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POPULAR
PREACHERS

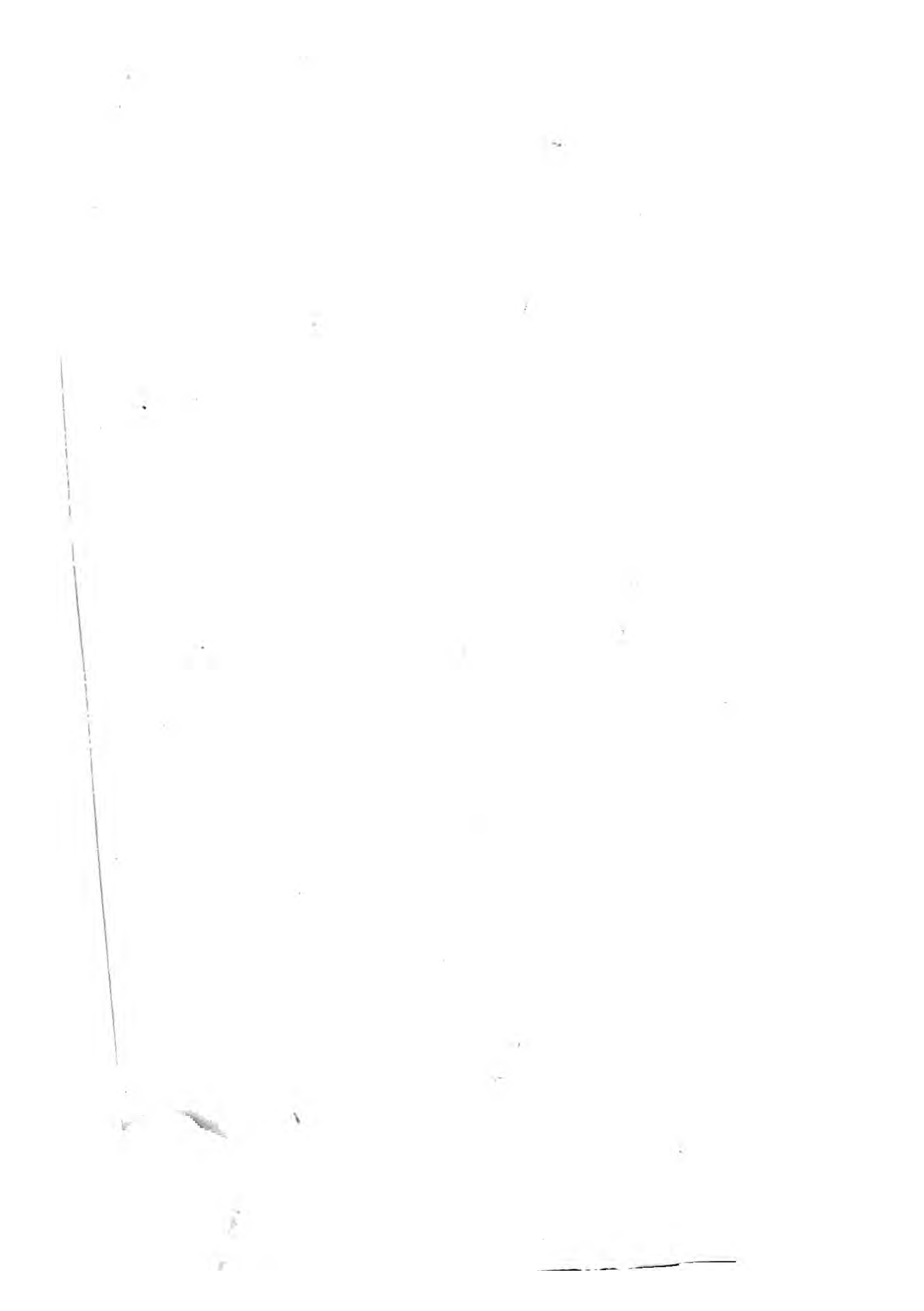
THEIR LIVES & WORKS.

ILLUSTRATED



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POPULAR PREACHERS

OF

THE ANCIENT CHURCH,



AUGUSTINE PENNING HIS CRITIQUE.

"The last years of Augustine's long and active life were chiefly occupied with his theological works, which the controversies of the day had called forth. . . . One of the works to which he devoted the evening of his life is a rare monument of candour, and undoubtedly a curiosity in literature—a critique on all his own works, which he called 'Retractationes.'" (Page 129.)

POPULAR PREACHERS

OF THE

ANCIENT CHURCH.

Their Lives and their Works.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM WILSON, M.A.

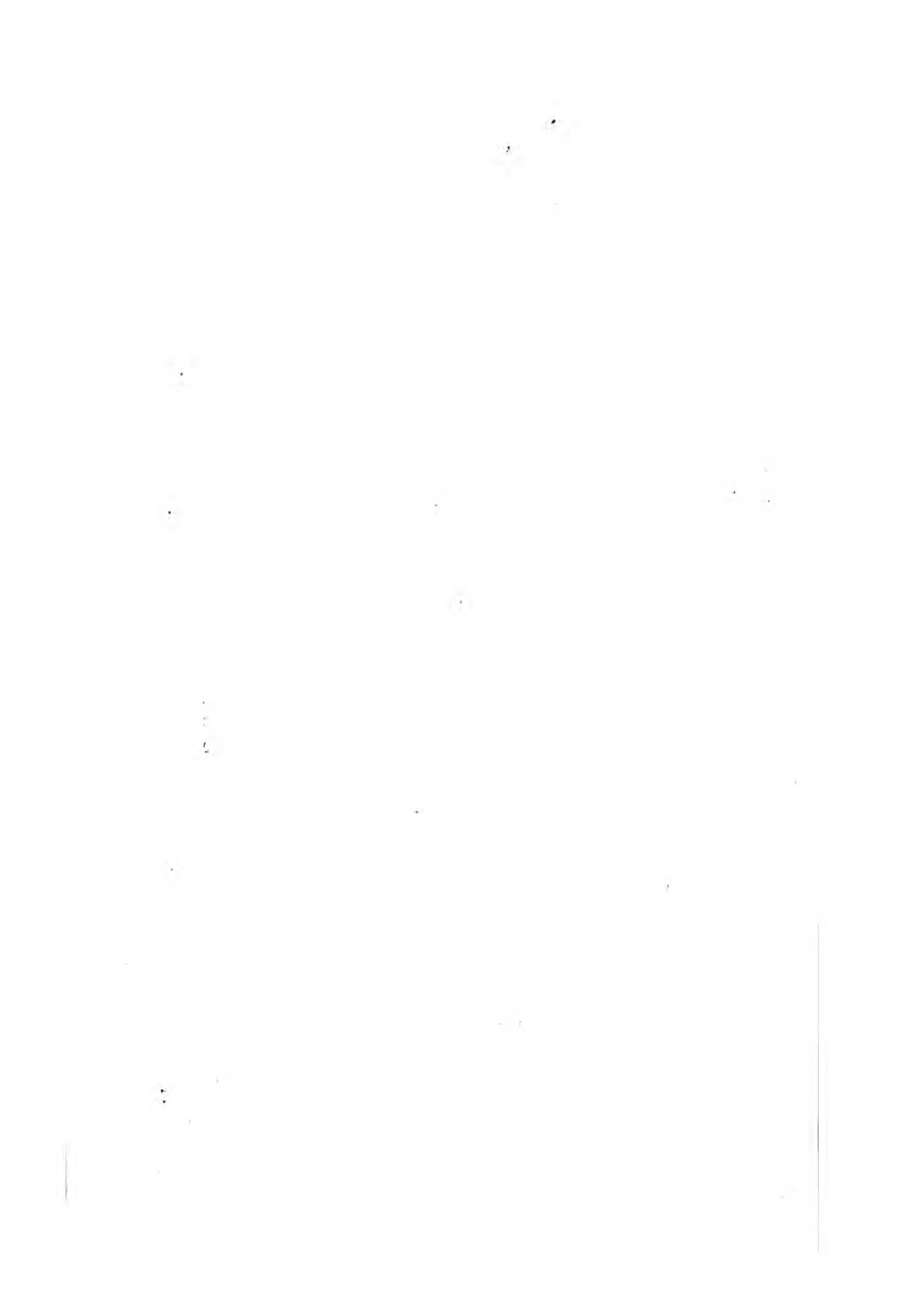


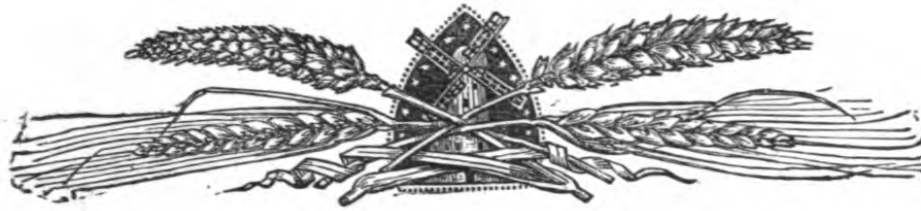
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P R E F A C E

THE present volume is the result of the author's endeavours to acquire a knowledge of the ancient pulpit from the writings of the great preachers of antiquity,—to discover what manner of men they were, and what manner of gospel they preached. In aiming at fidelity in his representations of the six remarkable men here noticed, the author believes that he has also succeeded in exhibiting them in aspects more congenial to the sympathies of modern evangelical Christians than those which are brought prominently forward by the servile admirers of the Fathers.

The extracts have been carefully selected with the view not only of exhibiting the matter and style of the pulpit oratory of each of the Patristic preachers here noticed, but also of conveying as clear an idea as possible of their piety, mental power, and complex personality. Accordingly, specimens have been given of exordia and per-

rations, along with selections of illustrations of particular points and striking thoughts.

In discharging the office of translator, the author has endeavoured to adhere to the letter of the originals as closely as was consistent with a true rendering of the spirit, avoiding, on the one hand, the dainty nicety and flowing paraphrase, in which the manly, outspoken eloquence of the Ancient Preachers has been often disguised when presented in an English dress,—and on the other, that stiff literality, which can never truly express that which in the original is characterised by freedom, flexibility, and force.

Enough, perhaps, has been said to show that this little work, in its plan, purpose, and contents, occupies distinctive ground of its own. It may be added, that the descriptive titles are not intended as exhaustive definitions of the many-sided men to whose names they are appended, but only as indicative of features that stand out prominently in the biographical sketches.

MONKTON.



THE CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPIST :
CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE.







THE POPULAR PREACHERS

OF

THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

THE CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPIST:

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE.

THE claims of the grey Fathers of the Church to the notice of the modern world will be disputed by those who regard the patronage of Martyrologists and Ecclesiologists as the stamp of superstition and imbecility. A free discussion of their merits will meet with no favour at the hands of those who, engaged in a bootless attempt to make humanity perform a crab-like pilgrimage into mediæval and patristic darkness, have closed their own shutters, lighted their candles, and made the hands of their own clocks point as many centuries as possible back.

The Fathers, however, belong to the universal Church and to humanity. They are the property of no particular sect; and, while we decline to serve ourselves heirs to their errors, it is but filial duty to enshrine them among our Lares and Penates, and honour them for whatever goodness, nobleness, or power they displayed. It is natural

for us to wish to view them from our own standpoint ; and to be curious to see how they look, when transferred from the dim religious light of stained cathedral windows and sepulchral cloisters, to the light by which we think, and work, and scrutinise other men, living or dead.

Their difference from the moderns is sufficient of itself to make them objects of interest. Of the genus bishop, for example, there are in the present day many species extant ; as also of martyrs, preachers, and saints. Yet what ecclesiastical naturalist will have the hardihood to identify any of them with those of the first centuries of Christianity ? While they generically resemble, there is a specific difference between them as strongly marked at least as that between the nautilus of the present age and the extinct ammonite. It is certain, notwithstanding, that the peculiarities of the Fathers have often been exaggerated. In the attempt to make them the objects of superstitious admiration and reverence, they have been placed beyond the range of our sympathies by the suppression of all that in them seemed to savour of human weakness, and by plentiful additions of marvel and myth. Hence, upon the whole, the modern age has been about as little moved by the recital of their virtues and miracles, as were Longfellow's jovial monks, when draining their wassail bowl, by the voice of the Reader, as he

“ Droned from the pulpit, like the murmur of golden bees,
The legend of good St Guthlac and St Basil's homilies.”

It must, however, be the fault of the biographer,

if he fails altogether to invest with interest a sketch of the most eminent of ecclesiastical disciplinarians, the greatest Christian philanthropist of his time, its most eloquent orator and glorious martyr, the man who, though bishop of an African see, was virtually head of the Western Church, and who by Tractarian, now Popish Newman, and Evangelical Joseph Milner, is held up as a model bishop, the most perfect incarnation of the episcopal ideal, and by others as a headstrong and overbearing ecclesiastical despot.

All this Thascius Cæcilius Cyprianus, Bishop of Carthage, is said to have been ; and without great talents and force of character he never could have earned such a reputation. The contradictory opinions formed of him may be accounted for partly by the spite, humorous or malignant, at reverend and ecclesiastical personages, which delights in hustling and nudging them, as Prince Kaunitz did the Pope when showing his Holiness the pictures at Vienna ; partly by the severe justice which has the same rule and measure for saints and statesmen, bishops and generals ; partly by the blind veneration which some have for churchmen and canonized martyrs, rather than by the paucity of materials for forming our judgment. For these, though scanty, are valuable, and not only sufficient to furnish hints to enable an active imagination to construct a representation of the good bishop similar to those corporeal restorations of the saints, in which all that is genuine is a rib, or a tooth, or a few hairs, the rest being of

wax, but sufficient to enable one who aims at working after the manner of the scientific palæontologist,—who, by the help of a few fossil bones, can tell the structure and habits of the living animal,—to say with tolerable accuracy what manner of man Cyprian was, and to give to the age in which he lived its form and pressure.

His literary remains, consisting of fourteen treatises, and eighty-one epistles, with a short memoir from the pen of Pontius, his deacon or personal attendant, are our chief sources of information.

In the first half of the third century there lived at Carthage a celebrated teacher of rhetoric. His profession brought him honour and emolument, and, if tradition may be credited, political, or at least civic influence. This was the future bishop, the subject of our present sketch.

It is difficult in any age for one whose occupation is either to teach or study classical literature, to be anything but a heathen, as can be verified by the experience of the days in which we thumbed our Virgils and Homers, when Jupiter and Apollo were to us almost as real as Paul and Peter. Christianity, though uncrushed by oppression and martyrdom, was not yet in the ascendant; it had in this century to endure some of the fiercest persecutions to which it had ever been subjected; and Cyprian, till he was forty-five years of age, was a worshipper of the gods of his ancestors. Little is recorded of the heathen period of his life. But it appears he was gay and somewhat dissolute.

Pontius, his deacon or confidential beadle, with

whom, in defiance of the adage that no man is a hero in the eyes of his valet, Cyprian is the greatest of bishops and most glorious of martyrs, passes by this period entirely, with the remark, that a man's actions should be recorded, not from the time of his *first*, but of his *second* birth. He gives us no assistance in tracing the steps that led to his master's conversion. This event, in his short memoir, is represented not only as supernatural, but miraculous in its suddenness as well as completeness; and Cyprian's career as a Christian, as there related, is not the rise and gradual culmination of a star, but the transit of a meteor in a line of supernatural light, with no waxing or waning, but springing from the darkness at once in full splendour, and vanishing as suddenly as it came.

"In him," says the deacon, with more than Boswellian admiration, "all things incredible meet together; in him the threshing anticipated the sowing; the vintage, the tendril; the fruit, the firm root."

Making, however, all allowances for the colouring of the marvellous thrown around it by Pontius, Cyprian's transformation from a heathen to a Christian strikes us by its thoroughness; and while the discovery of the invisible links between the first forty-five and the last twelve years of his life would make Cyprian more interesting as a psychological study, it would not, in our decided opinion, take his conversion out of the category of events supernatural and divine. The suddenness of such conversions as Cyprian's, we believe

for the most part to be only apparent. Those mighty upheavals which by divine influence shatter old habits, prejudices, and opinions, are generally the result of forces that have been silently generating and operating for long periods, just as waters accumulate gradually in subterranean reservoirs, until at last the upward pressure overcomes the resistance of the superincumbent mass, and the ground is rent and covered with ruins. It is evident, from a passage in his treatise on "The Grace of God," that he had speculated on conversion long before he became a Christian; and that, when sunk in fashionable pleasures and vices, he had begun to entertain vague wishes of rising above them, although he despaired of being able to do so—at least so suddenly and completely as those that were regenerated in baptism were said to have done. Cæcilius, a presbyter, between whom and Cyprian there existed an intimacy, was his spiritual father, in token whereof, moved by reverence and gratitude, he adopted the name of Cæcilius.

