allusion to infant baptism, and in his mode of expressing himself on the subject, he leads us at the same time to recognise its connection with the essence of the Christian consciousness; he testifies of the profound Christian idea, out of which infant baptism arose, and which procured for it at length universal recognition. Irenæus is wishing to shew that Christ did not interrupt the progressive development of that human nature, which was to be sanctified by him, but sanctified it in accordance with its natural course of development, and in all its several stages. "He came to redeem all by himself; all who, through him, are regenerated to God; infants, little children, boys, young men and old. Hence he passed through every age, and for the infants he became an infant, sanctifying the infants;—among the little children he became a little child, sanctifying those who belong to this age, and at the same time presenting to them an example of piety, of well-doing and of obedience; among the young men he became a young man, that he might set them an example and sanctify them to the Lord."<sup>3</sup> It is here especially important to observe, that infants (*infantes*) are expressly distinguished from children (*parvulis*), whom Christ could *also* benefit by his example; and that they are represented as capable of receiving from Christ, who had appeared in their age, nothing more than an objective sanctification. This sanctification becomes theirs, in so far as they are regenerated by Christ to God. Regeneration and bap-

<sup>1</sup> See my *History of the Planting*, &c. vol. i. p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> The same, p. 224, ff.

<sup>3</sup> Irenæus, l. ii. c. 22, § 4: *Omnes enim per semetipsum venit salvare: omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes et parvulos et pueros et juvenes et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem, et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes, in parvulis parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes ætatem, simul et exemplum illis pietatis effectus, et justitiæ et subjectionis, in juvenibus juvenis, exemplum juvenibus fens et sanctificans Domino.*

tism are in Irenæus intimately connected; and it is difficult to conceive how the term regeneration can be employed, in reference to this age, to denote anything else than baptism. Infant baptism, then, appears here as the medium through which the principle of sanctification, imparted by Christ to human nature from its earliest development, became appropriated to children. It is the idea of infant baptism that Christ, through the divine life which he imparted to and revealed in human nature, sanctified that nature from the germ of its earliest development. The child born in a Christian family was, when all things were as they should be, to have this advantage above others, that he did not first come to Christianity out of heathenism, or the sinful nature-life, but from the first dawning of consciousness, unfolded his powers under the imperceptible preventing influences of a sanctifying, ennobling religion; that with the earliest germination of the natural self-conscious life, another divine principle of life, transforming the nature, should be brought nigh to him ere yet the ungodly principle could come into full activity; and the latter should at once find here its powerful counterpoise. In such a life the new birth was not to constitute a new crisis, beginning at some definable moment, but it was to begin imperceptibly, and so proceed through the whole life. Hence baptism, the visible sign of regeneration, was to be given to the child at the very outset; the child was to be consecrated to the Redeemer from the beginning of its life. From this idea, founded on what is inmost in Christianity, becoming predominant in the feelings of Christians, resulted the practice of infant baptism.

But immediately after Irenæus,<sup>1</sup> in the last years of the second century, Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism; a proof that the practice had not as yet come to be regarded as an apostolical institution; for otherwise he would hardly have ventured to express himself so strongly against it. We perceive from his argument against infant baptism, that its

<sup>1</sup> It has been attempted to prove the practice of infant baptism from the passage already cited from Clement of Alexandria, *Pædagog.* lib. iii. f. 247: "πάντες ἐξ ὕδατος ἐνασπαμίνων παιδίων," which, beyond question, refers to baptism; but this can hardly be considered a valid proof; for as the idea of the *Θεῖος παιδαγωγός* was floating before Clement's mind, he could denominate *all* Christians *παιδία*. Beyond doubt, the writer is speaking in this passage directly of conversion and regeneration, in reference to all men.

advocates already appealed to Matth. xix. 14, a passage which it would be natural for every one to apply in this manner. "Our Lord rebuked not the little children, but commanded them to be brought to him that he might bless them." Tertullian advises, that in consideration of the great importance of the transaction, and of the preparation necessary to be made for it on the part of the recipients, baptism as a general thing should rather be delayed than prematurely applied, and he takes this occasion to declare himself particularly opposed to haste in the baptism of children.<sup>1</sup> In answer to the objection drawn from those words of Christ, he replies:—"Let them come while they are growing up; let them come while they are learning, while they are being taught to what it is they are coming; let them become Christians when they are susceptible of the knowledge of Christ. What haste, to procure the forgiveness of sins for the age of innocence! We shew more prudence in the management of our worldly concerns, than we do in intrusting the divine treasure to those who cannot be intrusted with earthly property. Let them first learn to feel their need of salvation; so it may appear that we have given to those that wanted." Tertullian evidently means, that children should be led to Christ by instructing them in Christianity; but that they should not receive baptism, until, after having been sufficiently instructed, they are led from personal conviction and by their own free choice, to seek for it with sincere longing of the heart. It may be said, indeed, that he is only speaking of the course to be followed according to the general rule; whenever there was momentary danger of death, baptism might be administered, even according to his views. But if he had considered this to be so necessary, he could not have failed to mention it expressly. It seems, in fact, according to the principles laid down by him, that he could not conceive of *any efficacy whatever* residing in baptism, without the conscious participation and individual faith of the person baptized; nor could he see any danger accruing to the age of innocence from delaying it; although this view of the matter was not logically consistent with *his own* system.

But when now, on the one hand, the doctrine of the corruption and guilt, cleaving to human nature in consequence of the first

<sup>1</sup> De baptismo, c. 18: Cunctatio baptismi utilior est, præcipue tamen circa parvulos.

transgression, was reduced to a more precise and systematic form, and on the other, from the want of duly distinguishing between what is outward and what is inward in baptism (the baptism by water and the baptism by the Spirit), the error became more firmly established that without external baptism no one could be delivered from that inherent guilt, could be saved from the everlasting punishment that threatened him, or raised to eternal life; and when the notion of a magical influence, a charm connected with the sacraments continually gained ground, the theory was finally evolved of the *unconditional necessity of infant baptism*. About the middle of the *third* century, this theory was already generally admitted in the *North African Church*. The only question that remained was, whether the child ought to be baptised immediately after its birth, or not till eight days after, as in the case of the rite of circumcision. The latter was the opinion of the bishop Fidus, who proposed the question to a council convened at Carthage. Cyprian answered it, in the year 252, in the name of sixty-six bishops.<sup>1</sup> His answer evinces how full he was of that great Christian idea which has just been unfolded, and out of which the practice of infant baptism proceeded. But embarrassed by his habit of confounding the inward with the outward, by his materialism, he mingled with it much that is erroneous. He declares himself against the arbitrary limitation of Fidus. "None of us could agree to your opinion. On the contrary, it is the opinion of us all, that the mercy and grace of God must be refused to no human being, so soon as he is born; for since our Lord says in his Gospel, 'The Son of man is not come to destroy men's souls, but to save them,' Luke ix. 50; so everything that lies in our power must be done that no soul may be lost. As God has no respect of persons, so too he has no respect of age, offering himself as a Father with equal freeness to all, that they may be enabled to obtain the heavenly grace. As to what you say, that the child in the first days of its birth is not *clean* to the touch, and that each of us would shrink from kissing such an object, even this, in our opinion, ought to present no obstacle to the bestowment of the heavenly grace; for it is written, 'to the pure all things are pure;' and none of us ought to revolt at that which God has condescended to create. Although the child

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 59.

be but just born, yet it is no such object that any one ought to demur at kissing it to impart the divine grace and the salutation of peace (*i. e.* the brotherly kiss, which was given to persons newly baptised, as the sign of the fellowship of peace in the Lord), since each of us must be led, by his own religious sensibility, to think upon the creative hands of God, fresh from the completion of their work, which we kiss in the newly-formed man when we take in our arms what God has made. As to the rest, if anything could prove a hindrance to men in the attainment of grace, much rather might those be hindered whose maturer years have involved them in heavy sins. But if even the chief of sinners, who have been exceedingly guilty before God, receive the forgiveness of sins on coming to the faith, and no one is precluded from baptism and from grace, how much less should the child be kept back, which, as it is but just born, cannot have sinned, but has only brought with it, by its descent from Adam, the infection of the old death; and which may the more easily obtain the remission of sins, because the sins which are forgiven it are not its own, but those of another."

In the Alexandrian Church, also, which, in respect to its whole theological and dogmatic direction of mind was so essentially distinguished from the Church of North Africa, we find prevailing, even at a somewhat earlier period, the doctrine of the necessity of infant baptism. Origen, in whose system infant baptism could readily find its place,<sup>1</sup> though not in the same connection as in the system of the North African Church, declares it to be an apostolical tradition,<sup>2</sup> an expression, by the way, which cannot be regarded as of much weight in this age, when the inclination was so strong to trace every institution which was considered of special importance to the apostles; and when so many walls of separation, hindering the freedom of prospect, had already been set up between this and the apostolic age. Also in the Persian Church, infant baptism was, in the course of the third century, so generally recognised, that the sect founder Mani

<sup>1</sup> Namely, in its relation to his theory, that human souls are fallen heavenly essences, and are to be cleansed from a guilt which they brought with them; see below.