To become a Christian in those times was not merely to substitute one creed for another, or to take a serious turn. Even those who are most thoroughly changed in heart and habits by Christianity, in a land where manners and society have been for ages influenced by it, in the abandonment of carelessness and vice for the paths of virtue and piety, can scarce conceive of the wrench suffered by converts from the idolatries of Greece and Rome, in exchanging the temple for the upper room or the basilica; in turning their backs on

the hopes of political privilege and advancement, and embracing the prospect of the martyr's crown ; in abandoning the impure habits of heathenism for the sanctity of the gospel. Cyprian was not the man to do things by halves, or halt between two opinions. His part taken, it was taken decidedly. He became a changed—a new man. The wealth that he had hitherto freely spent on his pleasures, was now entirely sacred to the widow and the orphan ; to the service of God and the good of man. He sold his gardens near the city—a delicious retreat, in which he used to take refuge from the heat and bustle of Carthage. These, however, seem to have been restored to him, for his first treatise on the “Grace of God” is dated from this spot. It was written in A.D. 246, shortly after his baptism. A few months after this event he was made a presbyter of the Carthaginian church, in which capacity he continued for about two years. In the following year he wrote a short treatise on the vanity of idols, and, as is generally supposed, in the next his compendium of Scripture texts against the Jews ; as also, perhaps, his treatise on “The Dress of Virgins.”

By these we can see that, despite the assertions of his deacon, he was no exception to the law by which there is first the blade, and then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. In the first of these pieces, the hand of the rhetorician is manifest. It smacks much more of the class-room of *belles lettres* than of the pulpit. It is flimsy, gaudy, and stilted, and does not contain a single

text of Scripture. The second is a mere fragment of very little value, likewise without a quotation from Holy Writ. The third is almost all Scripture. The last is the only one of these which gives any intimations of what Cyprian was to be. It is evidently an imitation of Tertullian, whom he closely followed; and gives the sanction of high authority to Canon Stowell in denouncing the modern make-believe bonnets, and recommending those of coal-box dimensions. He scolds the dress-loving virgins somewhat cavalierly, yet with all earnestness and gravity; and it may not be amiss to give our fair readers some idea of what the ladies of Cyprian's flock had to listen to. He roundly ascribes to the teaching of the devil the most of the operations of the toilet. The apostate angels, he says, "taught to paint the cheeks with a dishonest tint, to dye the hair with false colouring, and to make away with all truth of face and forehead." "I consider," he says, "that the married also, and all females whatever, ought to be cautioned that what God has made and fashioned, ought in no wise to be tampered with, whether with yellow dye, or black powder, or rouge, or any other preparation at all, which undoes the lineaments of nature."

But it was not long ere he found matters more serious than the dress of virgins to occupy his thoughts and his pen.

The see of Carthage was vacant, and the eyes of the people were turned towards him. He concealed himself in his house, and would gladly, as

Pontius tells us, have escaped from the window in a basket, as Paul had done. But retreat was impossible: he was seized by a crowd that besieged his door, carried off, and made Bishop of Carthage, in A.D. 248.

Half a century of comparative quiet had made work enough for a reformer. The picture which Cyprian gives of the Church is truly deplorable, and shows the urgent need of one to wield a whip of cords and cleanse the temple. The external development of the Church had been at the expense of its internal life. The orders of clergy had multiplied, while ecclesiastical rule had become weakened. Degeneracy and disorganization were everywhere visible. There were not only bishops, presbyters, and deacons, but subdeacons, acolytes, readers, and a variety of helps. But deacons kicked against the authority of presbyters, and presbyters rebelled against bishops. Many of the clergy were not only idle and luxurious, but rapacious and stained by scandalous crime. Clerical personages and others, who had vowed celibacy, lived with virgins under similar vows, cherishing, however, as they most strenuously affirmed, only a Platonic and spiritual love for each other, and united only in a wedlock of souls. He set his hand to the work of reform with energy and decision, although he had to proceed with caution, as he was counteracted and undermined by five factious presbyters, who had opposed his election. But dark days were at hand. With the exception of the two years, from A.D. 235 to A.D. 237, during which the edicts

of Maximin against bishops and ministers were in force, there had been no regular persecution against the Church in the first half of the third century, although in the provinces Christians were liable to be harassed by superstitious, rapacious, or blood-thirsty governors. In the year 249, however, the edicts of Decius came forth, ordering the extermination of the Christian faith. Recantation or death were the alternatives. The bigoted and infuriated multitude, thirsty for blood, hailed with savage delight the imperial edicts. Cyprian, from his former celebrity and conspicuous station, was a marked man ; and the cry, "Thascius Cyprianus to the lions," was raised too often by the mob to allow him to dream of the possibility of escaping martyrdom, if he remained in Carthage. Flight was both possible and allowable. To leave his flock in the midst of persecution, with so many internal abuses, and to incur the suspicion of timidity, cost him a pang ; to remain among them was certain death, and involved, therefore, the renunciation of all hope of reforming the Church. Accordingly, with a sorrowful heart, he bade adieu to his dispirited and distracted flock, and remained in concealment about two years.

Degenerate as the Church was, many chose to languish and starve in prisons, or bare their necks to the headsman's axe, rather than deny their faith. But the number of the apostates was great. Multitudes sacrificed to the gods, or by bribes procured certificates stating that they were idolaters. From both classes sprang serious troubles, which

all the tact and decision of Cyprian could scarce have obviated had he been on the spot, but which could only be mitigated and checked, in some degree, by his letters. Of these, during his retirement, he wrote 395, and did more by them to guide, to soothe, to calm, than most men could have done by their presence. He superintended and directed everything. He wrote to the presbyters and deacons, exhorting them to see to the supply of the confessors' wants, to visit the sick and bury the dead, and directed them how to conduct their visitations to those that were in prison, so as least to attract the notice of the authorities. He addressed to the confessors exhortations breathing all the energy of his own intrepid soul, a noble disdain of terrestrial things, and glowing anticipations of immortality, which nerved them with strength to march with firm step to the death, and inspired them with a sublime ambition to cast off their emaciated bodies that were rotting in prisons, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

To stand fast when so many fell away, showed a strength of piety and principle, which was largely appreciated and lauded, and by none more than by those who had lapsed through fear. The martyrs and confessors were held in the highest esteem, and were made the objects of injudicious and hurtful attentions. The lapsed flocked to them in prison, or wrote to them letters entreating their influence in procuring reconciliation with the Church. No patron ever had greater crowds of

clients than the martyrs and confessors ; no minister ever had more importunate solicitations for places, than they had for readmission into the Church. The flattery with which they were addressed was most fulsome ; the supplications made to them most abject. First, the body of confessors addressed the bishop in respectful terms, requesting him to consider their recommendations when he should return and meet with his clergy ; and had not some of the factious presbyters, on their own responsibility, admitted some who were furnished with these recommendations, the evil that afterwards was so hurtful would not have arisen. Cyprian was alarmed at the contempt shown by these presbyters to his episcopal authority, and resolved to crush the mischief in the bud. He went to work with characteristic tact and decision. He wrote the confessors, requesting them to make very special inquiry into the cases of all to whom they gave letters, and instead of saying, " Admit such a one, with his friends," to specify the name of each individual whom they wished included in their recommendation. He wrote the laity in a mild, persuasive tone, counselling them to use their influence with the lapsed, to make them wait with patience his return.

His letter to the clergy is more authoritative in its tone, and reflects severely on those presbyters who had been guilty of setting aside the discipline of the Church, and ignoring the power of the bishop, by the readmission of those that had lapsed. He felt the critical posture of affairs, and

wrote the presbyters at Rome, giving an account of what he had done, and thus obtained their concurrence in the steps he had taken for preserving the purity and discipline of the Church, and maintaining his episcopal prerogatives.

But the factious presbyters disregarded his injunctions, the lapsed were clamorous, the confessors, assailed by adulation, and encouraged by the rebellious presbyters, proceeded to still greater lengths. Lucian, who, by the orders of the emperor, was condemned to starvation, had come to believe that he carried the keys of the kingdom of heaven in his girdle. In virtue of a commission delegated to him by the martyr Paul just before he sealed his testimony with his blood, he granted peace to all and sundry who applied to him, and in the name of all the confessors. He signified to Cyprian, and through him to all the bishops, that they had granted peace—this is their phrase—to all of whose conduct the bishop should be satisfied, thus at once superseding Cyprian's authority, and putting upon him the invidious responsibility of revoking the pardons they had granted, and expelling from communion those whom they had readmitted. Cyprian saw at a glance the difficulties of his situation, and took alarm at the insubordination of both clergy and laity, which threatened to bring into contempt alike the wholesome restraints of ecclesiastical discipline and the authority of the bishop. It was not in his nature to sacrifice either. Whatever else is signified by the word *bishop*, to Cyprian it intimated oversight and authority. The

episcopal office was, in his view, the very keystone of the ecclesiastical structure—the representative of apostleship—the fountain and head of authority. He was a born ruler, and carried authority in his brow. His manners, as Pontius tells us, though pleasant, were grave; his dress plain, but not sordid; and his whole air and bearing fitted to inspire reverence as well as affection.

The tradition that he had been a senator wants authority; but is certain that in the council of prelates, in the chair of his own presbytery, in managing the delicate and difficult public questions with which he had to deal, and controlling popular movements, he exhibited not only decision and fearlessness, but much statesman-like tact and wisdom.

The reins were in a firm hand, otherwise the affairs of the Church would have rushed into utter confusion, although all his efforts could not prevent an open insurrection. There is no crushing men such as those factious presbyters, who are too cunning and clever to be managed by policy, too insolent and vindictive to submit to the restraints of authority. They speedily brought on a crisis by seceding under the ringleading of Felicissimus, who threatened to excommunicate all who should obey the bishop. Cyprian retorted at once, by pronouncing sentence of excommunication upon Felicissimus, which the latter had richly merited, not only for his turbulence and insubordination, but for other scandalous crimes. The clergy of Carthage were also instructed to excommunicate

all who should adhere to the schismatical faction. The schismatics got some ragamuffin bishops to meet and ordain to the episcopal office Fortunatus, one of their number. Cyprian was in a position well fitted to try the temper of his mind. He was the butt of odium and invective. He was abused as headstrong, intemperate, and overbearing, tyrannical to his clergy, and merciless to penitents; he was maligned as a coward, who had shrunk from persecution through fear. He burned to dash into the thickest of the fight, that he might stay the dastardly rout of apostacy, and tread out the newly-kindled sparks of a schism, that, by offering salvation on cheaper terms than the Church, was subverting discipline and ruining souls. But he knew that the church at Carthage needed less a martyr than one who at safe distance could direct operations, and animate the courage of all who were engaged on the right side.

In A.D. 252, we find him again at Carthage. Almost immediately after his return he summoned a council, in which the vexed question of the re-admission of the lapsed was settled in such a way as to preserve a mean between the laxity of the party that had already given him so much trouble, and the excessive rigour of those that adhered to the Novatian schism. The rise of the latter division is a curious instance of the facility with which certain minds can pass from one extreme to another, and of the effrontery with which those whose inclination or interest it is to pick a quarrel can seize on any pretext whatever. Novatus, one of

Cyprian's recreant presbyters, who, along with the others, had found fault with his bishop for being so severe a disciplinarian, came to Rome, and was brought into contact with one Novatian, a disappointed candidate for the Roman see, whose Christianity was blended with the rigour of the Stoical philosophy, of which he had previously been a disciple, and whose opinions about the readmission of those who had apostatized were diametrically opposed to those of Novatus, and the sect to which he belonged. The two, nevertheless, coalesced, the Carthaginian embracing the opinions of the Roman, and the latter was ordained bishop by three ignorant Italian bishops, who were said to be in a state of intoxication when they performed the act. As a good Christian, Cyprian hated division and strife ; as a staunch churchman, he had a horror at schism, then a new portent in the Christian world ; as a genuine prelate, he regarded opposition to the bishop as a heinous sin. Accordingly, he rushed to the aid of Cornelius, whose episcopate was menaced, and whose see was disturbed by this formidable schism. He wrote to the confessors at Rome, who had been led to join it, captivated by the purity of membership which it was the object of the Novatian strictness to introduce into the church. Cyprian's letter, aided by the discovery of some pious frauds practised by the Novatians, gained back the confessors to the rule of Cornelius, and thereby weakened most materially the influence of the adverse party. With equal vigour, though not with equal success, he opposed the

Novatians in his own province, where, despite all his efforts, they struck their roots deep and wide. He had to defend the Church from attacks on two opposite sides. But while, in combating his assailants, he refuted their diverse ideas on doctrine and discipline, he took up a position from which he could direct his fire against both parties at once. They were both alike schismatics, and his treatise on "The Unity of the Church" was a two-edged sword which most unmercifully smote Novatian and Felicissimus. This production, in which is developed a theory of the Church and the episcopate which does not want abettors at the present day, must have been difficult to refute, at a time when the distinction had not been drawn between an external and internal unity; between a church visible and a church invisible. The Church, according to Cyprian, is the fountain of light and grace—the mother of the faithful—the seamless robe of the Redeemer. Schism therefore cuts off the stream from its source—alienates from the chaste spouse of Christ—joins to an adulterous mother, and rends the seamless coat. Of all sins it is most fatal and damnable. It expels the holy dove, and introduces instead "the fierceness of dogs, the deadly poison of serpents, the cruel fury of wild beasts." Schismatics are more guilty than the lapsed, and fit only to be ranked with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and with the traitor Judas. He involves all separatists and dissenters in one indiscriminate condemnation, excluding alike from the kingdom of heaven, not only the most pestilent

heretics that had disowned or been disowned by the Church, but all who seceded from her communion. The Novatians came in for the largest share of this denunciation, evidently because their's was the most powerful schism, not because their tenets were most unscriptural, for they were perfectly orthodox, both in rite and doctrine, the sole point of difference between them and the Church being their refusal to readmit to their communion those who had been guilty of the grosser sins.

The tone of this treatise is harsh in the extreme; and although the bitterness of the opposing parties, and the mischief they wrought, may be adduced in extenuation, it is evident that Cyprian's ideas of church power were very *high*, and that he was morbidly sensitive on what touched the dignity and authority of the bishop.

The treatise on "The Lapsed" was written about the same time. In common with the former, it is cast in a rhetorical mould, and is more of an animated and eloquent oration than a dissertation. There is a fire in it which bursts through all its elaborate polish and superficial ornament; and it conveys perhaps a truer idea of Cyprian's head, heart, and gift of speech, than any other of his compositions. It combines with the most unflinching condemnation of sin the utmost tenderness for the sinner, and must have tended to soothe the irritated feelings of those to whom it was addressed, and bring them to humility and contrition. At the same time, there are bursts of indignation and invective against those who, without any course

of probation, or evidence of repentance, admitted apostates to their communion. The peace they gave he denounced as delusive and pernicious. For by it, he said, "the wounds of the dying are covered over, and a fatal blow planted in the depth and secrecy of the vitals has a veil of concealment drawn over its pregnancy. Men turn from the altars of Satan to the holy thing of the Lord, with foul and tainted hands; still overcharged with the poisonous idol feasts, their jaws breathing their crime, and, fresh from the deadly infection, they invade the body of the Lord."

With redundancy of words, and plenty of conceits and false antitheses, Cyprian's compositions exhibit such copiousness, play of imagination, earnestness, deep feeling, and sense, that we do not wonder at the influence they had over the Church in general, and especially among the North African clergy; and they clearly show that, though his intellectual and theological culture was somewhat scanty, his oratory must have been pleasing and powerful.

But it is time to turn from the arena of strife, in which he had such ample room for the display both of intrepidity and skill. The plague, which, on his return from exile, he found raging at Carthage, gave full scope for the exercise of his benevolence, his oratorical gifts, and his power of organization. The description of this fearful visitation in Cyprian's treatise on "The Mortality," recalls to us the details of Thucydides' graphic picture of the state of Athens during the plague.

Time had evidently not ameliorated the genius of heathenism. We learn from Cyprian that the dying were plundered and deserted in their last agonies, the dead were left unburied, and in sullen recklessness and despair, the living said, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Then, even from amid the chaotic elements of which the Church was composed, emerged the fair form of Christian philanthropy. It was a crisis fit for the display of the loveliest aspects of Christianity, its brotherly love, its heroism in suffering, and the power of its glorious hopes. The Church awoke into life, and gladdened and blessed the plague-stricken city. The sick and dying, Christian and heathen, were tended, the dead buried, the famished fed, and an incense-perfume of life and immortality breathed from the sanctuary through the tainted air.

Cyprian was the soul of this movement of mercy, which was twice blest, blessing not only its objects, but its agents, by making them forget their own woes in ministering to others, and exchange the morbid gloom and inaction of sorrow for the healthful and gladsome throb of heart, which is the never-failing concomitant of active benevolence. His success in this noble work was due in great measure to his knowing his place and keeping it, and keeping all others in their's. His work was to get resources, to procure labourers, to find them work, and keep them at it. He was bishop, overseer, superintendent, and he knew that he could do more by planning and preaching, than by carrying with **own** hand medicine or food to the houses of the

sick and hungry. He left such ministries to his presbyters, deacons, and beadles. He was daily in the pulpit, and, amid farewells to the dying, and sounds of frantic mourning for the dead, rung out the clear, soul-stirring tones of his voice like that of an angel of mercy. His words filled with light and music that sad scene of sorrow and death; they bore the fire of his spirit into a thousand hearts, and set them a-glow with the flame with which his burned. He was liberal of his own money, but a thousand times more was needed than he could give; he was willing to devote his personal efforts, but it was little that one pair of hands and feet could do. He had, however, what the crisis needed, an eloquent tongue, that opened the purses of the rich and obtained the services of the poor. Never was oratory employed in a better cause, or crowned with more success. Nowhere can we find a more pleasing proof that the pulpit might easily lead the vanguard of all philanthropic movements, and that the Christian orator can bring forces into play which are beyond the reach of others.

The works of mercy performed by the Christians during the plague must have done much to remove prejudice, and recommend their faith to the heathens, who attributed the terrible scourge by which the city was wasted to the anger of the gods on account of the dishonour done by the Christians to their worship. Cyprian thought it necessary to refute, or rather to retort this accusation in a treatise addressed to Demetrianus, a heathen of some consequence, and asserts that the pestilence, and

all the other calamities under which they groaned, were judgments from the one living and true God, on account of the sins of idolaters. It is denunciatory, rather than persuasive or argumentative, and, though it was fitted in some respects to reach the heathen conscience, must have told far less favourably than the good works of its author on the worshippers of idols. His address to Christians on "The Mortality," written about the same time, was intended to cheer and animate those who had sunk into despondency and gloom, by producing contempt for this world, and a longing for a better. The idea is very prominent in both these treatises, and, indeed, throughout Cyprian's works, that the world was drawing near its end. To Cyprian everything seemed to portend that its doom was at hand. The enumeration of the signs of its decrepitude and decay will at once show the misery and gloom of the times in which he lived, and serve as a specimen of his style: "The world itself attests its own ruin in the tottering estate of all things. The showers of winter fail for nourishing the seeds; the sun's heat in summer for ripening the corn; nor in springtide do the fields display their usual growth, and the trees of autumn are barren of their accustomed issue. Mountains, disembowelled and ransacked, yield a shortened store of marble layers; the exhausted mines send up but a scanty wealth of silver and gold; their impoverished veins day by day are narrowed and minished, while the husbandman languishes in the fields, the sailor at sea, the soldier in the camp;

honesty sinks in the mart, justice from the tribunal, love from friendships, skill from the arts, and discipline from conduct."

In the conclusion of his treatise on "The Mortality," while he looks on the world as a crazy building from which a speedy escape is desirable, and life a weltering and tempestuous sea, in which shipwreck was inevitable, unless the vessel arrived speedily in port,—no shade of gloom darkens his intrepid soul. He closes with a burst of noble eloquence, similar to that in the Tusculan disputations, in which the soul of Cicero kindles at the prospect of immortality, and of meeting all the renowned and virtuous heroes, legislators, and patriots of former ages in the home of the blessed, the region of pure ether above. He pictures the bliss of Paradise, the Christian's native land, and the rapture of joining the noble army of martyrs, and all the brotherhood of the saints, in language worthy of the great Roman orator, and with a faith and hope to which the latter was a stranger. From this time to his martyrdom his activity was incessant, but his history during that period may be very soon told. His benevolence was not confined to his own diocese. Numidia having been visited by war, and a number of the Christians taken captive, Cyprian immediately assembled a council, and set on foot a subscription, to which he contributed largely himself, for their ransom. This subscription, which amounted to £807, 5s. 10d., he sent to the Numidian bishops, with a letter full of sympathy

His influence over the African bishops was shown in a controversy which agitated the Church for a considerable period, regarding the validity of heretical baptism. Stephen, Bishop of Rome, with considerable arrogance, took the liberal side, while Cyprian, and the whole of North Africa with him, insisted that all those who had been baptised by heretics should, previous to their admission into the Church, be re-baptized. He threw his whole soul into this war, and, although his moderation and charity towards Stephen and the others who took a different view are praised by Augustine, his wrath at the Novatians knows no bounds, and his ideas on the Church and the bishop appear full-blown. He got the question taken up at three successive councils of African bishops, and carried his own way. At one of these no less than eighty-seven bishops were present. No account is given of the discussion, because, in all likelihood, there was none ; but Cyprian has preserved the formal opinions delivered by each bishop, in which there is sufficient diversity to show that every man spoke his own mind in his own words, and the lack of logic is made up by a redundance of asperity. The document in which these are preserved is a curious relic of ecclesiastical antiquity, and one of the few monuments that we have to help us to form an estimate of the abilities and qualifications possessed by the early bishops in general.

Augustine afterwards completely demolished the positions taken up by Cyprian and the African

bishops in this controversy, which would have rent the Church in twain, if Cyprian and those who agreed with him had not, with great good sense and moderation, abstained from retaliating on Stephen, who hastily and intemperately excluded them from his communion.

But Cyprian's end was drawing nigh. He had escaped unnoticed, apparently, during the persecution of Gallus, the successor of Decius, who, after a brief pause, disturbed the peace of the Church; but under Valerian, who had been the protector of the Christians during the first three years of his reign, and during the last three years and a half of it was their merciless persecutor, Cyprian, in A.D. 257, was brought before Paternus, the proconsul of Carthage. In his examination he conducted himself with dignity and presence of mind, and was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was exiled to Curubis, a pleasant little town on the coast, about fifty miles from Carthage, where he lived in private lodgings, and was treated with great kindness by the citizens, for eleven months. At the end of this period he was recalled by Galerius Maximus, who, in the mean time, had succeeded Paternus, and took up his residence at his own gardens. A dream which he had at Curubis, related at length by Pontius, had made him look forward with certainty to martyrdom as his divinely-appointed doom. He was prepared to meet it with firmness and heroism, but determined, if possible, not to die out of Carthage. He concealed himself while the proconsul was at Utica, lest he

should be sent for and *martyred* there. On the proconsul's return to Carthage, Cyprian repaired again to his gardens. On the 13th of September, A.D., 258, the chief jailor and marshal of the guard apprehended him, and conveyed him in a chariot to Sexti, a place about six miles from Carthage, whither Galerius, who was convalescent, had gone. The news spread through Carthage, and drew out the whole Christian population, who crowded around the gate of the officer's house, where the bishop was confined till next day. On the morrow he was brought before the proconsul in the criminal court. The last act of the drama was short, Cyprian was firm, and the council reluctantly pronounced sentence. When the proconsul read aloud, "It is the will of this court that Thascius Cyprianus be immediately beheaded," the martyr replied, "Thanks be to God!" and a shout arose from the crowd, "We will die with him." He was marched at once to the place of execution, a field near Sexti, under a strong escort. It was a plain, thinly planted with trees, which many of the immense concourse that had collected climbed, to see their bishop die. He laid aside his cloak and knelt down in prayer, then rising, took off another upper garment, ordered twenty-five gold pieces to be given to the trembling executioner, bade him do his office quickly, covered his face with his hands, and calmly awaited the fatal stroke.

His death was worthy of his life. His brave soul passed away, exulting in the glory of having won the martyr's crown, after manfully and zeal-



THE MARTYRDOM OF CYPRIAN.

"He laid aside his cloak and knelt down in prayer, then, rising, took off another upper garment, ordered twenty-five gold pieces to be given to the trembling executioner, bade him do his office quickly, covered his face with his hands, and calmly awaited the fatal stroke." (Page 36.)

ously finishing his work, and doing as much for the Church in his brief episcopate of ten years as probably all the rest of his contemporaries put together. His letters and treatises are interesting not only as specimens of the literary taste of his times, but as throwing light on the state of the Church of the third century; and they and their author together form invaluable materials for a commentary on past and present, which might rival in interest the story of Abbot Sampson. The history of Cyprian is, in fact, the history of the Church during his day—a period of glorious martyrdom and ignoble intestine feuds, of deeds of heroism and benevolence worthy of the times of the Apostles, and scandals at which their most degenerate successors blush. The permanent impress he left on the Carthaginian Church is a noteworthy monument of the power of “God’s great ordinance of speech,” and of His equally great ordinance of discipline. He was cumbered with little learning, either sacred or profane, and had no philosophy. He had no combats with metaphysical Apollyons, and had neither the time nor the turn for discussing speculative questions. In theology, he was very much *a man of one book*, and distilled his religious opinions from Tertullian, for whom he had such veneration that he used to ask for his works by saying, “Hand me the Master.” But though he entered on office a mere novice in Christianity, and equipped only with the slender intellectual furniture of a mere rhetorician, he had those gifts which bear to the highest posts of political and

ecclesiastical influence, and which have made him the envied model of aspiring churchmen.

On the whole, we must pronounce him one of the true *Titanic* breed that usually come to earth singly and at considerable intervals, and of whom one at a time is all that in general there is room for in any one department.



Passages from Cyprian.

INSINCERE REPENTANCE.

ARE we to imagine that he sorrows with his whole heart, with fastings and tears, weeping and lamentations, who, since the first day of his sin, daily frequents promiscuous baths, who, fed on sumptuous repasts, and distended with too many dainties, belches forth their unwholesome remains the day after, but never supplies the necessities of the poor with a share of his meat and drink? In what respect does he deplore his ruin who moves about with brisk and sprightly step, who, though it is written, "Neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard," yet plucks out his beard and trims his face; and while he is at pains to please others, displeases God?

Or is she groaning and wailing, who can find time to attire herself in costly array, but bestows no care on that robe of Christ which she has lost; and to put on precious ornaments and richly wrought necklaces, without shedding a tear at the forfeiture of her divine and celestial adornment? Thou art naked, though clad in foreign fabrics and silken robes. Bedizened with gold, and pearls, and gems, thou art unsightly, destitute of the comeliness of Christ. Now, at least, during these sorrows, desist, thou who dyest thy hair and encirclest thine eyes with a line of black paint! Now, at least,

wash thine eyes with tears. If thou hadst lost a dear friend by death, thou wouldest sorrowfully groan and weep ; thou wouldest express the signs of thy distress by the disorder of thine appearance, by change of dress, neglected hair, sad looks, and a dejected countenance. Wretched woman, it is thine own soul thou hast lost ! The spiritual life extinct, thou hast begun to live to thyself, and to walk about, bearing thine own corpse ; yet there is no bitter lamentation, no continual groaning, nor doest thou retire into seclusion either from shame for thy sin, or to prolong thy lamentation. —*Treatise VI., On the Lapsed.*

THEATRICALS.

Turn now and look at another kind of spectacle, as contagious and melancholy. In the theatres you will witness matter for sorrow and shame. I mean what is called the tragic buskin, whose part it is to rehearse in verse the enormities of antiquity. The ancient horrors of parricide and incest committed long ago are unfolded in a scenic representation in the form of truth, lest, in the lapse of centuries, what once was perpetrated should be forgotten. Each age is reminded by what it hears that what has been done can be done again. Sins do not die with the wane of ages, crime is not engulfed by years, nor wickedness buried in oblivion ; deeds long ago past become examples.

In mimic exhibition, men are led by lessons of impurity to review the secret transactions of their

past history, or to hear what they may do in the future. Adultery is learned by being seen ; this evil, with the public sanction, entices to vice, and the matron returns from the scene divested of the modesty which, perchance, she brought to it.

Authority is not wanting to the disgrace which solicits them, that the evil by easier approaches may creep on men. Venus is drawn unchaste, Mars adulterous, and their Jupiter supreme in vice as in power ; they represent him burning for terrestrial amours even in the midst of his thunderbolts, glittering at one time in the plumage of a swan, gliding down at another in a shower of gold, and again rushing with his ministering birds to seize children.

Ask now, Can the spectators remain unharmed and pure? No ; they imitate the gods they worship, and, in the eyes of these wretched devotees, crimes become a religious duty.—*Treatise I., On the Grace of God.*

ADVICE TO VIRGINS.

Be such as God your Creator made you. Be what you were fashioned by your Father's hand. Tamper not with your face, let alone your shoulders, keep your figure in its natural shape. Do not pierce your ears, do not encircle your arms or neck with armlets or collars, load not your ankles with fetters of gold, and keep your eyes worthy of seeing God. Let your ablutions be performed among women, among whom you will bathe with modesty. Avoid wanton marriage-

feasts and sinful entertainments,—they are perilously infectious. Conquer dress, since you are a virgin ; conquer gold, since you are engaged in conquering the flesh and the world.—*Treatise IV., On the Dress of Virgins.*

ON THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

The Church is one, though she be expanded into a multitude by the increase of her children—as the sun has many rays, but one light ; as the tree many branches, but one vital power seated in the tenacious root ; and as, when many streams flow from one source, its bounteous, overflowing abundance gives rise to the appearance of a multiplicity of waters diffused abroad—yet unity is preserved in the source itself. Endeavour to part a ray of the sun from its orb, and the unity of light forbids this division ; break off a branch from the tree, and, once broken, it can bud no more ; cut off the stream from the fountain, and the part separated will be dried up. Thus the Church, filled with the light of the Lord, sends forth her beams over the whole earth ; the light, which is diffused over all places, being one, and the unity of the body unbroken. So the Church expands her boughs over the wide world in the rich results of her exuberance, and scatters, with beneficent hand, onward-flowing streams ; yet is there one head, one source, one mother, whose abundance springs from her own fruitfulness.—*Treatise V.*

APOSTATES FROM THE FAITH.

In the Gospel, likewise, afterwards, the Lord, the Teacher by his words, and Fulfiller by his deeds, teaching what to do, and doing all He taught, did He not inform us of all that is now taking place, or is yet to take place? Did He not assign eternal punishment to those who deny Him, the rewards of salvation to those who confess? Alas, there are those from whose memory all this has fallen and passed away. They did not even wait till they were apprehended before going up, or were interrogated before making their denial. Many fell before the battle prostrate, without encountering the foe, not reserving to themselves even the semblance of being reluctant to sacrifice to idols. They ran to the Forum of their own accord; of their own choice they hastened to their death, as if they had long desired it, as if seizing an opportunity for which they had all along been looking. How many were there put off by the magistrates at the time, through the press of nightfall, and how many who even entreated that their destruction might not be delayed? What violence can any one allege as an excuse for guilt, when he himself rather offered the violence which resulted in his own destruction? When they came thus willingly to the Capitol when of their own accord they offered themselves to a compliance in that awful deed, was there no tottering in their steps, no blackness upon the face, no fainting at heart? Did not their arms fall powerless? Were not the senses stupefied, did not

the tongue cleave to the roof of the mouth, and the speech fail? Could the servant of God, who before had renounced the devil and the world, stand there, and speak, and renounce Christ? Was not the altar, to which he went to perish, his funeral pile—an altar of the devil, seen in the smoke and odour of its vile incense? Ought he not to have shuddered at it, and fled as from the death and sepulchre of his own life? Miserable man! why bring an offering, why present a victim for slaughter? You yourself are an offering for the altar; you have slain there your own salvation; your faith and hope you consumed in those funereal flames.—*Treatise VI., On the Lapsed.*

OUR FATHER.