<sup>2</sup> This, expressly in the fifth book of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, according to the Latin translation of Rufinus. In Origen's time, too, difficulties were still frequently urged against infant baptism, similar to those thrown out by Tertullian. Comp. his Homil. xiv. in Lucam (according to the translation of Jerome.)

thought he could draw an argument from it in favour of a doctrine which seemed to him necessarily presupposed by this application of the rite.

But if the necessity of infant baptism was acknowledged in theory, it was still far from being uniformly recognised in practice. Nor was it always from the purest motives that men were induced to put off their baptism. Precisely the same false notion of baptism, as an *opus operatum*, which had moved some to consider the baptism of infants so unconditionally necessary, led many others, who mistook indeed, in a far grosser and more dangerous manner, the nature of this rite, to delay their baptism, that they might, in the meantime, the more freely abandon themselves to their lusts, and yet, cleansed in the hour of death by the magical annihilation of their sins, be able to pass without hindrance into eternal life. We have already noticed the pious indignation and force with which Tertullian, who was otherwise opposed to haste in baptism, combatted this error.

Infant baptism, also, furnished probably the *first* occasion for the appointment of sponsors or god-fathers; for as this was a case in which the persons baptized could not themselves declare their confession of faith and the required renunciation, it became necessary for others to do it in their name; and these at the same time engaged to take care that the children should be rightly instructed in Christianity, and trained up in a life corresponding to the vows given at baptism; hence they were called sponsors (*sponsores*.) Tertullian adds it to his other arguments against infant baptism, that these sponsors were obliged to assume an obligation which they might be prevented from fulfilling, either by their own death, or by the untoward conduct of the child.<sup>1</sup>

With the act of baptism, several *symbolical customs* were united, which flowed from the idea of this transaction, and in which this idea was to be represented to the senses. Thus it came about that, as the participation of the universal priesthood of all the faithful was considered as necessarily united with the introduction to the fellowship of Christians, so the symbol of priestly consecration was made to follow the act of baptism. As,

<sup>1</sup> De baptismo, c. 18: Quid enim necesse est, sponsores etiam periculo ingeri? quia et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt et proventu malæ indolis falli.

in the Old Testament, anointing was the sign of consecration to the priestly office; so oil, which had been blessed expressly for this purpose, was applied to the newly baptized, as a sign of consecration to this spiritual priesthood. We first meet with this custom in Tertullian, and in Cyprian it appears already to constitute an essential part of the rite of baptism.<sup>1</sup> The imposition of hands accompanied by prayer, with which the act of baptism was concluded, is beyond doubt a still older custom. The sign of the imposition of hands (*ἐπιθέσις τῶν χειρῶν, χειροθεσία, יָדַיִתָּהּ*) was the common token of religious consecration, borrowed from the Jews, and employed on various occasions, either to denote consecration to the Christian calling in general, or to the particular branches of it. The apostles, or presiding officers of the church, laying their hands on the head of the baptized individual, called upon the Lord to bestow his blessing on the holy transaction now completed, to cause to be fulfilled in him whatever was implied in it, to consecrate him with his Spirit for the Christian calling, and to pour out his Spirit upon him. This closing rite was inseparably connected with the whole act of baptism. All, indeed, had reference here to the same principal thing, without which no one could be a Christian,—the birth to a new life from God, the baptism of the Spirit, which was symbolically represented by the baptism of water. Tertullian still considers this transaction and baptism as one whole, belonging together; although he distinguishes in it the two separate moments, the negative and the positive, the forgiveness of sin and cleansing from sin which was mediated by baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the importation of the Holy Spirit following thereupon, upon the individual now restored to the original state of innocence, to which importation the imposition of hands refers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> L. c. c. 7: Egressi de lavacro perungimur benedicta unctio de pristina disciplina, qua ungui oleo de cornu in sacerdotium solebant. Adv. Marcion. l. i. c. 14: de res. carn. c. 8. Yet in the book de corona milit. c. 3, where he describes the usages in baptism, which were derived not from Scripture but from ecclesiastical tradition, he makes no mention of this unction. Cyprian, ep. 70, in the name of an ecclesiastical assembly: Ungi quoque necesse est eum, qui baptizatus sit, ut accepto chrismate esse unctus Dei et habere in se gratiam Christi possit (the next following words respecting the sacrament of the supper are manifestly a gloss, disturbing the sense, and occasioned by the subsequent mention of the supper), unde baptizati unguuntur oleo in altari sanctificato.

<sup>2</sup> De baptismo, c. 8: Dehinc manus imponitur per benedictionem advocans et invi-

But now, since the idea had sprung up of a spiritual character belonging exclusively to the bishops, or successors of the apostles, and communicated to them by ordination ; on which character the propagation of the Holy Spirit in the Church was dependent ; it was considered as their prerogative to seal, by this consecration of the imposition of hands, the whole act of baptism (hence this rite was called signaculum, *σφραγίς*.) It was supposed that a good and valid reason for this rite could be drawn from the fact, that the Samaritans, baptized by a deacon, were first endowed with spiritual gifts by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, which was added afterwards (Acts xix.<sup>1</sup>), as this passage was then understood. So now the presbyters, and in case of necessity, even the deacons, were empowered to baptize, but the bishops only were authorized to consummate that second holy act. This notion had been formed so early as the middle of the third century. The bishops were under the necessity, therefore, of occasionally going through their dioceses, in order to administer to those who had been baptized by their subordinates, the country presbyters, the rite which was afterwards denominated *confirmation*. In ordinary cases, where the bishop himself administered the baptism, both were still united together as one whole, and thus constituted *the complete act of baptism*.<sup>2</sup>

After all this had been performed, in many of the churches, in those for instance of North Africa and of Alexandria, there was given to the person newly baptized a mixture of milk and honey,

tans Spiritum sanctum. He names together, de res. carn. c. 8, in connection with baptism, all the *three* things which afterwards, separated from it and combined together in one whole, constituted in the Roman Church the sacrament of confirmation ; the *unction*, conveying with it *the consecration of the soul* ; the *signing with the cross*, conveying with it *protection from evil* ; the *imposition of hands*, the *illuminatio spiritus*.

<sup>1</sup> See on this subject, my History of the Planting, &c. vol. i. p. 82, ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cyprian speaks of a sacramentum duplex, water baptism, and spiritual baptism, represented by the imposition of hands (sacramento utroque nasci), yet both united in the church act of baptism, ep. 72, ad Jubajanum, and ep. 72, ad Stephan. We must not lose sight here of the unsettled meaning affixed to the word sacramentum, according to which it signified any sacred thing, sacred doctrine, sacred sign. After citing the example of Philip and the apostles, he says : Quod nunc quoque apud nos geritur, ut, qui in ecclesia baptizantur, præpositis ecclesiæ offerantur, et per nostram orationem ac manus impositionem spiritum sanctum consequantur et signaculo dominico consummentur. The same notion occurs in the contemporary work, as is most probable, de rebaptismate ; this act is here denominated baptisma spiritale. Cornelius, in Euseb, l. vi. c. 43, asks respecting one who may not have received this confirmation of the bishop : "How could he without *this* become partaker of the Holy Spirit ?"



as a symbol of filiation into the new life, and as a spiritual application of the promise concerning the land flowing with milk and honey, to that heavenly country, with all its blessed privileges, to which the baptized belonged.<sup>1</sup> He was then received into the church by the first kiss of Christian brotherhood, the salutation of peace, of that peace with God which he now participated in common with all Christians;<sup>2</sup> and from henceforth he had the right of saluting all Christians with this fraternal sign. But Clement of Alexandria already had to complain that this brotherly kiss, originally a natural expression of Christian feeling, was become an opus operatum, a thing of conscious display, by which the suspicion of the heathens was excited.<sup>3</sup> His objection to it is, that love evinces itself not in the brotherly kiss, but in the disposition of the heart.<sup>4</sup>

Before taking leave of this subject we must touch on a controverted question, which, in the second half of the third century, created no small agitation. It was the question, *what constitutes the validity of baptism?* What was to be done in the case of a heretic who, after having received baptism in his own sect, came over to the orthodox Church? Before any special inquiries on this point had as yet been instituted, the churches in different countries had been in the habit of pursuing different courses, just as they happened, as is usual in such cases, to proceed unintentionally from different starting points. In Asia Minor and the adjacent countries, the point started from was that no baptism was valid, save that administered in the orthodox church, where alone all religious acts had their true significancy; that the baptism of heretics was null and void, and that the true baptism ought therefore to be administered to such as came over from the sects, in the same manner as to heathens. This may be easily

<sup>1</sup> See the passage above quoted from Tertullian's *de corona milit. and adv. Marcion.* l. i. c. 14: *Deus mellis et lactis societate suos infantat* (he causes them to be known as his new-born children.) Clemens, *Pædagog.* l. i. f. 103: *Εὐθὺς ἀναγεννηθέντες τριμήμηθα τῆς ἀναπαύσεως τὴν ἐλπίδα, τὴν ἄνω Ἱερουσαλὴμ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι, ἐν ᾗ μίλι καὶ γάλα ὄμβρειν ἀναγίγραπται.*

<sup>2</sup> *Osculum pacis, εἰρήνη.* See above.