First of all, the Teacher of Peace and Master of Unity would not have men pray in individual isolation, and separation from others, so that, when any one prays, he should pray only for himself. For we do not say “My Father, who art in heaven,” nor, “Give me this day my bread;” nor does each individual pray that his own debts only should be forgiven, or for himself alone ask not to be led into temptation, or to be delivered from evil. Our prayer is general, and for all; and when we pray, we pray not for one person, but for all, because all are one.

THE PLAGUE.

This present visitation, of the exhaustion of the strength of the system by an internal flux—by

fire in the marrow breaking out in ulcers upon the jaws ; of the shaking of the entrails by continual vomiting ; of the eyes becoming bloodshot through fever ; of the feet or other parts of the body falling away by mortification ; while, from the weakness occasioned in consequence of this mutilation and consumption of the body, either motion is impeded, or hearing obstructed, or sight lost—is a profitable exercise for faith. What magnanimity is it to battle, with strength of soul unshaken, against these onsets of desolation and death ! How glorious to stand unbending among the ruins of the human race, instead of lying prostrate with those who are destitute of hope in God!—*Treatise IX., On the Mortality.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S NATIVE LAND.

What man on a foreign soil would not haste to return to his native land ? Who that is speeding on a voyage towards those he loves would not long, with increasing ardour, for a favourable breeze, that he may the sooner embrace his friends ? Paradise we regard as our native land. We have already patriarchs for our kindred. Why do we not haste and run, that we may be able to behold our country, to salute our native land ? A great multitude of loved ones await us there—parents, brothers, children—a varied and numerous assemblage longing after us, who, secure of their own salvation, still feel anxiety for ours. What a mutual joy to them and to us, to pass into their presence and embrace ! How exquisite the pleasure of those

celestial realms, without fear of death—with an eternity of life! Oh, supreme and perpetual bliss! There is the glorious choir of the Apostles; there is the assembly of prophets exulting; there is the innumerable host of martyrs crowned for their victory of strife and suffering; there are virgins triumphant, who have overcome, by the power of continency, the concupiscence of the flesh and the body; there are merciful men enjoying their reward, who fulfilled the works of righteousness, giving food and gifts to the poor, and, in conformity with the instructions of the Lord, transferred their earthly inheritance to the treasury of heaven. To these let us, with eager longing, hasten. Let it be the portion which we desire, soon to be among them—soon to be gone to Christ.—*Treatise IX., On the Mortality.*

IMPORTUNATE PRAYER.

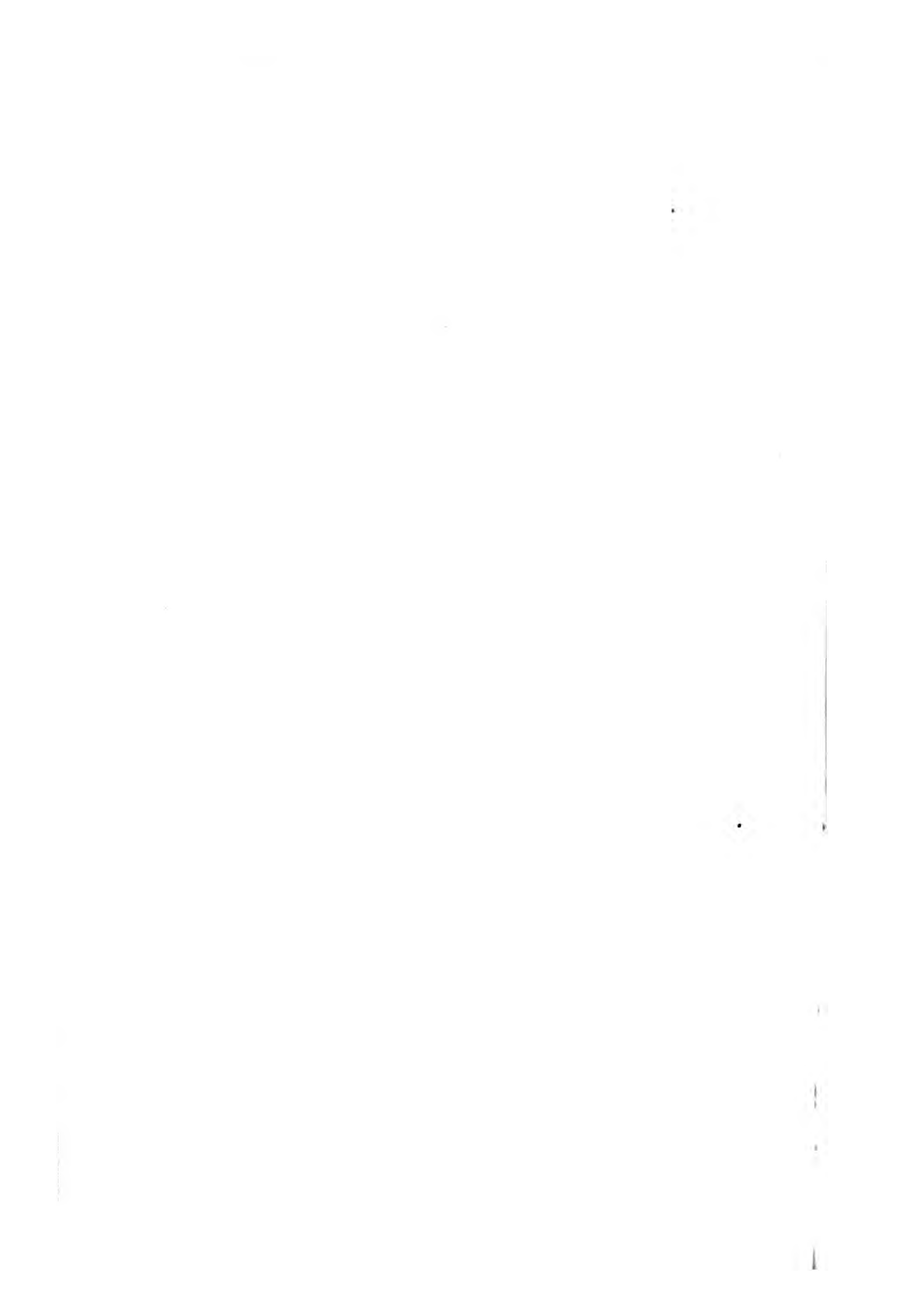
Let us pray, with our whole hearts, for mercy; and if the answer to our prayers be tardy, because we have deeply transgressed, let us knock; for to him that knocketh it shall be opened when prayers, groans, and tears beat at the door.—*Ep. VII.*

THE SOLDIER OF THE CROSS.

For we have not enlisted under the banners of Christ on such terms as to be under obligation only to set our hearts on peace, and avoid and refuse active service. Since the Lord, the teacher of humility, patience, and suffering, has gone before us in the path of conflict, so that He did what He has taught us to do, and what He exhorts us to

suffer He himself first suffered for us. And let none of you, dearly beloved brethren, be disquieted at beholding our people put to flight and scattered through fear of persecution, nor troubled because he no longer sees the brotherhood assembled, or hears the bishops preaching. Those who are forbidden to slay others, but must hold themselves in readiness to be slain when attacked, cannot be together at such a time. Wherever, in those days, any of the brethren shall be separated from the flock awhile through the exigencies of the time—separated in body, not in spirit—let him not be moved to dread flight, nor, while in retirement and concealment, let him be terrified at the solitude of the desert. He is not alone who has Christ for his companion in flight. He is not alone, who, keeping the temple of God pure, cannot be without God wherever he is. And if, while wandering a fugitive in the desert or on the mountains, a robber overpowers him, a wild beast attacks him, famine, or cold, or thirst afflicts him; or, while speeding over the ocean, under press of sail, storm and tempest overwhelm him, Christ beholds his soldier wherever he fights, and awards to the man who, in consequence of persecution, dies for the honour of his name, the prize he has promised to give at the resurrection.

Nor is the glory of martyrdom less that he dies not publicly and among men, since he dies for Christ's sake. It is sufficient for attesting his martyrdom that He is witness of it by whom the martyrs are approved and crowned.—*Letter LVI.*





THE FAITHFUL MINISTER:

AMBROSE OF MILAN.





THE FAITHFUL MINISTER :

AMBROSE OF MILAN.

IN the year of our Lord 374 the Great Church at Milan was the scene of an uproar. It was the election of a bishop in the room of Auxentius, just deceased. In those times such occasions were not rarely disgraced by tumult and even bloodshed. In the course of a keenly contested election, church property, and even the sacred vessels, disappeared as bribes.

Parties ran high at Milan. The last bishop had belonged to the Arian faction, although he had had sufficient subtlety and dissimulation to prevent expulsion from his see. The assembled bishops, at their wits' ends, had entreated the Emperor to nominate a successor, but he had wisely and modestly declined. The town was all but in open riot, and the civil authorities thought it time to interfere. Accordingly, the governor of Liguria and Æmilia, of which Milan was the capital—Ambrose by name—entered the church, with the view of quieting the tumultuous assemblage. Silence being restored, a child cried out, "Ambrose bishop!" Taking this up as a happy idea and a divine omen, the crowd responded with deafening cries, "Let Ambrose be bishop! Let

Ambrose be bishop!" and his election was carried by acclamation.

Were the Lord Mayor of London presented with the metropolitan mitre, or the Sheriff of Edinburgh appointed to the pastoral care of one of its vacant churches, he could scarcely be more thoroughly confounded than was Ambrose. The astonishment, however, in his case arose rather from the event being unexpected than from its being unprecedented. The elevation of laymen from secular callings to ecclesiastical honours was not then uncommon, although less usual in the West than in the East. Gregory of Nazianzen makes it the subject of many a satirical remark. In his poem on bishops, he says, "Let no ploughman, joiner, or cobbler—let no one who follows the chase, or beats the anvil—stay away and have another for his bishop, since it is better to rule than to obey. But let one throw away his huge axe, and another quit the plough-tail, another lay aside his leather, another his spear, and another his tongs." He pictures a rabble rout of handicraftsmen and blackguards, jostling, pushing, and knocking down each other as they rush to seize the vacant episcopal chair. The ample revenues and extensive influence attached to the large sees tempted cupidity and ambition. Many of the bishops dazzled by the splendour of their equipages, the gorgeousness of their apparel, and the princely sumptuousness of their tables. Both by disposition and station, Ambrose was superior to those vulgar attractions which made a bishopric

a temptation to many eyes. His father had been prætorian prefect and governor of Gaul, Britain, and Spain. After practising with distinction for some time at the bar, he was made counsellor to Anicius Probus, his father's successor. His next promotion was to the highly honourable and responsible post he now occupied. He had never felt the Church to be his vocation; the sacred office he regarded with awe. To preside over the see of Milan, especially in these critical times, he knew well was a task of infinitely more labour and difficulty than to govern Liguria and Æmilia. He therefore resolutely declined the unsought honour. But the Milanese were equally determined, and their pertinacity drove him to desperate shifts. He got women of the town to frequent his house, in order to sully his reputation for chastity, and brought down the magisterial sword with ostentatious severity on the heads of some unfortunate prisoners who were in his power, to acquire a name for cruelty. Such a device would succeed effectually in modern times. But then white lies and pious frauds were reckoned quite venial and fair, and the artifice was too clumsy and patent to answer its end. He next tried flight. He stole out of Milan at midnight. Having lost his way, and wandered all night, he found himself at daybreak, close to the town, and was placed under arrest, till the Emperor's pleasure as to relieving him from his civil duties should be known. His hopes in this quarter, if he had any, being dissipated by

the arrival of the imperial assent, he fled a second time, and hid himself in a friend's country-house, but returned to Milan in consequence of a threatening edict of the Emperor. The struggle was evidently hopeless, and, to the extreme delight of Emperor and people, he at last gave his consent. Thus this strange piece of business terminated.

He was baptised—for he was yet only a catechumen—and with all convenient haste consecrated bishop of Milan. He gave a demonstration of his fitness for the office thrust upon him, and a prognostication of the manner in which he should discharge it, by cutting away at once all secular trammels. He distributed his money among the poor, entrusted the management of his family to Satyrus his brother, and conveyed his landed estates to the Church, reserving the life-rent of them to his sister Marcellina. There was opened up before him a splendid career, but it was one that demanded the concentrated force of his undivided energies. He hesitated not for a moment, but gave himself at once and wholly to the duties of his new sphere. The result was not only that he kept his ground respectably—which was the utmost his humility allowed him to hope for—but that he carried all before him, and stands at the head of a list of renowned Milanese bishops, the best and holiest of them.

The spectacle we get of the Christian ministry in those dim and troubled years is, on the whole, a noble one. Were we to embody it in a symbol,

we should have to paint a figure clad in showy and cumbrous robes, on which the names of superstition and arrogance are seen embroidered; but with one hand holding a broad shield over the oppressed, and with the other dealing bread to the hungry, and binding up the wounded heart. The attitude here described was nobly assumed by Ambrose. One instance out of many which might be mentioned to show with what watchful and zealous care he guarded the interests of the weak and defenceless, far and near, was his aiding the Bishop of Pavia in resisting demands made in the name of the Emperor on the property of a widow which had been entrusted to the church there. He exhorted his own clergy to consider themselves as the natural guardians of the orphan, the widow, and the prisoner; and animated them by appealing to his own opposition to imperial despotism, and the rapacity of its myrmidons, in the sacred name of humanity and justice. So beneficent a power was the Church in those dark and stormy days, in which the altar was often the only inviolable asylum, and redress, sought in vain at the tribunals of justice, could be obtained only by the intercession of the bishop. His exertions in behalf of the poor, and his liberality, won universal admiration. Once, when he had exhausted all his resources, after an invasion of the Goths, he sold the church vessels to ransom captives,—an act which, of course, drew upon him the censure of those who strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel.

He soon showed himself to be a power in the empire. Perturbations in the orbits of imperial personages were the inevitable results of the proximity of a planet of such magnitude in the ecclesiastical sphere. At the election of a successor to the Arian bishop of Sirmium Photinus, his successful efforts in behalf of the orthodox candidate in opposition to the Empress-mother Justina, whose influence was thrown into the Arian scale, exposed him then to the insults of the mob set on by her, and procured for him her implacable resentment ever after. He next came into collision with the Emperor himself. Exasperated by the exhortations of Ambrose to turn a deaf ear to his mother's counsels, Valentinian sent his guards one day to surround the church, and the bishop was ordered to come out and surrender. His own intrepidity and his people's affection rendered the menace powerless. The guards returned without him, to report his calm reply: "I will not voluntarily give up the sheep of Christ to be devoured by wolves. Draw your swords and spears against me, I will die at my post." A scheme was next concocted to draw him away from his people. He was invited to court to dispute with an Arian bishop brought to Milan by Justina. Seeing through the design, he declined, telling the Emperor that the decision of religious controversies was no part of his business ; but that the Arian bishop might come to the church, and the people could then judge which they liked best. Such a proceeding, however, he added, would be

superfluous, as they had already sufficiently declared their sentiments.

Force was again resorted to, but with no better success. The Arians had received permission to worship within the walls, and, in a little, tribunes were sent to demand the principal church, with its plate, in the name of the Emperor, and a party of soldiers sent to apprehend Ambrose. The people, however, rallied around him, and filled the church, day and night, occupying their time in singing. The consequence was, that the troops were withdrawn, and the bishop's influence, built on the people's esteem and affection, being thus conclusively tested, and seen to be impregnable, he was afterwards let alone.

His conduct towards the Emperor Theodosius exhibits him trembling under a sense of the awful responsibilities of the ambassador of Heaven, and discharging his commission with equal fearlessness and meekness. The circumstances were these:—A tumult had taken place at Thessalonica, in which the imperial official had been slain. The Emperor's exasperation, which at first had been somewhat soothed by the mediation of Ambrose, was fanned again into fury by the tongues of flatterers. He issued an order to give up the city for three hours to the fury of his soldiers, and a horrible massacre took place, in which innocent and guilty, to the amount of seven thousand, perished. Ill health, under which he was at the time really suffering, furnished Ambrose with a valid excuse for leaving Milan, and thus avoiding a

personal interview with the Emperor. He took the much more prudent course of writing. The letter is still extant, and is a model of blended affection and firmness. He tells Theodosius that he must be faithful, at the peril of his own soul, and was therefore bound not only to warn him, but to debar him from the table of the Lord. "I have no reason to wish," he said, "to be contumacious towards you, but I have reason to fear for you. I dare not dispense the sacred symbols if you are present. Is that which is not allowed when the blood of one innocent person has been shed, to be allowed when the blood of so many innocent persons has been shed? I cannot believe it. Must it not be desirable for me to possess the Emperor's favour, and should I not, then, act according to your wishes if I could?" He expressed his deep sorrow that he manifested no compunction; he reminded him that neither man nor angel could forgive sin; and solemnly told him that to permit him to come with the stain of unrepented guilt would only bring sin on the heads of both. The barbed arrow of remorse sprang from the bow so gently, yet so firmly drawn, and sank deep into the soul of Theodosius. He threw away his royal robes, and for eight months absented himself from the communion. He submitted to public penance in the church, and, as a protection against his irascible temper for the future, by the influence of Ambrose, re-enacted the law of Gratian, which prescribed an interval of thirty days between the passing and execution of the Emperor's capital

sentences. The power of the keys, by which he had been excluded, then readmitted him ; but to his dying day the shadow of that bloody deed lay dark upon his soul. The result, as concerned the Emperor and the bishop, was mutual admiration and affection. In his funeral oration on Theodosius, Ambrose says, "I loved the man who preferred the person who told him the strictest truth to the flatterers." He might well say so. With equal truth Facundus of Hermione remarked to Justinian, who was pursuing a different course from Theodosius, "If God were now to raise up an Ambrose, a Theodosius would not be wanting."

By his efforts and influence over successive emperors, the repeated attempts of the pagans at Rome—still a numerous body—to have their ancient revenues and privileges restored, were defeated. Gratian, by whom he was held in deep affection and reverence, refused their deputies a hearing. Valentinian denied their request ; and Theodosius, when on the point of granting it, was deterred by the representations of Ambrose. Another occasion on which his ascendancy over this emperor was wielded—not, it must be confessed, in the right direction—is illustrative of the attitude at that time of Christianity towards paganism. Theodosius followed in the track of Gratian, and even advanced farther in the suppression of pagan worship, though not with uniform severity. His edicts prohibiting sacrifices were, contrary to his intention, made by turbulent monks and zealous bishops the pretext for destroying the temples. In

A.D. 388 a temple and Jewish synagogue had been destroyed in Mesopotamia. The Emperor was on the verge of inflicting punishment on the monks, who had demolished the temple, and making the bishop, at whose instigation the synagogue had been pulled down, rebuild it. Ambrose successfully interposed to shield both parties from punishment, although the fanatical and unruly monks greatly needed a check, and would have been much the better for an imperial chastisement.

These facts, which we have gathered out of his life, and placed side by side, are sufficient to give us an idea of the mass and momentum of Ambrose's mind, and the sweep of his orbit. To form anything like a tolerable estimate of a father of the church—nay, to enable us to conceive of him even as a possible being—the first essential requisite is to quarry out the bare facts from the rubbish of encomium and comment, the fable in which they are imbedded. By looking steadily at them we come to see how they fit on to each other—the plan of the jumbled mosaic gradually dawns on us ; by and by we see the impression of life and reality, and we begin to feel that we are handling the attributes of an actual man, who once lived, and breathed, and spoke, and acted.

From the incidents at which we have glanced, we can draw with tolerable accuracy the great features of the portrait : the minute lines and colours will be more easily filled in as we proceed. In respect of a biographer, Ambrose has fared like his fellows. Paulinus of Nola wrote his life, or rather

one of those panegyrics, done according to rhetorical rule, which could be made to answer for almost any other saint and bishop—much in the same way, and with almost as little change, as the sign-painters, according to Macaulay, touched up the portraits of Admiral Vernon into Frederick the Great. It is full of fables, and tinged all over with superstition. You want to see Ambrose, and the old cathedral door is swung open, and you discover a figure in episcopal robes, carefully placed before the stained window, so that patches of light—rose, green, and blue—may fall on the face and all over. The effect is striking in its way, but the natural flesh-tints are concealed, and you can see them only by looking through a prism that will absorb all those variegated rays of rhetoric and fable. You then see beaming out upon you the beauty of holiness and the majesty of the man of God. But even thus, there is much in him that does not suit your fancy—much that positively repels. The very name of ascetic is enough to cool down to zero whatever enthusiasm has been previously excited in a modern breast, familiar with asceticism only in the extremely mild phase of total abstinence, which is rather suggestive of comfortable living in the shape of edibles than otherwise, and with celibacy only under the name of bachelorism, which by no means conveys the idea of mortification, even in the case of clergymen. You do not like that lean and hungry look; those compressed lips and twitching muscles give you suspicions of uneasiness and suffering, of a hair-cloth shirt un-

changed for many a day, perhaps of a rope twisted so tight round the waist as to produce ulceration. Your dissatisfaction increases when you hear that he not only practised asceticism, and was its apologist, but that he persecuted for it—joined in hunting down Jovinian, who, in an honest, enlightened, and thoroughly scriptural way, opposed the ascetic spirit, and disputed the merit of the unmarried life. When to this are added his veneration for relics, his opinions about the sacraments, the Virgin Mary, and other points that you are accustomed to associate with imbecility and superstition, you feel puzzled how to amalgamate them with what you discover of his piety and power. It will not be without hard gazing and careful adjustment of your intellectual stereoscope that the different views will combine into one solid living whole. But we must remember the times in which he lived. Christianity was then absorbing into itself everything around, and the consequence was, that it was deeply discoloured by the streams which poured into it. The dark and troubled surface is burnished by the light of heaven, but it is only here and there, in some tranquil nook, where, by the subsidence of the impurities, the water exhibits the pellucid clearness with which it gushed from the fountain, and which was yet to mark its onward course.

We must remember the extravagances of monasticism, of which we may take a specimen or two. The monk Ptolemy lived on the top of a rock in Egypt, fourteen miles from the nearest

spring, quenching his thirst all the year round with the dew that he collected in vessels in December and January, till his brain turned, and he denied his own existence and that of the world and God, and then became a glutton. Heron of Nitria used to travel thirty miles into the desert, under a burning sun, and live for three months together on nothing but the Eucharist and wild herbs, and afterwards took to visiting the circus and theatre, and plunged into all manner of excesses. Eusebius the Syrian employed another monk to read the Gospels to him when walking in the open air, but his attention having been drawn off for a minute by looking at some peasants in the adjoining field, he determined to put it out of the power of the Devil to play him a similar trick. By means of an iron collar, a girdle of the same material, and a chain fastening the two, he got his head bent down so that he could neither look up nor round. Simeon Stylites was soon to mount his pillar, increasing its size till it was sixty feet high. There were multitudes that had visions of angels and chariots of fire, or fancied that devils plucked their sleeves, flapped out their lights, and neighed and grunted to disturb their prayers.

Ambrose, however, though he, in common with Gregory, and Basil, and Chrysostom, and all the leading spirits of the time, favoured monasticism, and was even one of its first and most zealous apostles in the West, like them adopted moderate views, and had no sympathy with those extravagances which were rife chiefly in Egypt and the

East. Basil, as zealous an ascetic as the age produced, in a letter to Gregory, his friend, said that the expectation of finding release from trouble by retiring from the world into the seclusion of a monastery was about as reasonable as getting out of a large vessel into a small boat on the open sea, under the idea that it was the size of the ship that was the cause of its pitching and rolling. This, Ambrose would have readily subscribed. If on this and other points he was not in advance of his age, he was at least not behind it. If we miss the daylight of better times, the cloud has its silver lining—the night has its stars. He constantly urged on his hearers the careful study of the Scriptures. “Meditate,” he says in one of his homilies, “on the law the whole day; you must not run through it cursorily. If you wish to buy a field, if you are purchasing a house, you take into your counsel a man of skill, and carefully consider what is right, lest you should happen in any point to be mistaken. But now that the question is of your own purchase and price, consider what you are, and what credit you have. What do you gain? Not land, money, or gems, but Jesus Christ, to whom no price or ornament can be compared. Take as your counsellor Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, John, and the greatest counsellor of all, Jesus the Son of God, that you may gain the Father.” By a fine spiritual instinct—by soundness of heart, rather than clearness of head, he was led to give a prominent place to those evangelical truths that were

mixed up with the theological rubbish of the time. But, not being of a speculative cast, and being called to teach others before he was taught himself, he took up the orthodoxy of the day as he found it, and the utmost that he—in his own estimation the least of all bishops—hoped, was to master the prevalent doctrinal ideas. Amid his incessant and varied labours, “he seems to have heard in his soul the music of wonderful melodies;” at least he wrote sacred hymns which have all the appearance of having—

“Gushed from his heart,
As showers from the cloud of summer,
Or tears to the eyelids start.”

Augustine, in his “Confessions,” gives us a snatch of one of them. Overcome with sorrow at his mother’s death, after having in vain sought relief from his anguish, he threw himself on the bed, and fell asleep; on awaking he thought of the lines he had often heard sung in the cathedral at Milan:—

“Creator of this wondrous whole,
Ruler of earth and starry pole,
Thou robest the day in beauteous light,
And dower’st with grateful sleep the night,
That the weary refreshed, at labour’s call
May rise from sweet repose;—
That the load from the jaded mind may fall—
The heart forget its woes.”

He preached every Sabbath, and the fame of his eloquence spread far and wide. It is a proof of its artistic excellence that Augustine was charmed by it at the time he was regarding the Gospel with the cold disdain of scepticism; but by and by he

tells us that his inward exclamation, from being "How fine!" became, "How true!" The influence of Ambrose's preaching on Augustine is enough alone to immortalise it. His deficiency in theological knowledge he supplied by earnest devotion to study. Augustine tells us that he repeatedly found him buried in a book on calling on him—all being permitted to enter without announcement—and that, loath to disturb him, he would go away without speaking. It was no disadvantage to him that he did not pass from the schools of rhetoric direct to the pulpit, but spent an intermediate stage amid the din of the Forum. The knowledge of the world and the practical training in public speaking he thus acquired were invaluable. In the pulpits of the West there was less subtlety of disputation, less artifice in style, less of the oration, than in those of the East. Manliness and simplicity, with frequent felicity of expression, are Ambrose's characteristics. His numerous writings, however, are of little value to us, except as illustrative of the man and his times. His panegyrics, reckoned, no doubt, in his day, his literary *chefs-d'œuvre*, may, without loss, be forgotten. Like Basil, the two Gregories, and Augustine, he was an Origenist; and, like most popular preachers, an unsafe guide as a commentator. Luther has said that the heart makes the theologian, and Quintillian that the heart makes the orator; and Ambrose had both the theology and the eloquence of the heart. His kindly, sympathising nature, and humble, earnest piety,

gave his preaching that indefinable but invaluable quality, called unction, which melts and wins. He worked at high pressure to the last, and died, A.D. 327, aged sixty-four years, soon after his return from Rome, where he had taken refuge while civil war was raging at Milan.



Passages from Ambrose.

BLACK, BUT COMELY.

“I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.”—*Cant.* i. 22.

IMAGINE the Lord Jesus reclining at the supper, John leaning on his bosom, and the rest wondering at the servant leaning on his Lord—at that sinful flesh reclining on the temple of the Word—at that soul, bound in the fetters of the flesh, surveying the shrine of the fulness of Divinity. To the others, in their astonishment, the soul of John replies, “I am black, but comely.” Black through guilt—comely through grace. The flesh also says, “I am black, but comely.” Black with the dust of the world, which it has gathered in the struggle of life—comely in the eye of the spirit from which the dust and defilement of this world have been wiped away; black through vice, but comely through the laver which washes away every transgression. I am black because I have sinned—comely because Christ has loved me. For that which it had lost it has recovered in the virgin—it has received from Mary. The synagogue also says, “I am black, but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem.” Black through unbelief—comely through the law; black through my backsliding—comely because the Sun shines on me with cheering ray, and I first was made a congregation of God.—*Commentary on Canticles.*

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE.

And, in the first place, they wish to overthrow what has been implanted in, and imprinted on, our minds by many a text of Scripture. They deny the possibility of waters being above the heavens, saying that the orb of heaven, in the middle of which the earth is situated, is round, and that water could not remain on that round revolving surface, but must of necessity flow down and be displaced, as it always runs down from the higher to the lower part. "How," as they say, "can water stand above the sphere when the sphere itself revolves?" This is but the subtlety of logic. Grant me a fact from which I may draw an answer to you; if not, then shall nothing be said in reply.

They ask it to be conceded to them that the axis of heaven is whirled round with swift motion, but that the orb of the earth is immoveable, in order to build on this the conclusion that there cannot be waters above the heavens, because they would be all dissipated by the revolution of the axis. As if—to make the required concession and answer them according to their own notions—they could deny that in the height and depth of which we speak there is a length and a breadth which none can comprehend but he who is filled with all the fulness of God, as the Apostle says.—*Ephes.* iii. 18, 19.

There is then a breadth in the height of heaven. There are also—to speak of what we can know—

buildings in plenty, round outside, and square within, and others square outside, and round inside, whose higher parts are level, so as to be able to contain water.

We say this only for the purpose of making them observe that their notions can be successfully met with others more probable, and to make them cease from measuring the work of God only by contemplating the work of man, and what is within the range of our ability.—*Hexameron*, book 1. chap 3.

CLERICAL CONVERSATION.

That jokes, although occasionally seemly, are nevertheless to be wholly proscribed in the case of ecclesiastics, and that the speech ought to be simple and unaffected.

Many other precepts regarding the mode of speaking are given by men of the world, which I think we should pass over—as, for example, those on instruction in joking. For although sometimes jokes are seemly and pleasant, yet they are abhorrent to ecclesiastical rule; for how can we practise what we do not find in the Holy Scriptures? They are ever to be guarded against in fables, lest they interfere with the gravity of the severer end in view. “Woe to you that laugh now, for ye shall weep,” (Luke vi. 21,) saith the Lord; and are we seeking material for laughter, so that laughing here, we may weep yonder? Not only immoderate joking, but also all joking is, in my opinion,

to be avoided, although it is not unbecoming for a speech to be full of sweetness and grace.

What shall I say of the voice? In my opinion purity and simplicity in speaking are sufficient (here is a reference to Cicero, who says, "In the voice we are to aim at two things, clearness and sweetness.") Melodiousness is the gift of Nature, not the attainment of industry. Let it be distinct in its style of pronunciation, and full of manly vigour, so as not to show rusticity of sound, not to affect a theatrical rhythm, but maintain a suitability* to sacred subjects.

TRUE BLESSEDNESS.

[In the previous chapter, blessedness is described "as consisting in the knowledge of God, and in the love of good works."

The definition of blessedness derived from Scripture is considered, and it is demonstrated that it is susceptible of no addition from outward good, nor any diminution from outward evil.]

And, since this knowledge of things has been exploded, either as futile according to the superfluous discussions of philosophy, or only half perfect, let us consider how plain a deliverance Scripture gives on that on which the questions of philosophy are so numerous, involved, and confused. For the Scripture asserts nothing to be good, unless what is honourable, and judges virtue to be blessed in all circumstances, inasmuch as it is

* Literally, to the sacredness of the mysteries.

neither augmented by corporeal or external advantages, nor diminished by the opposite, and that nothing is thus blessed which is not alien from sin, full of innocence, replete with the grace of God. (Ps. i. 1, 2. Ps. cxix. 1.)

Innocence, then, and knowledge, make a man happy. That the blessedness of eternal life was the reward of doing good, we observed above. It remains, then, that scorning the blandishments of pleasure, or the fear of pain,—the one of which is contemptible as enervating and effeminate, the other as unmanly and weak,—that I should show that the blessed life shines conspicuous in the midst of woes.

This we may easily learn when we read, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you," &c. (Matt. v. 11, 12.) And in another place, "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. xvi. 24.)

THE GATHERING OF THE WATERS A TYPE OF THE CHURCH.

"Let the water which is under the heaven be gathered together into one body.*"—Gen. i. 9.