<sup>3</sup> In the passage already cited from the *Pædagog.* l. iii. f. 256: *Οἱ δὲ οὐδὲν, ἀλλ' ἢ φιλήματι καταψοφῶσι τὰς ἐκκλησίας, τὸ φιλοῦν ἔνδον οὐκ ἔχοντες αὐτό. Καὶ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο ἐκπίπληκιν ὑπονοίας αἰσχροῦ καὶ βλασφημίας τὸ ἀνάϊδην χρῆσθαι τῷ φιλήματι, ὅπερ ἐχρῆν εἶναι μυστικόν.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ἀγάπη δὲ οὐκ ἐν φιλήματι, ἀλλ' ἐν εὐνοίᾳ κρίνεται.*

in Asia M.  
 Bapt.  
 null.

explained from the asperity of the polemical relations which existed in these particular districts between the Church and the sects, and from the character of these sects; for instance, the Gnostic, who departed widely in regard to the most essential points of doctrine and of practice from the commonly received opinions. In the Roman Church, on the contrary, where, too, in other respects a bitter hostility prevailed against the heretics, the matter was conducted in a milder spirit, more importance being here attached to the objective side of baptism. The principle was pursued in practice, that baptism, in virtue of the objective significance of the name of Christ or of the Trinity, with the invocation of which it was administered, always has validity, by whomsoever and under whatsoever religious views it may be administered. The heretics, therefore, who came over to the Church, were recognised as baptized Christians; and only the rite of confirmation, in the sense above explained, was bestowed on them by the bishop, that the Holy Spirit might render efficacious the baptism they had received; a practice which was one of the occasions of separating confirmation from baptism. As the different communities willingly directed themselves according to the model of their apostolical mother churches (the *sedes apostolicæ*), it is probable that most of the Western churches followed the example which had been set them at Rome.

But towards the close of the second century, the custom, which thus far had been tacitly observed, became an object of especial inquiry in Asia Minor; whether it was that the prevailing principle in that region, being followed also by the Montanistic churches,<sup>1</sup> was therefore called in question by those who were glad of any opportunity to oppose the Montanists; or whether it was for some other reason, the majority declared in favour of adhering to the old principle. Somewhat later, when the matter again came up, this principle was solemnly confirmed by two ecclesiastical councils at Iconium and Synnada in Phrygia. This led to the discussion of the same question in other countries. Tertullian, most probably while he was still a member of the Catholic Church, wrote in the Greek language a special treatise on the subject, in which he did not hesitate to depart in this particular from the custom of the Roman Church. To defend the

<sup>1</sup> See Tertullian, *de pudicitia*, c. 19.

*2 Roman -  
Vul. et*

necessity of recognising heretical baptism, the opposite party had doubtless already appealed to Ephes. iv. 5, 6, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all;" and had drawn from it the conclusion that wherever men were found to call on that one God and that one Lord, it was necessary to recognise the validity of their baptism. But Tertullian replies:<sup>1</sup> "This can relate only to us, who know and call upon the true God and Christ. The heretics have not this God and this Christ. These words, therefore, cannot be applied to them; and as they do not rightly administer the ordinance, their baptism is the same as none."

In the North African Church men willingly followed, for the most part, the example of the mother Church at Rome, but were at the same time far from submitting their own judgment to the authority of that church.<sup>2</sup> At a council held in Carthage, over which the Bishop Agrippinus presided, seventy bishops of North Africa declared themselves for the opposite opinion. Yet neither party was disposed as yet to obtrude its own views and practice on the other. The churches which differed on this point, in no case dissolved the bond of fraternal harmony on account of a disagreement which so little concerned the essentials of Christianity. But here again it was a Roman bishop, Stephanus, who, instigated by the spirit of ecclesiastical arrogance, domination, and zeal without knowledge, attached to this point of dispute a paramount importance. Hence towards the close of the year 253, he issued a sentence of excommunication against the bishops of Asia Minor, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Cilicia,<sup>3</sup> stigmatizing them as anabaptists (*ἀναβαπτισται*),<sup>4</sup> a name, however, which they could justly affirm they did not deserve by their principles; for it was not their wish to administer a *second* baptism to those who had been already baptized, but they contended that the previous baptism, given by heretics, could not be recognised as a *true* one.

From Asia, the discussions in regard to this matter extended themselves to North Africa. Here there was always a party

<sup>1</sup> De baptismo, c. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See above.

<sup>3</sup> Dionysius, in Euseb. l. vii. c. 5; Firmilianus in Cyprian, ep. 75.

<sup>4</sup> The words of Cyprian, ep. 71 ad Quintum: Nos autem dicimus eos, qui inde veniunt, non rebaptizari apud nos, sed baptizari.

which stood firm by the old Roman usages. The earlier discussions were now forgotten, and hence there arose new questions and investigations relative to this matter. These induced Cyprian, the bishop, to propose the point for discussion at two synods held in Carthage in the year 255, the one composed of eighteen, and the other of seventy-one bishops; and both assemblies declared in favour of Cyprian's views, that the baptism of heretics ought not to be regarded as valid. As he was well aware<sup>1</sup> what importance the Church of Rome and its followers attached to traditional customs, and that they held up this long-observed practice in the light of an apostolical tradition, although from the nature of the thing cases of this sort could not well occur in the time of the apostles; he expressed himself after the following manner in a letter to Quintus,<sup>2</sup> an African bishop, to whom he communicated the decisions of the first council: "This is a case in which we are not to be arbitrarily directed by custom, but to be convinced by arguments. For even Peter, whom our Lord chose the first, and on whom he founded his Church, did not arrogantly pretend, when Paul afterwards disputed with him concerning circumcision, Gal. ii.<sup>3</sup> that he held the primacy, and that the later and younger apostle should yield obedience to him; nor did he despise Paul because he was once a persecutor of the Church; but he took counsel of the truth, and easily acquiesced in the correct views which Paul succeeded to establish. He thus gave us an example of unanimity and of patience, that we should not obstinately cleave to our own way, but rather, when any useful and salutary thing is occasionally suggested to us by our brethren and colleagues, make it ours, if it be true and lawful." He communicated the decisions of the greater council to Stephanus also, the Roman bishop, in a letter written with great freedom of spirit, though in a tone of forbearance;<sup>4</sup> but Stephanus, in his arrogant reply,<sup>5</sup> set up against Cyprian the tradition of the Roman Church. He is said to have carried his blind, unchristian zeal so far as to indulge himself in undignified and abusive language towards his African colleague, refuse the bishops an audience who came to him as delegates of the North

<sup>1</sup> See above.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 71.

<sup>3</sup> It is remarkable how constantly the unbiassed, unprejudiced view of this fact had been preserved in the North African Church.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 72.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 295, ff.

African council, and even forbid his church to receive them into their houses! Yet far from Cyprian was the thought of submitting his reason to the authority of the Roman Church. He convened at Carthage, in the year 256, a still larger council, composed of eighty-seven bishops, and this assembly also acceded to the principles before expressed. In the North African Church was evinced, under this zeal for the exclusive validity of Catholic baptism, a fanatical hatred of heretics; an exaggerated opinion of the exclusive holiness of the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> But it is noticeable how the same individual, who held tradition generally in so high esteem, opposed to it on this occasion, truth and right reason. "In vain," he says, "some who were cast in the argument, oppose to us usage, as if usage were greater than truth, or as if in spiritual things one must not follow that better way which has been revealed by the Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

Cyprian now endeavoured to form a connection with the Asiatics, who entertained the same views of this matter with himself; and to this end laid the whole case before one of the most eminent of the Asiatic bishops, Firmilianus, of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. The latter signified his entire concurrence in Cyprian's views;<sup>3</sup> and added some well-timed remarks on the advantages of common deliberation on spiritual matters, when such deliberation is conducted in the spirit of Christ. "Since divine doctrine transcends the bounds of human nature, and the soul of man cannot grasp the Whole and the Perfect, therefore is the number of prophets so great, that the manifold wisdom of God may be apportioned among many. And hence he who has first spoken as a prophet, is commanded to keep silence when anything is revealed to another;" 1 Cor. xiv. 30.

The Christian moderation of the bishop Dionysius of Alexan-

<sup>1</sup> See Cyprian's words, ep. 71: *Hæreticorum sordidam et profanam tinctionem vero, unico et legitimo ecclesiæ catholicæ baptismo præponere. Nihil potest esse commune Antichristo et Christo.* He styles the baptism of heretics, "*aqua perfida et mendax.*" The opinions expressed by many of these bishops manifest the same spirit,—a premonitory sign of those struggles which in the fourth century were produced in these districts by a fanatical separative spirit.