Let the water be congregated, it was said, and it was congregated; and frequently it is said, Let the people be congregated, and they are not congregated. It is no ordinary disgrace that the insensible elements should obey the command of God, and men should not obey, who by God's own

* Translating literally from the Latin, "congregated in one congregation."

power have been endowed with sense. Perhaps it is a feeling of shame on this account that has made you assemble to-day in greater numbers, in order that, on the day in which the waters were congregated into one body, the people should not seem not to have congregated in the church of the Lord.

Nor have we this example alone of the obedience of the water; for it is also written in another place, Psalm lxxvii. 16, "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee. . . ."

The water, therefore, *knew* how to be gathered together, and to be afraid and to flee, when God commanded. Let us imitate this congregation of the waters, and know the one congregation of the Lord—the one Church.

Once the water congregated here from every valley, from every marsh, from every lake. The valley is heresy, the valley is heathenism; for God is the God of the mountains, not of the valleys. In a word, in the church there is exultation; in heresy and heathenism there is weeping and sorrow. Whence he says, "He placed in the valley of weeping.*"—Psalm lxxxiv. 6, 7. From every valley, therefore, the people has congregated. There are not, however, many congregations, but the congregation is one, the church is one. The water is congregated from every valley, and has become one spiritual congregation, and one people: the church has been replenished from the ranks of heretics and heathens. The

* Baca. English translation means "weeping."

theatre is a valley, the circus is a valley, where the treacherous horse runs for safety, where there is despicable and abject contention, where there is the base deformity of quarrels. From among those, then, who were wont to haunt the circus, the faith of the Church has grown, and the daily assembly is increased.

FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS EXPLAIN
THE ANOMALIES OF THE PRESENT LIFE.

Those who are displeased at the adversity of the good and the prosperity of the wicked, are shown by the instance of Lazarus, and the authority of Paul, that after this life rewards and punishments are in reserve.

We have finished two points, and the discussion has not unsuitably for us turned out to be of this nature. The third kind of question resolves itself into this—Why sinners abound in wealth and riches, and live luxuriously without trouble, without grief, while the just suffer want and meet with the loss of wives or children? Those who ask this should be satisfied by that parable of the Gospel which represents the rich man as clothed in fine linen and purple, and displaying every day sumptuous dainties, while the poor man, full of sores, gathered the scraps that fell from his table. But after death the poor man was in the bosom of Abraham, in the enjoyment of rest, the rich man in punishment. Is it not evident that the rewards or punishments of our deserts await us after death?

And rightly, because it is in the contest that

the labour is ; but after the contest there is for some victory, for others shame. Is the palm given, is the crown conferred on any one before the race is done? Well has Paul said—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me ; and not to me only, but also to all those that love his appearing." At that day, he says, he will give it, not this day. For on this day, like a good athlete, he is contending in the midst of toils, and perils, and shipwrecks ; for he knows that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. Therefore no one can receive a prize except he has legitimately contended for it ; nor his victory glorious unless where the contests have been arduous.—*Treatise on the Duties of Ministers*, chap. xiv.

HYMN VI.

I with my mind to God will pray,
 And with the spirit him adore.
 My wandering heart forbid to stray,
 'Gainst meaner objects close the door ;
 Lest while I kneel on holy ground
 I mock my God with empty sound.

Know you not, O man, that you owe to God every day the first-fruits of your heart and tongue?
 —*On Psalm cxviii.*

God calls whom it pleases him, and whom he calls he makes pious.—*On Luke vii.*

SEEING GOD.

He who is unwilling to see God cannot see him. God is not seen in place, but in a pure heart; nor is God sought with corporeal eyes, nor is he circumscribed by sight, nor grasped by touch; nor is he heard in audible speech, nor perceived by sensible approach.

CO-OPERATION OF THE HUMAN WILL AND THE
DIVINE.

The result of Christ's work in us is to make that which is good to seem good to us; for whom he pities he also calls. And so he who follows Christ, when asked why he wished to be a Christian, can answer—"It seemed good to me." When, however, he says this, he does not deny that it was so ordered because it seemed good to God, for it is by God that the will of man is prepared. For it is of the grace of God that God is honoured by the saint.—*On Luke i.*

HYMN XI.

TO THE TRINITY.

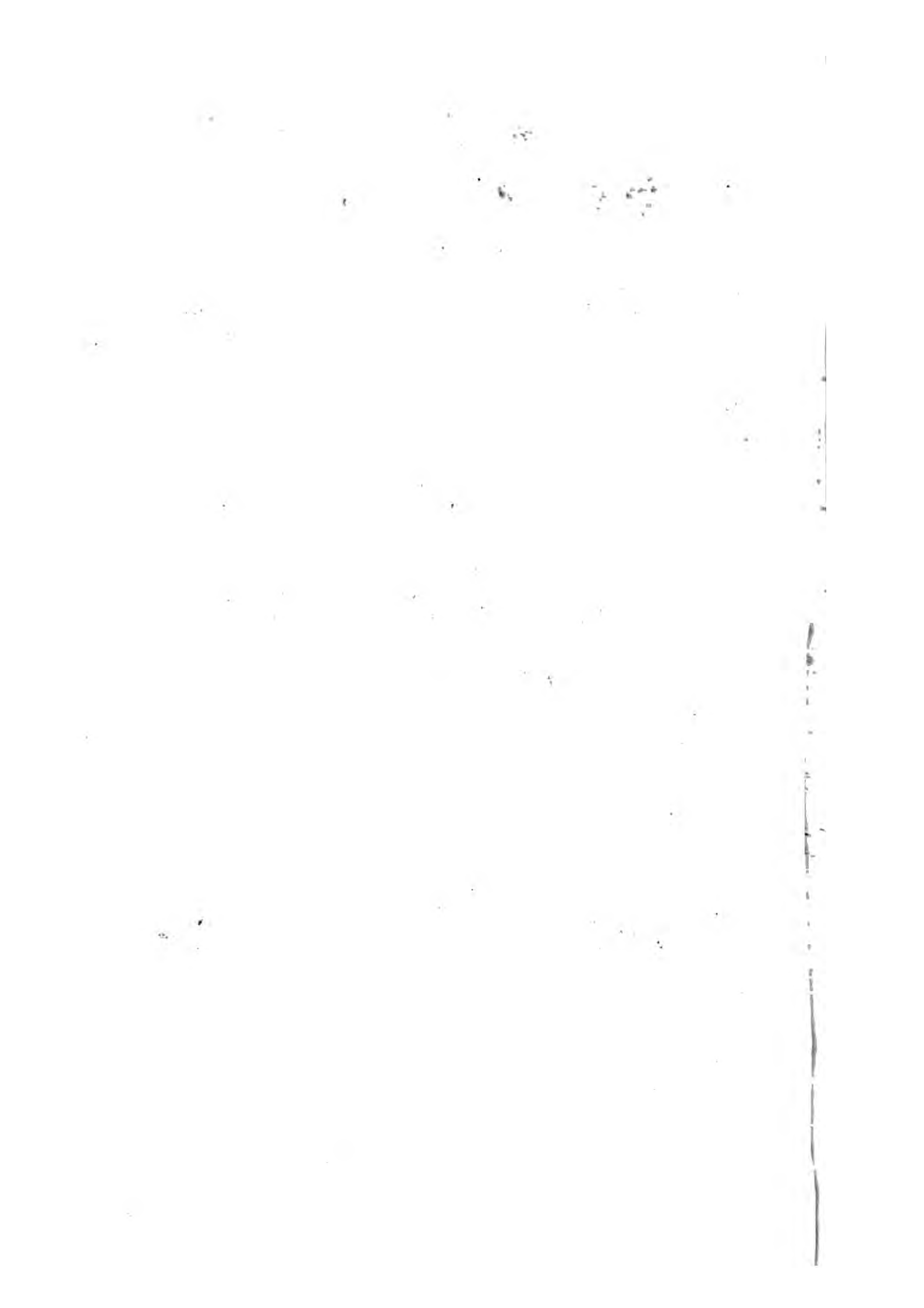
Hail, holy Light, blest Trinity,
Supreme and glorious Unity!
The flaming sun has now withdrawn,
Shed o'er our hearts thy rays;
To Thee our hymn shall rise at dawn,
At eventide our praise.
And, while eternal ages roll,
Our suppliant voice shall Thee extol.



THE HOMELY PREACHER:

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO.







THE HOMELY PREACHER: .

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO.

BEFORE the art of “stealing a thought and clipping it round the edge” had reached its present perfection; in the days when authors were more studious of displaying their erudition than affecting originality, and a false taste made them garnish their compositions with scraps of learned quotation; Latin sentences headed with, “as St Augustine saith,” did not rarely occur in sermons.

The faithful, no doubt, were greatly edified and refreshed by the mouthing of the Latin of the Father, and it is to be hoped they were still more so by the translation into vernacular speech of his quaint golden sayings, stuck on the thorns of scholastic theology, through which shepherds not a few delighted to lead their flocks.

Indeed, few authors are better adapted for quotation. The writings of Augustine are auriferous to an uncommon degree, and have attracted swarms of diggers—philosophical, theological, psychological, and pietistic; for the precious metal not only is held in suspension by the full-flowing stream of language, or is detected sparkling in minute grains amid much that is mere sand, but is found abundantly in solid nuggets. Inter-

scattered through the ten folio volumes filled by the Benedictine edition of his works, are many sentences of compressed wisdom, and many pithy, profound, and pious sayings—to adopt a metaphor of his own—strung like pearls on the links of a golden chain of argumentation.

None of the ancient church Fathers affected his own times more, or transmitted more influence to future ages. He has attracted towards him men of the most opposite tendencies; and his authority has been claimed for opinions the most conflicting. Mr Maurice tells us that he finds his gospel in Augustine; and Mr Kingsley, who, in his “Two Years Ago,” and elsewhere, publishes a gospel very much according to Maurice, in the close of his “Hypatia” introduces to us the venerable Bishop of Hippo preaching to a congregation of rude soldiers, much in the manner of the author of “Village Sermons.” On the other hand, Dr Pusey, who, in his preface to the Confessions, in the “Oxford Library of the Fathers,” tells us that catholic antiquity, rightly and devotionally studied, is calculated to satisfy the cravings of earnest souls, and “to provide a haven for those weary of modern questionings,” recommends Augustine as one in whom the stream of catholic truth flowed strong and deep, although there floated on its surface straws and sticks of predestinarianism and other idiosyncrasies of opinion.

His writings were carefully preserved by the Church; but the truths they contained remained for a long time dry and unproductive as wheat

in a mummy's hand. His sayings were read, admired, and classified by the Dryasdust theologians of the middle ages, of the ninth century in particular. At last they became living germs of doctrine, thought, and action, in the souls of Luther, Calvin, and Jansenius. Although, however, both Luther and Calvin had closely studied the theology of this Father, and were much indebted to it, it is only Jansenius and his followers that can, with any propriety, be called Augustinians. His book, published after his death, at which he had worked for twenty years, was entitled "Augustinus," and was professedly an account of the opinions of this Father. Augustine, thus evoked from the shades by Jansenius, was in the seventeenth century nearly as formidable to Jesuits as he had been, alive, to Donatists, Pelagians, and Manicheans; not alone by the strength of his single arm, but by rousing and influencing, among others of name and worth, such spirits as Blaise Pascal, Anthony Arnauld, Nicole, and Quesnel. In his own day, he was the great champion of orthodoxy, and the antagonist of separatists and heretics; for his love of truth made him war with falsehood to the knife, and his love of peace made him labour vigorously to put down the divisions that were distracting the Church. The work he did required one specially fitted for it, and in looking at the successive stages of his history, and tracing the course of his mental development, through those dark and stormy phases which preceded the strong and serene faith of the meridian, prime, and closing years of his life,

we see Augustine training for the post which he so long and so bravely filled.

Aurelius Augustinus was born on 13th of November, A.D. 354, as Tagaste, the modern Tajelt, an obscure village in Numidia.

His father, Patricius, was a pagan, but towards the close of his life became a catechumen, and died in the bosom of the Church. His mother, Monica, of whom, in the "Confessions," we have such touching notices, was a woman of deep piety, who, like a guardian angel, watched and wept over her gifted, though abandoned, boy, till she saw the water of baptism sprinkled on his brow, where her tears had oft fallen.

Augustine himself, in his "Confessions,"—our chief source of information—has graphically sketched his boyhood, with many a penitential sigh, many a quaint remark, and many a stroke of quiet satire. Amid all his wanderings, the glimpse that he got by his mother's knee of the Star of Bethlehem never faded entirely from his view, and at last, after many a cloud and tempest, it shone full and clear upon him, and guided his "sea-sick weary bark" to the haven of faith and rest. By his own account, he was an idle, play-loving boy, and heartily hated every subject that required application. Greek was his especial aversion; but he luxuriated in the classics of the Latin, his vernacular tongue, particularly in the fables of the poets, which inflamed at once his imagination and his passions. He was disobedient to his masters and parents, though, as he himself confesses on his

knees, he had a nervous dread of whipping, for he tells us that when a boy he used to pray to God that he might not be beaten at school. Quick, impulsive, and imaginative, his religious feelings were at this period strong, and once, when he thought himself dying, he implored his mother to have him baptised. The rite, however, was not performed.

In the schoolboy we see the future rhetorician and preacher in embryo ; for he tells us that his recitation of Juno's words of wrath, because Italy could not drive from her shores the King of the Trojans, drew from the listeners great applause, on account of the deep passion and dignity wherewith he personated the great Queen of Heaven. He had gone to Madaura, a neighbouring city, to study literature, whence he returned to Tagaste, in his sixteenth year, with the view of being sent to Carthage. At this period he was ambitious, yet wild and dissolute. The robbing of a pear-tree, which he relates, with shame and sorrow, as one of his juvenile escapades, will not of itself be regarded as proof of any uncommon degree of depravity. But other circumstances which he records, with all allowance for the prevailing morals of a semi-pagan community, and the sombre shade of penitence in which the sins of his boyhood are set in his "Confessions," speak of a precocity of vice and licentiousness.

At the early age of seventeen, he is cast on the great world of Carthage, where he frequented the theatres, kept a mistress, and studied rhetoric ; and, but for his self-respect, and the ambition which he

cherished of becoming a great orator, he would have drunk to the dregs the cup of Circe, and been what the vice and dissipation of a large city have made many a youth. The Carthaginian students were, however, too much of mere roysterers and blackguards to suit altogether the taste of Augustine, and, although he cultivated their society, and boasted among them of wickedness of which he had not been guilty, he would not share in the riotous violence and outrage which they practised.

For about two years he continued wooing pleasure and eloquence in Carthage, till he reached his nineteenth year, which formed a memorable epoch in his life. In the ordinary course of his studies in the great master of Roman eloquence, he came on the book "Hortensius," which contains an exhortation to the study of philosophy. The effect of that book upon him will be best told in his own words: "That book turned to Thee, O God, my heart, my prayers, and changed my desires and aims. Every vain hope sank into insignificance, and, with incredible ardour of soul, I desired the immortality of wisdom, and had begun to rise and return to Thee."

Up to this time he had panted for renown. To shine in the Forum, to dazzle by the coruscations of his eloquence, and thus to win for himself riches and honours—this had been the object of his ambition. But Cicero dashes his dream aside, and discovers to him a fairer and nobler ideal. He had worshipped *Fame*, but he had now found out a grander and more glorious divinity. He becomes

the devotee of *Truth*, and is determined not to pause, so long as he is among those who gaze on her temple from afar, or linger around its portals, but will press on till he becomes an adorer in her inmost shrine, and the hierophant of her mysteries. It is not without reason that he regards himself as having begun from this time to ascend; for the love of truth is immeasurably nobler than the love of fame. He believes that truth exists, and may be found; and, though he has many a pained step yet to take on the burning marl ere he finds what he seeks, he has already planted one foot on the great altar stair that slopes upward from sin and selfishness to God. Truth is to be found; but *where?* Cicero had kindled this ardour for truth, but could not guide him to it; and Augustine soon turned from his eloquent pages, because he found not there what realised his ideal, or satisfied the cravings of his heart. The saintly Monica was near him, to breathe to him with loving lips, and in her pious life, a sacred name which he had not quite forgot, and with which he had been taught to regard *truth* as inseparably wedded. That *name* he found not in Cicero, and this alone damped him. "For this name of my Saviour my tender heart had drunk with my mother's milk, and deeply treasured, and I could not be completely captivated by anything that wanted His name, however learned, polished, or *true*." Accordingly he tried the Bible, but soon turned from it in disappointment. With the grand periods of Cicero ringing in his ears, and his taste formed according

to the turgid and affected style of the times, the Scriptures seemed to him mean and poor. He was not prepared yet to find truth wearing a garb so homely, and an aspect so mysterious, as the Bible presented. Some one has said, "Philosophy speaks the language of the gods, and religion that of men." Such seemed to Augustine the difference between the writings that had made him a seeker of wisdom and the Bible ; and he was yet in no mood to descend from Olympus to earth, and soon cast the Scriptures aside.