<sup>2</sup> *Proinde frustra quidam, qui ratione vincuntur, consuetudinem nobis opponunt, quasi consuetudo major sit veritate aut non id sit in spiritualibus sequendum, quod in melius a Sancto Spiritu revelatum.* Ep. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Cyprian, ep. 75, in a Latin translation often literal.

dria has been noticed already in a former controversy.<sup>1</sup> We find him manifesting the same temper in *this*. On the point in question he agreed, it is true, with the churches of North Africa and Asia Minor, the same views having for a long time prevailed in the Alexandrian Church;<sup>2</sup> though he differed from them in one respect, that *his more liberal spirit was rather inclined to make exceptions to the rule,*<sup>3</sup> in regard to many sects, who in doctrine harmonized completely with the Church. But at the same time he endeavoured to maintain brotherly harmony with the bishops of Rome, and dispose them for peace. He besought the Roman bishop Stephanus with earnest representations not to disturb again the Eastern Church in her enjoyment of that external peace which she had obtained from the Emperor Valerian, and of the internal peace which accompanied it since the suppression of the schism of Novatian. "Know, my brother,"<sup>4</sup> he wrote, "that all the once divided churches in the East and still beyond are now united together, and that all the presiding officers of these churches agree, rejoicing exceedingly in the peace which, contrary to expectation, has fallen to our lot. All give praise to God in harmony and brotherly love." It was probably in consequence of his negotiations with the Roman Church, conducted in the spirit of love and wise forbearance, that Stephanus did not venture to excommunicate him with the rest. He continued the correspondence with Sixtus, the successor of Stephanus; and to maintain the bond of brotherly love, he even asked his advice in relation to one matter, where both of them could start from the same principles.<sup>5</sup>

The Emperor Valerian becoming soon after a persecutor of the Christian Church, this outward conflict contributed to hush the

<sup>1</sup> See above, the Novatian schism.

<sup>2</sup> That the Alexandrian Church, too, rejected baptism administered in the churches of heretics, seems necessarily to follow from the declaration of Dionysius in his letter to the Roman bishop, Sixtus ii. Euseb. l. vii. c. 7, where he says, that when members of the Catholic Church who had gone over to the heretics returned back again to the former, it was not the custom to rebaptize them, for they had before received the *holy* baptism from the bishop.—This therefore was the *only* case. Consequently baptism administered *out of the Catholic Church* was not recognised as holy, as valid.

<sup>3</sup> Thus he made an exception of this sort with respect to the baptism administered in the Montanist churches, probably because he entertained milder views respecting their relation to the universal church. See Basil. Cæsar, ep. 188, or ep. canon 1.

<sup>4</sup> Euseb. l. v. c. 5.

<sup>5</sup> L. c. l. vii. c. 9.

disputes within it; perhaps, also, the successor of Stephanus did not partake of his blind zeal.

It remains that we should consider somewhat more minutely the points in dispute between the two parties, and the mode of their development on both sides. There were two points of dispute. In respect to *the first*, the Roman party maintained that the validity of baptism depended simply on its being administered as instituted by Christ. The *formula of baptism*, in particular, gave it its objective validity; it mattered not what was the subjective character of the officiating priest, who served merely as an instrument in the transaction; it was of no consequence where the baptism was administered. That which is objectively divine in the transaction could evince its power, the grace of God could thus operate through the objective symbol, if it but found in the person baptized a recipient soul; that person could receive the grace of baptism, wherever he might be baptized, through *his own faith*, and through his own *disposition of heart*.<sup>1</sup> But Cyprian brings against his opponents a charge of inconsistency, from which they could not easily defend themselves. If the *baptism* of heretics possessed an objective validity, then for the same reason, their *confirmation* must also possess an objective validity. "For," says Cyprian, "if a person born out of the Church (namely, to the new life) may become a temple of God, why may not also the Holy Spirit be poured out on this temple? He who has put off sin in baptism, and become sanctified, spiritually transformed into a new man, is capable of receiving the Holy Spirit. The Apostle says, 'As many of you as are baptized, have put on Christ.' It follows, then, that he who may put on Christ when baptized by heretics, can much more receive the Holy Spirit, which Christ has sent; as if Christ could be put on without the Spirit, or the Spirit could be separated from Christ."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eum, qui quomodocunque foris (without the church) baptizatur, mente et fide sua baptismi gratiam consequi. The opinion of the Roman Church is by no means to be so apprehended, as if the employment of the correct formula of baptism, even of such a baptism as departed in all respects wholly from the original institution, could render it valid. That the question related to a baptism which in other respects was administered in the right way, was presupposed on both sides. Had the opponents found it in their power to charge any fault upon Stephanus and his party in this respect, they would hardly have omitted the opportunity. Moreover, Dionysius of Alexandria, in the question which he proposed to the Roman bishop, Euseb. l. vii. c. 9, proceeds on the supposition that they were both agreed on that point.

<sup>2</sup> Cyprian, ep. 74.

The other party maintained, on the other hand, that no baptism could be valid, unless administered in the true Church, where alone the efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit is exerted. If by this was understood merely an outward being in the Church, an outward connection with it, the decision of the question would be easy. But what Cyprian really meant here, was an inward subjective connection with the true Church by faith and disposition of heart. He took it for granted that the officiating priest himself, by virtue of his faith, must be an organ of the Holy Spirit, and enabled, by the magical influence of his priestly office, duly to perform the sacramental acts, to communicate, for example, to the water its supernatural, sanctifying power.<sup>1</sup> But when the matter took this shape—was made thus *to depend on the subjective character of the priest*—it became difficult, in many cases, to decide as to the validity of a baptism, which must be the occasion of much perplexity and doubt;—for who could look into the heart of the officiating priest?<sup>2</sup>

But the Roman party went still farther in their defence of the objective significancy of the formula of baptism. Even a baptism where the complete form was not employed, but administered simply in the name of Christ, they declared to be objectively valid.<sup>3</sup> Cyprian maintained, on the other hand, that the formula

<sup>1</sup> L. c. ep. 70: Quomodo sanctificare aquam potest, qui ipse inmundus est et apud quem Spiritus Sanctus non est? Sed et pro baptizato quam precem facere potest sacerdos sacrilegus et peccator? Ep. 76: Quando hæc in ecclesia fiunt, ubi sit et accipientis et dantis fides integra.

<sup>2</sup> The author of the book de rebaptismate, which stands among the works of Cyprian, could therefore make the objection: Quid dicturus es de his, qui plerumque ab episcopis pessimæ conversationis baptizantur? by those who afterwards, when their vices came to be known, were deposed. Aut quid statues de eis, qui ab episcopis prave sentientibus aut imperitioribus fuerint baptizati?

<sup>3</sup> From Cyprian's letters, and from the book de rebaptismate, it is clear beyond all controversy, that the Roman party maintained this. If Firmilian, in the 75 ep. Cyprian, speaks only of the formula of baptism in the *name of the trinitas*, it does not follow that the opponents had spoken barely of this. Firmilian gives prominence only to that point against which he meant particularly to direct his polemics, the principle, that the baptismal formula gave to baptism an objective validity; and hence he does not distinguish what would have to be distinguished in exhibiting the opinion of his opponents. Yet we see also the other position of his opponents, which must have floated before his mind, discovering itself when he says: *Non omnes autem, qui nomen Christi invocant, audiri, &c.* The tract de rebaptismate, a work of some acuteness, I have thought myself undoubtedly authorized to cite as belonging to this period. I cannot adopt the opinion, that it is the one which, according to Gennadius, de script. eccles., Ursinus, a monk, is said to have written, not till the close of the fourth century, or still later. The writer discourses like a man who lived in the midst of these controversies, in time of the per-



of baptism had no longer significance, when not in the full form instituted by Christ. We perceive here the more liberal Christian spirit of the anti-Cyprian party. The thought hovered vaguely before their minds, that everything that pertains to Christianity is properly embraced in the faith in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Cyprian himself, however, did not venture to limit God's grace by such outward things in cases where converted heretics had already been admitted without a new baptism, and had enjoyed the fellowship of the Church, or died in it. "God," he observes, "is great in his mercy, to shew indulgence, and not exclude from the benefits of the Church, those who have been received into it informally, and thus fallen asleep."<sup>2</sup> A remarkable case of this sort is narrated by Dionysius of Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> There was in the church of Alexandria a converted heretic, who lived as a member of the Church for many years, and participated in the various acts of worship. Happening once to be present at a baptism of catechumens, he remembered that the baptism which he himself had received *in the sect* from which he was converted, probably a Gnostic sect, bore no resemblance whatever to the one he now witnessed. Had he been aware that whoever possesses Christ in faith, possesses all that is necessary to his growth in grace and to the salvation of his soul, this circumstance could not have given him so much uneasiness. But as this was not so clear to him, he doubted as to his title to consider himself a real Christian, and fell into the greatest distress and anxiety, believing himself to be without baptism and the grace of baptism. In tears, he threw

secutions; all which is inconceivable of an author belonging to a later period. When he says, these controversies were to produce no other fruit, nisi ut unus homo, quicumque ille est, magnæ prudentiæ et constantiæ esse apud quosdam leves homines inani gloria prædicetur, we see very clearly that Cyprian is here meant, and only a contemporary could so speak of him. The expression relative to an ancient apostolic tradition, "post tot seculorum tantam seriem," seems, it is true, unbecoming in the mouth of a man who wrote in the middle of the third century. But this expression would in any case continue still to be very hyperbolic, although employed by a writer at the end of the fourth century; and it is the fact generally, that strong hyperboles are not unusual in the writers belonging to the African Church.

<sup>1</sup> In the book de rebaptismate: *Invocatio hæc nominis Jesu quasi initium quoddam mysterii dominici, commune nobis et cæteris omnibus, quod possit post modum residuis rebus impleri.* The party of Stephanus not badly appealed to the fact, that Paul testified his joy in knowing that Christ was preached, even though it were not done in the right way, as was the case with regard to those judaizing Christians, Philip. i. 16. Cyprian, who wanted to deprive them of the use of this text, does not understand it so well, ep. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. l. vii. c. 9.

himself at the bishop's feet, and besought him for baptism. The bishop endeavoured to quiet his fears; he assured him that he could not, at this late period, after he had so long partaken of the body and blood of the Lord, be baptized anew. It was sufficient that he had lived for so long a time in the fellowship of the Church, and all he had to do was to approach the holy supper with unwavering faith and a good conscience. But the disquieted man found it impossible to overcome his scruples and regain his tranquillity. So destructive to peace of conscience were the effects of such tenacious adherence to outward things, of not knowing how to rise with freedom to those things of the spirit, which the inward man apprehends by faith!

We proceed now to the second holy symbol which Christ instituted for his Church—the *Lord's Supper*.

The last supper which Christ held with his disciples on earth must, from the nature of the case, have been full of meaning, as the parting meal of *him* who was about to give up his life for *their* salvation, and for *that of all mankind*; and who afterwards, although no longer *visible* among them as at this meal, yet quite as really, and with a more powerful divine efficacy and a richer blessing, would manifest among them his spiritual presence, impart to them himself and all his heavenly treasures. Besides, this meal was to take the place of the paschal supper, which Christ could no longer celebrate on earth. The feast in celebration of the foundation and covenant of the *Mosaic religious constitution*, was now, in accordance with the order of development of the theocratic economy, to exchange its earthly for a heavenly import, and to assume a relation analogous to the new shaping of the theocracy. The Jewish passover was a festival of thanks for the favour which the Almighty Creator of nature, who had caused its fruits to grow for the service of men, shewed the people whom he honoured with his *especial guidance*, when he delivered them from the Egyptian bondage. The father of the family, who kept the passover with his household, and distributed wine and bread among the guests, praised God, who had bestowed these fruits of the earth on man, for the favour he had shewn *his own* people. Hence, the cup of wine over which this giving of thanks was pronounced, was called the cup of praise or thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup> On the

<sup>1</sup> תַּרְבִּיחַ הַיַּיִן שֶׁבַּסֵּדֶר הַפֶּסַח = εὐχαριστίας.

present occasion, then, Christ pronounced the blessing as the master of the household ; a blessing, however, which, in its relation to the theocracy, must receive a new application, to denote deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin ; release from the dominion of sin ; the bestowment of true moral freedom through the sacrifice of Christ for mankind ; the preparation for entrance into a heavenly country ;—and this was the foundation of the kingdom of God, which is laid in the forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from sin, for all humanity. Hence Christ said, when he distributed wine and bread among his disciples, that this bread and this wine *were to be to them*,—and consequently to all the faithful of all times,—his body and his blood ; the body which he offered for the forgiveness of their sins, for their salvation, for the establishment of the new theocratic relation ; and as these outward symbols represented to them his body and his blood, so would he himself be hereafter spiritually present with them, just as truly as he was now visibly among them ; and as they now sensibly partook of these corporeal means of sustenance, which represented to them his body and his blood, so should they receive him, the Saviour, present in divine power, wholly within them for the nourishment of their souls ; they should spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood (John vi.), should make his flesh and blood their own, and cause their whole nature to be more and more penetrated by that divine principle of life which they were to receive through their communion with him. Thus, to praise the effects of his sufferings for mankind, to celebrate their intimate life-giving communion with him as members of one spiritual body, under one Great Head, they were to keep their feast together, till at length, in the actual possession of that heavenly country, they should enjoy, in its full extent, the blessedness which had been obtained for them by his sufferings, without being separated from him, and should, even in open vision, be united with him in his kingdom.

After the example of the Jewish passover, and of the original institution, the Lord's supper was accordingly at first united with a *social meal*. Both constituted a whole, representing the communion of the faithful with their Lord, and their brotherly communion with one another ; both together were called the supper of the Lord (*δεῖπνον τοῦ κυρίου, δεῖπνον κυριακόν*) the supper of

love (*ἀγάπη*.<sup>1</sup>) There was a daily celebration of this Christian communion in the first church at Jerusalem; the phrase *κλῆν ἄρτον*, breaking of bread, in Acts ii. 46, is most probably to be understood of them both together. In like manner we find them both united in the first church at Corinth; and so it probably was with the innocent, simple meal of the Christians of which Pliny speaks, in his report to the emperor Trajan.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, in the description given by Justin Martyr, we find the celebration of the supper entirely separated from those feasts of brotherly love, if indeed they still continued to exist in those churches which he had in view. This separation was occasioned partly by similar irregularities to those which had arisen in the Corinthian Church, when the spirit that prevailed in these feasts became unsuited to the holy rite which followed, and partly by local circumstances, which prevented generally the institution of such social meals. In truth, these meals were especially calculated to excite the jealousy of the heathens, and gave birth to the strangest and most malicious reports,<sup>3</sup> a circumstance which may have early led to their abolition or less frequent observance.

We now speak first of these feasts of brotherly love, as they were afterwards, when, separated from the supper of the Lord, they went under the particular name of agapæ (*ἀγάπαι*.) At these, all distinctions of earthly condition and rank were to disappear in Christ. All were to be one in the Lord; rich and poor, high and low, masters and servants, were to eat together at a common table. We have the description of such a feast of agapæ by Tertullian.<sup>4</sup> "Our supper," he says, "shews its character by its name; it bears the Greek name of love; and however great may be the expense of it, still it is gain to make expense in the name of piety, for we give joy to all the poor by this refreshment. The cause of the supper being a worthy one, estimate accordingly the propriety with which it is managed, as its religious end demands. It admits of no vulgarity, nothing unbecoming. No one approaches the table, till prayer has first been

<sup>1</sup> See my History of the Planting, &c. vol. i. p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian on the hindrances which a Christian woman meets with when married to a heathen. *Ad uxorem*, l. ii. c. 4. *Quis ad convivium illud dominicum, quod infamant, sine sua suspicione dimittet?*

<sup>4</sup> *Apologet.* c. 39.

offered to God; as much is eaten as is necessary to satisfy the demands of hunger, as much is drunk as consists with sobriety; every one remembering that the night also remains consecrated to the worship of God. The conversation is such as might be expected of men who are fully conscious that God hears them. The supper being ended, and all having washed their hands, lights are brought in; then each is invited to sing as he is able, either from the holy Scripture or from the prompting of his own spirit, a song of praise to God for the common edification. It then appears how he has drunken. The feast is concluded with prayer." These *agapæ* lost by degrees their true original significance, which it was impossible for them to retain except under the first simple relations of the communities. They became often a lifeless form, no longer animated by the original spirit of brotherly love, which removed all distinctions between men and united together all hearts as one. Many abuses crept into them, which furnished occasion for the maliciously disposed to present the whole solemnity in the most unfavourable light. As usually happens in such cases, some attributed undue importance to the dead form, as an *opus operatum*; others unjustly condemned the whole custom, without distinguishing the right use of it from its abuse; neither party being any longer capable of appreciating the simple, childlike spirit in which this festival had originated. Wealthy individuals of the church provided *agapæ* of this sort, and imagined they had done something peculiarly meritorious; and here, where all should be on a level, attention began to be paid to distinction of ranks, and the clergy, who should have set an example of humility to all, allowed themselves to be distinguished by outward preferences unworthy of their calling.<sup>1</sup> An ungentle, morose, ascetic spirit condemned these *agapæ* altogether, and eagerly caught at every particular instance of abuse on these occasions, which was set out in exaggerated colours, for the purpose of bringing into discredit the whole custom. Such was

<sup>1</sup> A double portion was set before ecclesiastics, in accordance with a grossly perverted and sensual interpretation of the text, 1 Timoth. v. 17. Tertullian, when a Montanist, de jejuniis, c. 17: *Ad elogium gulæ tuæ pertinet, quod duplex apud te presidentibus honos binis partibus deputatur.* Comp. Apostol. Constitut. l. ii. c. 28, where that which Tertullian very properly censures, is prescribed as a law. Clement. Stromat. l. vii. f. 759, respecting the Gnostic sects: *Ἡ συμπροσιακή διὰ τῆς ψευδωνύμου ἀγάπης πρωτοκλισία.*

the course of Tertullian after he became a Montanist.<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria expresses himself with greater moderation;<sup>2</sup> although he declares his opposition to those who imagined they could purchase with banquets the promises of God, and who seemed to degrade the heavenly name of love, by such a particular appropriation of it to these banquets. "Love," says he, "is indeed a heavenly food. In heaven this heavenly feast truly exists; the earthly one is indeed given by love, yet the feast is not love itself, but only the proof of a benevolence ready to communicate. Take care, therefore, that your treasure be not misrepresented; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He who shares in this latter feast attains to the most glorious of all possessions, the kingdom of God, while he strives to belong, even in the present world, to that holy community of love, the church in heaven. *Love is the divine thing itself, pure and worthy of God; to communicate is a work of love.*"

So long as the *agapæ* and the Lord's supper were united together, the celebration of the latter formed no part of the divine service. This service was held early in the morning, and not till towards evening did the church re-assemble at the common love-feast and for the celebration of the supper. At this celebration, as may be easily concluded, no one could be present who was not a member of the Christian Church, and incorporated into it by the rite of baptism. But there was no reason for excluding unbelieving or unbaptized persons from participating in the worship held in the morning.<sup>3</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> De jejuniis, c. 17; Apud te agape in cacabis fervet, major est agape, quia per hanc adolescentes tui cum sororibus dormiunt. So passionate an accuser appears of course not worthy of credit.