The state of his mind at this stage explains the next step which he took. His first essay to discover truth was unsuccessful, yet he held to his conviction that it was discoverable. He was dissatisfied with the Bible, which had completely disappointed his expectations ; he was groaning under the bondage of passion, whose chain his aspiring spirit dragged heavily along ; he believed that knowledge could be obtained that would satisfy his reason, and would not submit to the demand of the Church to substitute an unintelligent and unjudging faith instead. With all its absurdity, Manichæism was well fitted to captivate and ensnare him, for it promised all which he craved. It echoed his dissatisfaction with Scripture, for it rejected much as corrupt, both in the Old and New Testaments. But it would have had little power to fascinate him had it not promised to make truth plain to his reason, requiring him to believe nothing on authority, but engaging to demonstrate and prove everything. To a youth of nineteen,

panting for truth, and inflated with all the conceit and confidence in his own powers characteristic of budding manhood, this was irresistible. Augustine has got glimpses of "*the higher criticism*" which, by the touchstone of reason, discriminates between the true and the false in Scripture; he will rid himself conclusively of the leading-strings of authority, and, leaving faith and fable for old women, will receive nothing that he does not know or cannot prove. In short, he asserts his manhood by becoming a Manichee. But there was another cause which operated with no less power in drawing him into the Manichean snare—a cause connected with what to Augustine became the great, all-absorbing question which tortured him until he settled it—what is the origin of evil? Indeed, the Manichean system, comprehensively considered, is just an attempt to answer this question. With Augustine this was not a matter of mere curious speculation; for the conflict between sensuality and reason, by which he was internally torn, made him seek for deliverance, and attempt speculatively to account for that which fettered, embittered, and cursed his soaring, truth-loving soul. Manes, or Mani, the founder of the Manichean system, proclaimed himself the Paraclete promised by Jesus Christ to teach the whole truth; but his system is in reality a fusion of Buddhism with the philosophy of Zoroaster, whose fellow-countryman he was, deriving from Christianity nothing but names and phrases. The Ahriman, or evil principle of the Persian sage, he identified with matter, ascrib-

ing to it an independent existence ; and Ormuz, or the good principle, he identified with spirit, although spirit with him was only a more refined matter. By the mixture of the two, by an eruption of the world of darkness into the world of light, by the blending of portions of the Deity with portions of evil Matter, the world is formed. The human soul is a part of the Divinity imprisoned in evil Matter. Here then was an explanation of the struggle he felt which did not grate on his pride, nor oblige him to curb his vicious indulgences. For, according to it, he could say, I am unfortunate but not culpable, because my breast is merely the theatre on which the two powers of light and darkness, good and evil, contend ; or, rather, it is the good deity who is so unfortunate as to have his substance swallowed up by the evil, and cannot extricate himself without a contest. With this shallow explanation, which he afterwards demolished with such pitiless logic and scornful mockery, he was for the present content. One very palpable advantage it has,—it abolishes conscience altogether, and dispenses with the necessity or even possibility of self-reproach. It finds no more difficulty with the origin of evil than with that of good ; because both alike are underived, self-existent, eternal. There is an absolute evil as there is an absolute good. For a time he was very active and successful in unsettling the faith of others, scoffing at the scripture representation of God, as if it ascribed bodily parts to Him, and saying sharp and witty things about the patriarchs

having many wives. Poor Monica, horrified beyond measure, redoubled her tears and prayers, and entreated a bishop to reason with her deluded son, and convince him of his errors. The good man, who in his youth had been a Manichee, wisely refused, shrewdly telling her that the best thing that could be done was to let him alone, and that, when the novelty of the thing had worn off, the youth would of himself discover the absurdity and falsehood of the opinions he had adopted. It fell out as the good bishop prophesied, although it was nine years ere he shook himself clear of the Manicheans. Although from his nineteenth to his twenty-eighth year he was connected with them, he was for the greater part of that time inwardly harassed with questions to which they could give no answer; and he soon began to be disgusted with many of their puerilities and absurdities, and to suspect that he had been deceived.

His thirst for knowledge was unabated, and he drank at every stream. His intellect was of the highest order. The most intricate and difficult subjects of study he mastered almost with the ease of intuition. When scarce twenty, the Categories of Aristotle fell in his way, and, without the aid of a master, he at once comprehended them. It was the same with music, arithmetic, geometry, logic, and rhetoric; and he had no idea that these studies were attended with any difficulty, till he began to teach them to others, to the most studious and talented of whom he found they cost much labour. Astrology engaged his attention; and he clung

long and fondly to the belief that the stars influenced the affairs of men, and that the secrets of fate were written in mystic characters on the sky. About the beginning of this period he spent a short time at Tagaste, his native town, teaching grammar. Here the death of a young man, to whom he was tenderly attached, plunged him into the deepest sorrow. The friendships of Augustine were close and lasting, and showed how strongly he could love and be beloved. His heart was of womanly tenderness, and his life afforded many proofs of that capability of high and pure friendship which belongs only to the noblest souls.

His grief at the loss of his friend was frantic. "I bore about," he says, "a shattered and bleeding soul, that could nowhere find rest. Not in pleasant groves, not in games and songs, neither in perfumed halls nor sumptuous entertainments, nor in the luxury of couch and bed, not even in books or poems, could it repose. All was ghastly, even light itself; all that was not *he* was hideous and odious, except groaning and tears. These alone yielded a slight relief."

Weary of life, and yet afraid of death, he tore himself from Tagaste, where it was impossible to forget him in whom he had garnered up his affections. He returned to Carthage. The abrupt termination of this friendship deeply influenced him, and the tears he shed yielded a rich harvest of thought, though the void made in his heart was filled by other friendships—its craving for sympathy was gratified in companionship with con-

genial minds. But Augustine's mind is of that kind which must find a reason for everything. He has found that life without love is not worth having, and that it is from love that all our enjoyments spring. He must account speculatively for this; and he asks, What is it in any object which attracts our *love*? He ponders the question, and the answer he gives is, It is the lovely, the beautiful. This leads him to speculate on the beautiful, a theme congenial to his youth, and according with his situation and studies. Rhetoric, by which he lived, brought him into constant and familiar contact with all that was most sublime and beautiful in the Latin muses of poetry and eloquence. The sky of Carthage was clear: it had pleasant groves and glancing fountains; it was not wanting in monuments of sculpture, painting, and architecture; the blue wave of the Mediterranean laughingly rushed to kiss the warm Carthaginian shore; there were sparkling eyes, and fair faces, and graceful forms; and bright in the clear midnight heaven were its golden galaxies, on which Augustine gazed, a lonely and thoughtful watcher. He feasted on beauty; he searched through creation for the beautiful; he found it everywhere, and reared for himself a palace, in which his soul luxuriated, amid forms of loveliness gathered from nature and art. The result was the writing of a treatise on æsthetics, dedicated to Hierius, a Roman orator. It was composed, he tells us, when he was about twenty-six or twenty-seven; but was lost, he knew not how, before he wrote

his "Confessions." This work, the loss of which was regretted by Lord Jeffrey, was entitled "De Pulchro et Apto"—the beautiful and the congruous, or the fair and fit—and resolved beauty into unity and adaptation. Where there is unity, or where there is a mutual correspondence between objects, there is beauty. In unity, the chief source of the beautiful, Augustine thought he found the explanation of the true and good.

These speculations on beauty we reckon not only significant of his mental state, but as auxiliary means of his deliverance from Manichæism, as we shall by and by see. Although the pursuits we have mentioned above kept him from brooding exclusively over those deeper questions that led to his adoption of the Manichean creed, yet, unsettled as he was, and becoming more and more suspicious of it, although unwilling to publish his doubts, or even to avow them to himself, he at last procured admission into the inner circle of the elect, to whom alone the esoteric doctrines were communicated. It was promised that the veil under which truth had been obscured should be withdrawn, and that he should look upon her face to face; but he discovered that the inner shrine into which he had been conducted was empty; and, instead of responses to his eager questionings, only the echoes of his own voice came back in tantalizing mockery from the pretended oracle. Unable to reply to him, the Carthaginian Manichees referred him to Faustus, one of the most celebrated of their teachers. Augustine soon took his measure; he

found him glib and fluent, but possessed of little literary and no scientific knowledge ; and, though he spoke neatly and persuasively, had really nothing to say which Augustine had not heard from others of the sect. Manes' system attempted to explain everything, physics among the rest ; and being utterly ignorant of science, his writings were full of arrant nonsense and falsehood. This was enough to convince Augustine, who was thoroughly conversant with the scientific knowledge of his day, that Manichæism was a cheat ; for he could not but feel that it was fatal to the pretensions of one who claimed the special inspiration of heaven to fall into such absurdities and falsehoods. He had been promised knowledge, and had waited patiently for nine years ; but after all, he was asked to believe what he *knew* to be false and absurd. Instead of the firm ground on which he had hoped to stand, he found himself in a quaking morass, and at every step becoming more perplexed, and sinking deeper and deeper in the mire of sensuality. He still clung to Manichæism with a despairing hold, because he had nothing to substitute for it ; but, sick at heart, and disgusted with the disorderly conduct of the students of Carthage, he was induced to set out for Rome. At Rome he first consorted with the Manicheans, wishing still to lay the blame of his sin, not on himself, but on the evil principle, and preferring the Manichean conception of God as a lucid mass, infinite on all its sides except one, on which it was bounded by the power of darkness, to that which he falsely thought was held by the

Catholic Church, in which corporeal parts were assigned to the Deity. He was beginning, however, to be inclined to believe that the only landing-place for the philosopher was scepticism. Manichæism had tainted him deeply. It materialized his conceptions so much, that he had no idea of a spiritual substance. He believed "evil to be some kind of a substance, and to have its own foul and hideous bulk;" and he could not allow himself to believe that evil, such as he conceived it, came from God. Yet the more he reflected on this substance, which was evil—absolutely, eternally, irrecoverably evil—the more hideous must it have appeared, and the more anxious must he have been to get rid of this horrible incubus, and to prove himself that no such thing existed.

Disappointed with Rome, he accepted an invitation to teach rhetoric at Milan, and, attracted by the eloquence of the good Bishop Ambrose, whose fame had reached him at Rome, he became a hearer, at first caring only for the preacher's manner of speaking, and having no idea of learning the truth at the lips of a Church teacher. By and by, as he listened, he discovered that much more could be said in favour of the Scriptures than he thought; and, with increasing interest, day by day, he heard many difficulties and objections disposed of. Tired of Manichæism, it had yet penetrated so completely into his mind, and so coloured all his conceptions, that it required an effort to throw it off. He bent himself, therefore, with all his might, to disprove it. "Could I," he

says, "once have conceived a spiritual substance, all their strongholds had been beaten down and cast out of my mind ; but I could not." He compared the theories of philosophers regarding the world, with that of Manes, and found them far more probable. Accordingly he decided that Manichæism was to be given up ; and, although now cast adrift on a sea of doubt, and despairing of finding truth, he yet came to the resolution of becoming a catechumen in the Christian Church, till he should know what course to steer. This step, which Augustine took in his twenty-ninth year, showed that the Church was the haven in which he wished to anchor. Along with him at Milan, where his friends Alypius and Nebridius, and his mother Monica, who heard with placid delight that he was no longer a heretic, and doubted not to see him, in answer to her prayers, a firm believer. His misconceptions of catholic doctrine gradually melted away, and, under Ambrose's teaching, he came to understand many passages of Scripture which seemed before absurd. He felt shame and resentment at having been the dupe of Manichean misrepresentations and fables ; and would fain have unbosomed himself to the bishop, whose numerous engagements, however, precluded the possibility of such a lengthened conference as would have been of any service. Although truth had been the chief object of his pursuits since his nineteenth year, he had entertained schemes of worldly advancement, and especially of an advantageous marriage. To fur-

ther this last object, he put away the concubine with whom he had lived twelve years, and who was mother of his son Adeodatus, born when Augustine was but eighteen years of age. His heart was lacerated by his separation, and sickened with disappointment at the frustration of his plans, for the wished-for marriage and aggrandisement came not, and he was mortified at the proof he gave of the power of sensuality over him, by entering a second time into concubinage. His wretchedness was aggravated by terror of death and judgment, and the old question of good and evil occupied his mind more deeply than ever it had done.

Before quitting Carthage, he had been staggered by an argument of his friend Nebridius, which struck him now with such power, that he saw the Manichean doctrine to be untenable. It is briefly this: What harm would the evil principle have done to the good, provided the latter had refused to contend with it? If it is answered, no harm, then there is no reason for fighting with it, especially since in the contest portions of the Deity are enthralled and imprisoned, some of them never to be extricated. If they should say that the Deity would suffer some harm if he refused to fight with the powers of darkness, then the Deity was asserted to be corruptible; which was false and execrable. Augustine saw clearly that, in shifting the authorship of evil from man's free-will, the Manichees landed themselves in this inevitable consequence, that the substance of the

Deity suffered injury; for, according to their hypothesis, all that he could do at last was to extricate those portions of his essence that were imprisoned in darkness, and miserably treated; and it was doubtful if even he could effect that. Disguise or deny it, then, as the Manichees did, however much, it followed irresistibly from their hypothesis that the substance of the good principle might be injured and corrupted,—a conclusion from which the soul of Augustine revolted. Accordingly he tried how far the other hypothesis of free-will would account for the origin of evil. He reasoned,—I am as sure as I live that I have a will, and I am almost certain that all my volitions proceed from myself. If so, then the evil that I do proceeds from my will, and what I suffer is the punishment of what I do. But then, God, who is goodness, made me; how then came I to will evil, and be punished for it? Who is the author of this evil in me? The devil, it is answered. But whence that same devil? Whence came that evil will in him by which from a good angel he became a devil?—questions these which vex peasants and philosophers, which very few can in any satisfactory way dispose of, and which for the time completely nonplussed St. Augustine. He was plunged into the deepest distress; for he could find no answer to the question, Whence is evil? In this state of mind, the Platonic philosophy engaged his attention, and kindled in him, as he says himself, an incredible ardour. It formed to him a “transition point from scepticism to the

clearly-developed consciousness of objective truth; it effected the spiritualisation of his thoughts, which had by means of Manichæism become habituated to sensible images, and led him from dualism to a consistent monarchism." Platonism was the ladder by which he ascended to Christianity. His great obstacle was his gross materialistic ideas of God and of evil. To him they were both not only entities, but material entities. It was Plato that taught him first to conceive of a spiritual substance; for Manichæism had made him apprehend God with the imagination rather than with the intellect. He was haunted by two phantoms—one a bright, luminous, ethereal substance which he called God; another a mass of hideous, hellish darkness pushing its way into the light—this was the evil principle, the devil, or whatever it might be called. Both of these Plato helped to dissipate. Augustine held it to be given in the very idea of God, that he was incorruptible, uninjurable, unchangeable; to this he clung, determined to oppose all that contradicted it, and seeking by it to banish his Manichean phantoms. But he says, "being scarce put off, in a twinkling they gathered thick about me, flew against my face, and beclouded it."

Plato told him of a Word that was in the beginning with God, a light that lighteth every man that comes into the world; and a glimpse of the *spiritual* for the first time was obtained by Augustine. Formerly he could think of nothing except under a corporeal form—nothing that was not

extended in space seemed to be really existent. He turned his gaze into his soul, and saw there what was not material. He beheld in it the witness of a light different from that of the sun; his eyes saw the distant gleam of that living Spirit who is truth, love, and eternity; and from far above him a voice was heard, in reply to his inquiring soul, saying, "I Am that I Am."