<sup>2</sup> Pædagog. l. ii. f. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Dr Rothe, in the acute and ingenious dissertation which has already been referred to, de disciplina arcani, maintains the opinion, that the admission of unbelievers and catechumens to the first portion of the service, was a later arrangement; and that it was the change which took place in the catechumenal instruction (see above, p. 416), and the introduction of a class of catechumens into the church assemblies, in which hitherto none but those that had been baptized took a part, which first led to the comparing of the Christian worship with the Grecian mysteries, and to the distinguishing of a missa catechumenorum, and a missa fidelium. But I cannot be persuaded that the suppositions on which this opinion rests are sufficiently well grounded, although, I confess, there is a want of precise data for a certain determination of the disputed questions. The reasons for my opposite views, and against Rothe, lie in my development of the matter itself.

is clear, from 1 Cor. xiv. 23-25, that in the age of the apostles, no stranger was withheld from visiting those assemblies; that on the contrary, such visits were regarded with pleasure, because the salutary impressions which were thus made on them might tend to their conversion. The Apostle Paul desired that divine service should be so arranged as to exert an influence in this manner on such persons. We see no reason to justify a deviation from this practice. There needed to be no fear of spies. The extravagant reports spread abroad concerning the Christians could be best refuted by ocular demonstration. Publicity was the best witness of the innocence of the Christians. To this, moreover, Tertullian appeals, that each one could have convinced himself of the untruth of those stories, as the churches were so often surprised in their meetings, and it must thus have been observed what was transacted in them.<sup>1</sup> If then the pagans themselves were challenged to testify what they had seen done in the Christian assemblies when thus surprised, there certainly was no reason for repelling all visits of strangers for fear of spies.

But now, when the celebration of the supper was disjoined from the agapæ and united with the other parts of divine service, it might happen on this very account that men would believe it necessary to confine the participation of unbelievers to those other parts; that at this celebration and the preparation which went before, they should be dismissed, because these celebrations, from their very nature, were designed only for the members of the church, and originally all who were present partook in the communion of the holy supper. Marcion, the defender of apostolical simplicity in church life, the warm opponent of all Jewish, hierarchical peculiarities, combated the new separation made between catechumens and the baptized entitled to communion, and this dismissal of them at certain church prayers united with the supper, as an innovation alien from the original spirit of the apostolic, or, as he said, Pauline Church.<sup>2</sup> He would have the catechumens take part in all the prayers of the church<sup>3</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Apologet. c. 7: Quotidie obsidemur, quotidie prodimur, in ipsis plurimum cœtibus et congregationibus nostris opprimimur.

<sup>2</sup> In reference to the position held by such, Tertullian, præscript. hæret. c. 41: Simpliciter volunt esse prostrationem disciplinæ, cujus penes nos curam lenocinium (a corruption of the primitive unity) vocant.

<sup>3</sup> See Jerome on the epist. Galat. vi. 6: Marcion hunc locum ita interpretatus est, ut

would see nothing offensive even were they present also at the celebration of the holy supper, without participating in it. Tertullian, on the other hand, objected to the heretics,—by whom he seems particularly to have had in his mind the Marcionite party,—that in their assemblies it was impossible to distinguish who were catechumens and who were believers (baptized); that all entered in alike or at once, and took part in the same prayers; that moreover, when pagans came in, the holy, such as it was, was thrown to dogs and the pearls before swine—viz. the celebration of the supper was exposed before the eyes of the profane; although, in truth, no Lord's supper—Tertullian proceeding on the assumption, that among heretics there could be neither a true baptism nor a true Lord's supper.<sup>1</sup> From this passage it is perfectly clear, not that the pagans assisted in the divine service, but that they could be present at the whole without distinction. This was what offended Tertullian. He demanded that pagans, catechumens, and baptized persons should, in the divine service, take their several places; that certain holy rites should be performed only in the presence of the last, but remain concealed from the gaze of the profane. It was the new arrangement combated by the Marcionites, by virtue of which the divine service was divided into two portions, the acts in which catechumens and unbelievers might take part, and those in which only the baptized could take part. Here the comparison with the mysteries of the Greeks, of which we have already spoken above, found place; although we cannot assert that this division proceeded originally out of a comparison with the Greek mysteries. For to those only who had been consecrated by baptism could the veil be removed from the hidden sanctuary.<sup>2</sup> Thus it came about, that while

putaret fideles et catechumenos simul orare debere et magistrum communicare in oratione discipulis.

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, præscript. hæret. c. 41: Inprimis quis catechumenus, quis fidelis, incertum est; pariter adeunt, pariter orant, etiam ethnici si supervenerint. A different sense presents itself, according as we take these words with what precedes or with what follows them. In the first case, the whole would be a continuation of the same thought, and by the sanctum we should have to understand the church prayers. In the second case, the sense expressed by me in the translation would answer to the original.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot concur with Rothe in respect to all the passages in which he is disposed to find an allusion to the Greek mysteries, or an affectation of secrecy in imitation of them. In particular, in the language of Athenagoras, Legat. pro Christianis, f. 37, ed. Colon., I can find no trace whatever of concealment and mystery as to certain sacred



Justin Martyr did not scruple to sketch out a description of the administration of baptism and of the celebration of the supper for the use of pagans, it was thought, on the other hand, after this transferring of the conception of the mysteries to the holy supper, that one ought not to speak of these holy things before the uninitiated. And this revolution coincides with the time when that great revolution of the Christian views took place respecting the priesthood. To the inner connection which here presents itself, it is unnecessary to direct the attention of our readers.

Already in the third century it became customary, before the prayer of the church which prepared the way for the celebration of the supper, for the clergyman who presided at this celebration, to admonish the church to silent devotion, calling upon them *to lift up their souls to heaven*, and the church thereupon responded—*Yea, to the Lord we have lifted them up.*<sup>1</sup>

It has already been remarked that the prayer of praise and thanks had passed over to the Christian celebration of the supper from the Jewish passover. This prayer of praise and thanks was, moreover, always considered as constituting an essential part of the solemnity: hence the Lord's supper obtained its name of *the eucharist* (εὐχαριστία.<sup>2</sup>) The presiding officer of the church,

rites. Athenagoras speaks of the fact, that the Christians, who distinguished themselves for their zeal in behalf of strict morality, must expect to be accused by the pagans, who were slaves to every lust, of the same unnatural debauchery which they found existing among themselves, and in this connection he says, “ὦ τί ἂν ἔποιμι τὰ ἀπόρρητα?” “What shall I say of that concerning which one would prefer to be silent?” Indigna dictu. Not a word here respecting the mysteries of the Greeks, nor respecting the sacraments of the Christians.

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian, de oratione dominica: Sacerdos ante orationem præfatione præmissa parat fratrum mentes dicendo: *sursum corda*, ut dum respondet plebs: *habemus ad Dominum*, admoneatur, nihil aliud se quam Dominum cogitare debere. And Commodian, c. 76, in rebuking the female practice of talking in the church, says—

Sacerdos Domini cum sursum corda præcepit;  
In prece fienda ut fiant silentia vestra,  
Limpide respondes nec temperas quoque promissis.

Thus we find already the first traces of the liturgy, which we become acquainted with in the fourth century.

<sup>2</sup> The term “εὐχαριστία” is used metonymically, resembling in all respects the phrase, “ποτήριον εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλόγουμεν,” in St Paul = “ὁ εὐχαριστηθεὶς ἄρτος καὶ οἶνος,” in Justin Martyr,—the bread and wine over which the prayer of thanksgiving *has been pronounced*. The latter says expressly, that immediately after the presiding officer of the church has pronounced this prayer of thanksgiving over the bread and wine, and the church joined in it with their Amen, the sacramental elements were distributed. He

taking up the bread and wine from the table that stood before him, gave thanks to God in the name of the whole church, that he had created the *things of nature*, which were here represented by the most essential means of sustenance, for the use of man; and that he, the Lord of nature, had also, for the sake of man, given his Son to appear and suffer in human nature. Both the thanksgiving for the gifts of nature and the thanksgiving for the blessings of grace were in fact intimately connected; since it is not until man, redeemed, returns back to his filial relation with the heavenly Father, that he truly perceives how all had been bestowed on him by the love of his heavenly Father; then every earthly gift acquires for him a new and higher significancy, as the pledge of an eternal love, imparting blessings to men of far higher worth than these. All nature, which before had been desecrated by him, in his servitude to sin, in his condition of estrangement from God, was now sanctified and restored back to him as a redeemed creature; and in the Lord's supper, the earthly, the natural was to become transfigured into a symbol or vehicle of the heavenly, the divine. With the bodily food, thus sanctified by the prayer of thanksgiving, was now to be connected by the power of the same God who had caused this earthly means of sustenance to grow for the use of men, a higher, heavenly food for the life of the inward man. (We shall say nothing at present of the different notions concerning the relations of the signs to the thing represented.)

This connection of ideas was quite familiar to the early Christians; they often made use of it in their polemics against the contempt for nature affected by the Gnostics. Attached to this, moreover, was the allusion to a *peculiar custom* of the Church at this period; the members of the community themselves offered the wine and the bread as a free gift, and from these were taken the elements for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>1</sup> These

mentions no other consecration. He says—*Ἡ δὲ εὐχὴ λόγου τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῦ (τοῦ Χριστοῦ) εὐχαριστήσια τροφή.* This cannot be a prayer which came verbally from Christ, for they had no such prayer; but it is rather the prayer of thanks generally, instituted by him, which, after his example, was to be offered at this celebration. It may be that the words of the institution were introduced into this prayer. In the language used by Firmilian, Cyprian, ep. 75, "invocatione non contemibili sanctificare panem et eucharistiam facere," lies probably the idea of a consecration, whereby the ordinary bread became the sacrament of the supper.

<sup>1</sup> This usage, which is already plainly presupposed by the allusions of Justin Martyr

gifts were regarded as the spiritual thank-offering of the Christians. The presiding officer of the Church, in taking from these gifts the elements of the supper and consecrating them to God with praise and thanksgiving, represented the whole community as one priestly race, as one in the Lord, and as ready to consecrate again to the service of God all that they had received from Him. This thank-offering of the Christians, considered as a spiritual offering of the heart, as a free expression of childlike love and gratitude, was opposed to the sacrificial worship of the Pagans and Jews. In part, these gifts of the Christians; in part, the prayer of thanks of the presiding church officer, with which they were consecrated to God; in part, finally, the entire celebration of the Lord's Supper, was called, at first only in *this* sense, an offering or sacrifice, προσφορά θυσία.<sup>1</sup> In allusion to this, Justin Martyr says:<sup>2</sup> "The prayers and thanksgivings offered by worthy men are the only true sacrifices, well-pleasing to God; these *alone* have the Christians learned to offer, and particularly in remembrance of their bodily nourishment, which consists of the dry and the moist, by which they are reminded also of the sufferings which Christ endured on their account." He regards this as a proof of the high priestly lineage of the Christians; since God receives offerings from none but his priests. In this sense Irenæus, contrasting those spiritual offerings with every species of ceremonial connected with a sacrificial worship, observes: "It is not the *offering* that sanctifies the man, but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies this offering, if it be pure, and induces God to receive it as from a friend."<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the idea of a sacrifice in the supper of the Lord was at first barely symbolical; and originally this idea did not even have reference to the sacrifice of Christ. The only thing originally had in view

and of Irenæus, is mentioned in express terms by Cyprian, de opere et eleemosynis, where he rebukes the rich woman who came to the communion without bringing with her a gift of charity for the necessities of the Church. Locuples et dives es, et dominicum sine sacrificio venis, quæ partem de sacrificio, quod pauper obtulit, sumis?

<sup>1</sup> Hence the expression which occurs so frequently in Cyprian—oblationem alicujus accipere, offerre. To receive such gifts from any one for the Church—to take from them the elements of the supper, and consecrate them, was evidence that he was considered to be a *regular* member of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Dial. c. Tryph. Jud. f. 345.

<sup>3</sup> Iren. l. iv. c. 18.

was the spiritual thank-offering of the Christians, of which the presentation of the bread and wine, the first fruits of nature's gifts, served as a symbol; while no doubt the consciousness of the new relation to God, in which the redeemed were placed by the sufferings of Christ, lay at the basis of the whole transaction."<sup>1</sup> Afterwards, the reference to the death of Christ was made more prominent, yet so that it continued still to be no more than the idea of a commemorative or symbolical representation of this sacrifice. But as one error begets another, it was quite natural that the false notion of a particular priesthood in the Christian Church, corresponding to that in the Old Testament, should give birth to the erroneous notion of a sacrificial worship which should stand in the same relation of correspondence to that of the Old Testament; and so it came about that the whole idea of sacrifice in the Lord's Supper, which in the first instance was simply symbolical, took a direction altogether wide of its true import, and bearing towards the magical; the earliest indications of which we find in Cyprian.

The ordinary bread presented by the Church was used for the Lord's supper. Justin Martyr calls it expressly common bread, (*κοινὸς ἄρτος*); those who went on the supposition that Christ kept the passover a day earlier than it was usually observed, had no occasion to take other than common bread for the celebration of the ordinance; but even those who entertained the contrary opinion did not consider the use of unleavened bread as an essential thing in the institution of the supper. We meet with but one exception, in a class of Judaizing Christians,<sup>2</sup>—an exception,

<sup>1</sup> A single passage in Irenæus, l. iv. c. 18, § 4, seems to speak a different language—"verbum quod offertur Deo;" therefore the Logos himself, Christ, is offered up in the sacrament of the supper. But even if there were no other reading, yet *this* could not be the right one; for such a form of expression would not only stand in manifest contradiction to the whole chain and connection of ideas *elsewhere* so luminously exhibited in Irenæus, but also be unsuited to what immediately precedes. He had in fact just before said, "offertur Deo ex creatura ejus" (thus the offering is referred to the bread and wine), and in the preceding chapter, § 6, it is said—"per Christum offert ecclesia." Beyond question, therefore, the reading of other manuscripts at this place—"per quod offertur," must be recognised as the correct one. It is precisely the reference to Christ, the high priest, which gives as well to this spiritual thank-offering as to the entire Christian life the right consecration. This is the meaning of Irenæus.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius says respecting the Ebionites of his time, that they annually celebrated the communion with unleavened bread and with water (the latter, because their ascetic principles allowed not the use of wine.)

however, which in this case explains itself. These Christians celebrated the Lord's supper, in remembrance of that last supper of Christ, but once in the year, at the feast of the passover; hence they were bound, as Christians who still continued to observe the Jewish ceremonial law, to use unleavened bread.<sup>1</sup> As among the ancients, and particularly in the East, it was not customary to drink at their meals pure wine unmingled with water, it was taken for granted that Christ also, at the institution of the supper, made use of mingled wine. The taste for higher mystical interpretations could not be satisfied, however, with this simple, but, as it seemed, too trivial explanation of the prevailing custom. The mingling of water with the wine was said to denote the union of the Church with Christ.<sup>2</sup>

As we have already remarked, the celebration of the Lord's supper was still held to constitute an essential part of divine worship on every Sunday, as appears from Justin Martyr; and the whole Church partook of the communion, after they had joined in the Amen of the preceding prayer. The deacons carried the bread and wine to every one present, in order. It was held to be necessary, that all the Christians in the place should, by participating in this communion, maintain their union with the Lord and with his Church; hence the deacons carried a portion of the consecrated bread and wine to strangers, to the sick, to prisoners, and all who were prevented from being present at the assembly.<sup>3</sup>

In some of the churches, however, as, for example, in the Church of North Africa, the daily enjoyment of the communion continued to be held necessary; since it was considered the daily bond of union betwixt the Lord and the Church, the daily means of

<sup>1</sup> See what is to be said hereafter of the Ebionites.

<sup>2</sup> Quando in calice vino aqua miscetur, Christo populus adunatur. Cyprian, ep. 63.

<sup>3</sup> In the description of the rite by Justin and by Irenæus cited in Eusebius, l. v. c. 24— Πίμπειν εὐχαριστίαν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν παρεκκλιῶν παροῦσιν, where the author is speaking of the Roman bishops. Thus arose first the custom of communicating with elements previously consecrated (the *προηγιασμένα*, as they were afterwards called.) The idea at bottom was, that a communion could properly have its right significance only in the midst of a church; the communion of persons absent, of individuals, was to be considered, therefore, as only a continuation of that communion of the whole body of the Church. But when in Cyprian mention is made of *presbyteris apud confessores offerentibus*, the meaning probably is, that the elements were first consecrated by the presbyters on the spot.

strength, life, and salvation to Christians. Hence Tertullian and Cyprian give a *spiritual* explication of the petition for our daily bread, as a petition for an uninterrupted, sanctifying union with the body of Christ through the Lord's supper. But when the daily service and celebration of the Lord's supper ceased, the only means left was, to take home a portion of the consecrated bread, which, in this case of necessity, was to be substituted for the whole communion—the first trace of the practice, introduced through error and abuse, of receiving the Lord's supper under *one* kind. Thus every Christian, with his family after the morning devotions, and before engaging in his daily business, partook of the communion at home, that the life of the whole ensuing day might be sanctified by fellowship with the Lord. We recognise here the ideas at bottom, lying in the depth of the Christian consciousness; but also the same spirit of externality, disturbing the Christian consciousness, which we have met with in so many different forms, and which was ever prone to ascribe a magic power of making holy to the sensible elements.<sup>1</sup>

But other countries, perhaps even as early as this, acted upon the principle that men ought never to partake of the holy thing except after a very especial preparation of the heart, and, therefore, only at stated seasons, chosen according to each one's necessities. The learned Hyppolytus, who lived in the first half of the third century, wrote thus early a discussion on the question, "whether the communion should be received daily or only at stated seasons."<sup>2</sup>

As the Church of *North Africa* was the first to bring prominently into notice the necessity of infant baptism, so in connection with this they introduced also the *communion of infants*; for as they neglected to distinguish with sufficient clearness between the

<sup>1</sup> To this custom the following passages refer. Tertullian, speaking of the suspicion of the Pagan husband towards his Christian wife, *Ad uxorem*, l. ii. c. 5: *Non sciet maritus, quid secreto ante omnem cibum gustes? Et si sciverit panem, non illum credit esse, qui dicitur.*—*De orat.* c. 19 (in the piece discovered by Muratori), *Accepto corpore Domini et reservato* (respecting a Christian mistress of a family), *arca sua, in qua Domini sanctum fuit.* Cyprian, *de lapsis*, p. 189, ed. Baluz.—In the work ascribed to Cyprian, *de spectaculis*, respecting one who runs from the church to the theatre: *Festinus ad spectaculum, dimissus e dominico et adhuc gerens secum, ut assolet, eucharistiam.*

<sup>2</sup> See Hieronym. *ep.* 71, *ad Lucin.*

sign and the divine thing which it signified, and as they understood all that is said in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel concerning the eating of the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ to refer to the outward participation of the Lord's supper, they concluded that this, from the very first, was absolutely necessary to the attainment of salvation.<sup>1</sup>

The celebration of the Lord's supper became the seal of all religious consecration; it was thus used at the conclusion of a marriage;<sup>2</sup> thus at the solemnities in commemoration of the dead. Of the latter we will here take occasion to speak somewhat more at large.

As Christianity in its general influence did not tend to suppress but only to ennoble the natural feelings of man; as it opposed itself generally, as well to the *perverted education* which would crush these natural feelings, as to the unrestrained expression of them in the rude state of nature; the same was its influence also in relation to mourning for the dead. From the first, Christianity condemned the wild, and, at the same time, hypocritical expressions of grief with which the funeral procession was accompanied, those wailings of women who had been hired for the occasion (*mulieres præficæ*); yet it required no stoic resignation and apathy, but mitigated and refined the anguish of sorrow by the spirit of faith and hope, and of childlike resignation to that eternal love, which takes, in order to restore what it has taken under a more glorious form; which separates for the moment, in order to reunite the separated in a glorified state through eternity. When multitudes at Carthage were swept away by a desolating pestilence, Cyprian said to his church:—"We ought not to mourn for those who are delivered from the world by the call of the Lord, since we know they are not lost, but sent before us; that they have taken their leave of us in order to precede us. We may long after *them* as we do for those who have sailed on a distant voyage, but not lament them. We may not here below put on *dark robes* of mourning, when *they* above have already put on

<sup>1</sup> And so it came about, that to children who were not yet able to eat bread, they gave *wine*. Cfr. Cyprian, *de lapsis*. Once more an example, how a superstitious abuse, contrary to the institution, led to a separation of the elements of the supper.

<sup>2</sup> *Oblatio pro matrimonio*. As to what is to be understood by this, see above.

the *white* robes of glory; we may not give the heathens any just occasion to accuse us of weeping for those as lost and extinct, of whom we say that *they live with God*, and of failing to prove by the witness of our hearts the faith we confess with our lips. We, who live in hope, who believe in God, and trust that Christ has suffered for us and risen again; we, who abide in Christ, who through him and in him rise again—why do we not ourselves wish to depart out of this world; or why do we lament for the friends who have been *separated* from us, as if they were lost, when Christ our Lord and God exhorts us, saying, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die?’ Why are we not in haste to see our country and home, to greet our elders? There await us a multitude of those whom we love, fathers, brothers, and children, who are secure already of their own salvation and concerned only for ours. What mutual joy to them and to us, when we come into their presence and into their embrace!”<sup>1</sup> Out of this direction of the feelings arose the Christian custom which required that the memory of departed friends should be celebrated by their relations, husbands, or wives, on the anniversary of their death, in a manner suited to the spirit of the Christian faith and of the Christian hope. It was usual on this day to partake of the communion, under a sense of the inseparable fellowship with those who had died in the Lord; a gift was laid on the altar in their name, as if they were still living members of the Church; and in return for this, the petition for peace to the souls of the departed was introduced into the prayer of the Church which preceded the communion.<sup>2</sup>

But when the ideas of the priesthood and sacrifice took another shape, this circumstance also would necessarily react on those Christian relations connected with the holy rite. We meet with the first indications of this false tendency as early as the times of Cyprian.

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian, de mortalitate.

<sup>2</sup> Oblationes pro defunctis annua die faciemus. Tertullian, de corona milit. c. 3, as an ancient tradition. The same writer says to a widower, in reference to his deceased wife: Pro ejus spiritu postulas, pro qua oblationes annuas reddis. Commendabis per sacerdotem etc. De exhortatione castitat. c. 11.



While individual Christians and Christian families celebrated in this manner the memory of those departed ones who were especially near to them by the ties of kindred, *whole communities* celebrated the memory of those who, without belonging to their own particular community, had died as witnesses for the Lord.<sup>1</sup> The anniversary of the death of such individuals was looked upon as their birth-day to a nobler existence. Great care was bestowed in providing for their funeral obsequies, and the repose of their bodies, as the sanctified organs of holy souls, which were one day to be awakened from the dead and restored to their use under a more glorious form. On every returning anniversary of their birth-day (in the sense which has been explained), the people gathered round their graves, where the story was rehearsed of their confession and sufferings, and the communion was celebrated in the consciousness of a continued fellowship with them, now that they were united with him for whom, by their sufferings, they had witnessed a good confession.<sup>2</sup> The simple Christian character of these celebrations is evinced by the manner in which the church at Smyrna, in their report of the martyrdom of Polycarp, their bishop, answered the reproach of the heathens, who refused to give up the remains of the martyr, lest the Christians should abandon the *crucified*, and begin to worship *him*.<sup>3</sup> "They are not aware," writes the church, "that we can neither forsake that Christ who has suffered for the salvation of the whole world of the redeemed, nor worship another. Him we *adore*, as the Son of God; but the martyrs we *love*, as they deserved, for their unconquerable love to their King and Master, and because we also wish to become their companions and fellow disciples."<sup>4</sup> The church then proceeds to say,—“ We gathered

<sup>1</sup> The dies natales, natalitia martyrum, γενέθλια τῶν μαρτύρων.

<sup>2</sup> The oblationes, sacrificia pro martyribus, presupposed originally that the martyrs were like *other sinful men*, who might well stand in need of the intercessions of Christians. This usage was, in its *original sense*, in collision with the extravagant veneration of the martyrs; and this circumstance accordingly must have afterwards led to a different interpretation of the ancient custom.

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. l. 4. c. 15. See above, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> Τοῦτον μὲν γὰρ υἱὸν ὄντα τοῦ Θεοῦ προσκυνούμεν· τοὺς δὲ μάρτυρας, ὡς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ μιμητὰς ἀγαπῶμεν ἀζήτων ἕνεκα εὐνοίας ἃν ὑπερβλήτου τῆς εἰς τὸν ἴδιον βασιλεία καὶ διδάσκαλον.

up his bones, which are more precious than gold or jewels, and deposited them in a suitable place; and God will grant us to assemble there in joy and festivity, and celebrate the birth-day of his martyrdom, in remembrance of the departed champion, and for the purpose of exercising and arming those whom the conflict is still awaiting."<sup>1</sup> Yet it cannot be denied that as early as the time of Cyprian, or even earlier (for Tertullian, when a Montanist, combated this error), the germ began to shew itself of an excessive veneration for the martyrs. So uniformly is man inclined to *place an undue value on the human agent, to deify the instrument*, which should simply point to Him who employs it; and the false element once existing in the germ, it soon unfolds and spreads, unless repressed by a mightier reaction of the sense of truth.

<sup>1</sup> Εἰς τι τῶν προσηβληκότων μνήμην καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἄσκησιν τι καὶ ἰστομασίαν.

Nov 28

END OF VOL. I.





**HENGSTENBERG ON THE PENTATEUCH.**

**DISSERTATIONS ON THE GENUINENESS OF  
THE PENTATEUCH.**

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY J. E. RYLAND, Esq.

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**HENGSTENBERG ON DANIEL AND ZECHARIAH.**  
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**AND THE INTEGRITY OF ZECHARIAH.**

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