He discovered the *Being of beings*, the self-existent, to be an incorporeal spirit; he saw that all things exist because they are from that Being, and that they have no independent self-existence, because they are not what He is. The solution of the awful mystery of good and evil is now possible. He who supremely is, alone is supremely good and incorruptible: that which has a dependent existence is good, but, because not absolutely good, may be corrupted, and could not be corrupted unless it were good. Being is derived from the Supreme Being, and is therefore good; whatever is, is therefore good. The conclusion is, that evil is non-being. To suppose that things may be deprived of all the good they have, and yet exist, is absurd. There can, therefore, Augustine argued, be no substance which is absolutely evil; and the evil whose nature and origin he sought to discover is and can be no substance. Evil is only a privation of good. Thus that horrible phantasm of the Manichees was logically annihilated, fairly reasoned out of God's universe. He saw sunshine now break over the world. He had got out of that fiendish state of mind which saw the devil

everywhere, and quarrelled with almost everything. He saw that it was a sign of utter morbidity of mind to be displeased with God's creation, for all was good—very good. He did not go the length of discovering that all was divine—your scoundrel as well as your saint—as Theodore Parker and others have done, and that sin was the necessary development of man's nature. This was too shallow a theory for Augustine's profound and earnest mind. He held fast to the eternal and unalterable distinction between good and evil. Sin never in his eyes was anything but damnable. But he became convinced that it was a morbid and fiendish state of mind that led him and others to find fault with the universe, and that there was harmony and beauty where the Manichees saw only discord and deformity. What seemed incongruous in itself, or in relation to something else, when viewed in reference to the universe as a whole, or to some other part of it, was harmonious. As he himself says, the dark colours of the picture are as necessary as the *light*. The wail of woe and the carol of joy, the demon and the angel, are all needed to complete the harmony of the universe. To this result his speculations on æsthetics had helped to bring him. Applying to "the good" his theory of the beautiful, he saw in the world unity, and discovered congruity between its several parts, and therefore rejoiced in it as good.

We cannot suppose that the influence of his gloomy Manichean creed had been equally powerful on him at all times during its nine years' pos-

session of him. But its effect must have been hideous at times ; for, when he looked through Manichean eyes, nature seemed a hateful, repulsive jumble, and the movements of the universe a demons' dance, loathsome and disgusting. Augustine was like "the ancient mariner," who, when "all alone on a wide, wide sea," "and never a soul took pity on his soul in agony," and the "very deep around him did rot," looked down with loathing and disgust on the seething, crawling waters, where he saw "a million million slimy things live on from day to day ;" and like him, too, when "a spring of love burst from his heart, and he blessed them unaware,"—on which the charm was broken, and the enchanted ship was wafted homewards. And when Augustine looked on creation as the work of God, and all good, the Manichean spell was dissolved, the disease of his mind was shown to have begun to abate, and from that moment he drifted away from the gloomy "land of mist and snow ;" for,

" He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things, both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The religious idealism and the Neo-Platonic conceptions he had imbibed prepared him for receiving Christianity, although much severe discipline was needed to give him the child's heart, declared by the highest authority, and demonstrated by experience, to be indispensable. He is satisfied, however, that he has found in Plato the

truth after which, since his nineteenth year, he has been longing, panting, and striving.

But he is convinced, also, that the truth which philosophy has taught him must be that contained in the sacred records. He reads, and thinks he finds in them the Platonic doctrines ; and, in addition, he discovers his own experience of inward conflict there shadowed forth. What the Bible contains comes into contact with his life and heart, while the lofty ideals of philosophy " were in a transcendental region, from which to bring them down was impossible."

By degrees he saw that the Bible had much more to tell him than his Platonic masters, of whose instructions at first it seemed only an echo ; by degrees, from amid the haze of Platonic ideas, the living truth dawned on his sight, and the splendid but unreal visions which had charmed him before retreated into shadow. He had been undergoing salutary moral and spiritual discipline. Sorrow, disappointment, and sin made him weary and heavy laden. Speculative doubts had now given way, and uppermost in his mind was the thought of that galling chain, which he had worn till it had festered his soul, and tortured with excruciating agony. He saw that he had been the victim of self-deception, for he had deluded himself with the idea that he could, whenever he found truth, snap as under the ties which bound him to earthliness and sensuality, persuading himself that they were but gossamer threads. Conscience upbraided him, and he asked, " Where art

thou now, my tongue? Thou saidst, that for **an** uncertain truth thou wouldst not cast off the **bag-**gage of vanity. Now it is certain, and yet **the** burden still oppresses thee."

The account of some who had renounced the world's pomps and vanities at once brought on a crisis. Sitting with his friend, who had heard the recital too, he started up, saying, "What ails us? What is it? What did you hear? The unlearned start up and take the kingdom by force, while we, with our learning, wallow in flesh and blood." His tones, his gestures, and his face, showed the intensest emotion, and Alypius looked on in silent wonderment. Augustine rushed into the garden that adjoined the house, followed by Alypius. He tried, by one strong, determined effort of will, to break his chain. He struggled to be free; his soul dashed against the bars of her prison, only to fall down exhausted and bleeding by the effort. His agony and misery found vent in tears; and, prostrated by a sense of utter helplessness, he fell on his knees and cried, "How long—how long? To-morrow and to-morrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?" A child's voice is heard from a neighbouring house, singing, "Tolle lege—tolle lege!" ("Take and read—take and read!") Checking his tears, he arose, and going within, took up Paul's Epistles. His eye fell on the words in the close of the Epistle to the Romans: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, **not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,**

and make no provision for the flesh." The words met his case ; they sounded in his ear like a voice from heaven, seconding the voice of conscience in drowning the clamours of the flesh, and pointing to a divine helper to strengthen his struggling will to make the grand resolve. Animated by the divine command, and nerved by a power not his own, the prodigal son sinks into his Father's arms, and the great crisis is over. Peace entered his troubled bosom ; the storm was hushed, the clouds vanished, and sunlight flooded his soul and lit up his face with a tranquil joy. Alypius took the book from the hand of Augustine, and read the passage and what followed, till he came to " Him that is weak in the faith receive ye ;" and the gentler, weaker Alypius, who with almost womanly confiding, had clung to the stronger arm of Augustine, for many a year grasps it still, and they enter together the haven of rest. Their joy is not yet full, till another heart shares it. Gladness, exultation, triumph, praise, are the words by which Augustine describes the emotions of his mother's heart, when she heard from his own and Alypius' lips the joyful tidings. Long had she sown in tears, but her harvest of gladness came. The bitterness of the cup she had drained was all forgot in the ecstasy of grasping the sparkling pearl of unearthly joy, which He who had put into her hand that chalice of sorrow had hid at the bottom beneath the wormwood draught.

Augustine determined at once to give up the profession of rhetoric, of which he speaks often in

contemptuous terms, as inconsistent with his new views and his devotion to higher objects. But, unwilling to draw particular attention to himself, he continued to teach until the vintage vacation, which was at hand; and when he announced his resignation to the Milanese, assigned as the cause only a pain in his chest from which he had been suffering for some time, and which of itself would have compelled him for a time to relinquish his laborious duties. Of his abandonment of secular pursuits, he himself beautifully says, "When my sails were spread for the Syrens' isle, I threw all overboard, and moored a shattered and leaking vessel in the longed-for haven."

When the vacation came, he retired to the country-seat of his friend Verecundus. Here, in the congenial society of his mother and his young friends, the days flew pleasantly but not idly by. Filled with the sad yet sweet emotions of penitence, Augustine was not the man to consume his time in the luxurious indolence of raptures and tears. The perils and conflicts through which he had passed made him at once bestir himself to seek to guide and save others. His hair-breadth escape from scepticism was fresh in his mind, and he lost no time in warning others of the precipice from whose perilous edge he had looked into the gulf of blank nothingness and despair that yawned below, but from which he had been dragged away ere his brain had become dizzy, or the horrible fascination of its fathomless gloom had made him leap into it. Accordingly, the first thing he did was

to commit to writing three disputations against the Academic sceptics—the substance of a *viva voce* discussion. But, as might be expected, he was not long in entering the lists against the Manichees, with whom, as charlatans and soul-destroyers, he maintained a life-long fight. He attacked them in the two books “De Ordine,” which he wrote at this time, and in which he developed the Platonic idea of sin as privation, non-being, in opposition to the Manichean doctrine of an evil substance. In this period, also, he composed his soliloquies, consisting of two books, in one of which he treated of the character of the true seeker of wisdom, and in the other discussed the immortality of the soul ; and on his birth-day he began the treatise on “The Blessed Life,” and finished it in three days’ discussion.

This amazing literary activity did not prevent him from devoting much time to the instruction of his young friends, maturing his own views by study and research, or communing with his heart and his God in prospect of admission to the Church. For he tells us that he usually spent half the night in earnest study and penitential prayer. Augustine worked with ease, and delighted in work ; yet had he not brought soul-consuming zeal and patient self-denial to the mission, for which he was so signally fitted, and which he so ably discharged, his almost intuitive quickness of apprehension, his insatiable love of speculations, his power of observation, his varied accomplishments, his rich experiences, and his enjoyment of literary labour, could

not have made him the noble, tireless, effective worker that he became henceforth to the end of his days. Returning to Milan, and having resided for some time in the lodges adjoining the cathedral, where the candidates for baptism lived, that they might devote their whole time to the exercises and instructions of religion, Augustine, along with his friend Alypius and his son Adeodatus, were baptised by the venerable Ambrose in the cathedral church of Milan. This event took place on the 25th of April, A.D. 387, when Augustine was in his thirty-third year.

The period of Augustine's life that we have just reviewed at some length—though as rapidly as seemed consistent with a clearly defined view of the successive phases of his inner history, and their connection with each other—attracts and arrests us, because, apart from its psychological importance, the spectacle of a soul rising through darkness, conflicts, and shadows, into the calm empyrean of reality and faith, has a deep and dramatic interest to earnest minds, who must grapple still with the same questions that demanded solution from Augustine—"the riddle of the painful earth," the mystery of good and evil, the claims and the conflicts of reason and faith. But, besides, this part of his life gives us the key to his doctrines, and explains his subsequent history. For all Augustine's opinions grew out of his life: each truth that he taught was won by conflict, and based on the most earnest conviction. We have seen already that no sooner had he got

rid of the discord of a divided will and found rest, than he buckled on his armour in the interest of truth, and during a long life held the most prominent place on the orthodox side, in all the numerous controversies that raged in that turbulent period. Our account of the work he did will be as brief and condensed as possible.

Immediately after his baptism, Augustine was in the field again against the Manichees. He exposed their pretensions to continence and sanctity in two books—one on the morals of the Catholic Church, and one on the morals of the Manichees. In a treatise on the incorporeality of the soul, he demolished their materialism ; and in the first of three books on the freedom of the will, demonstrated the absurdity of their doctrine of evil. After finishing these compositions, which were the work of a few months, he quitted Milan, intending to return to Africa. Monica, who accompanied him, died on the way, at Ostia, to the great grief of Augustine. Arriving at Tagaste in the year A.D. 388, he sold his patrimony, gave largely to the poor, and retired on the remainder for three years, which he spent in solitary study, and in writing his treatises "On the True Religion," "On the Master," to show that the only teacher of truth is God, and "On the Book of Genesis," against the Manichean doctrine of the creation.

At the end of this period, A.D. 391, he was ordained Presbyter by Valerius, Bishop of Hippo. Four years were spent in this capacity, during which his assiduity in the discharge of his more

strictly ecclesiastical duties did not interfere with the exercise of his pen ; and during this time was produced one of the most important of his short treatises — “ De Utilitate Credendi.” — (“ On the Use of Belief.”) The purpose of this tractate is to adjust the limits and show the harmony of reason and faith, and prove that we must believe before we know, and believe in order to know. In this small work may be found the elements of all that has been written so often on the subject, and Augustine disposes of his antagonists as conclusively as Rogers has done with their modern representatives. He illustrates his views with many a happy metaphor and simile, though we think with nothing so fine as the graceful allegory of the modern champion of faith, in which manly beauty and piercing eyes are ascribed to Reason, and feminine gentleness and an ear of exquisite delicacy to Faith ; while Reason’s ears are closed, and on the sightless orbs of Faith the daylight pours in vain—helpless each when apart, but intended to walk hand-in-hand in love, that by day the eyes of Reason may be the guide of Faith, and by night the ear of Faith may be the guide of Reason. There is one point which Augustine develops with great clearness and force, and that is the necessity of a subjective preparation to be able to comprehend truth—a necessity which his own dear-bought experience had taught him. It would be out of place here to enumerate the theological treatises that he gave forth while a presbyter. They show, however, that he was slowly feeling his way to the

doctrines that are called Augustinian, which he exhibited in full development in the famous Pelagian controversy, at which we must by and by glance.

In A.D. 305, he was made colleague to the old and infirm Bishop Valerius, after whose death, till his own, Augustine was sole Bishop of Hippo.

Pelagius, the great heresiarch, who gave his name to the celebrated Pelagian controversy, was in many points the antithesis of Augustine. He was a British monk—a man of serious disposition and great reputed sanctity. Though superior to Augustine in erudition, his was a much shallower and less earnest nature. He had steered clear of the whirlpools of passion; he had never known any of those strong cravings after the Good, characteristic of earnest and passionate minds, and had no experience of those deep internal conflicts through which Augustine had passed. Two minds so different must necessarily come into collision on almost every point that enters into the construction of a theological system, and all the more so that Pelagius was connected more closely with the Oriental Church, and Augustine with the Western; the theology of the East being congenial, in some points, with the doctrines developed by Pelagius and his friends in the course of the controversy. Without noticing the events of this controversy, in the earlier stages of which Pelagius and his friend Celestius attempted to conceal the real question at issue, and without attempting a discussion of the many knotty points, which are debated as fiercely now as they were then, it will

better suit our present purpose at once to trace the ultimate roots of their differences to a question which belongs more to ontology than theology. At the basis of all their theological differences was a different view of the relation of the Infinite to the finite—of God to the universe. Although on this Augustine never joined issue with Palagius, nor resolved into it the points of debate between them, he had investigated it profoundly, and declares himself explicitly upon it. The idea of the absolute dependence of the creation, at every moment, on the Creator, took strong hold of his mind, and lay at the basis of his whole theology, as he saw it to be connected with the renunciation of the belief in the existence of a principle of absolute evil. We find him thus clearly enunciating it:—"The secret power of God, penetrating all things, makes to exist whatever in any way exists, or to whatever extent it exists, because without the exercise of his power, not only would it not be *such* as it is, but could not *be at all*." The idea on which, unconsciously, to all appearance, Pelagius built his doctrines, was totally different. It contemplated the universe very much as isolated from, and independent of, the Creator. The world is, according to him, a machine, exquisitely contrived indeed, and fashioned by the divine Artificer; but, when once finished and wound up, will go without divine interference, provided only the springs, weights, and wheels, are preserved from injury. This view he clearly expressed when stating the relation of the human soul to the Deity. He said

that human nature had been provided with all the powers and capacities necessary for reaching its destination, not only with physical and intellectual, but with moral powers also—for the practical exercise of all goodness—but that the application of them depends on the will of man alone, divine influence being unnecessary for this purpose, and incompatible with the exercise of free will. In opposition to this, and in complete accordance with his fundamental idea, Augustine held that even in pure seraphs and archangels, as well as in man, a constant stream of divine influence is necessary for all knowledge and all goodness; that communion with God is the source of all good—estrangement from him the source of all evil. His own representation is, that what light is to the eye God is to the soul; and, as the eye cannot see when closed, or when no light falls on it, so, without the inward revelation and communication of the divine life, man or angel can know nothing, can do nothing that is good. This divine influence, necessary to the highest and purest beings, he denominated GRACE. We find here what is asserted by Mr. Maurice, Mr. Kingsley, and others—that man can know only what is revealed to him, and that it is more correct to say that the Spirit of God taught truth to Bacon, Plato, and Newton, than that they discovered it; because all our philosophies, our sciences, our poesies, come from the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Creature faculties, according to Augustine, are therefore universally organs of

the divine ; fellowship with God is the normal state of the creature, and only while that fellowship is maintained is goodness possible. The relation of all rational beings to God being such, there could be no difficulty connected with the assertion of fallen man's dependence on supernatural aid—needed in innocence, much more so was it in depravity ; consistent with purity and perfection, it implied no violence to the constitution of man.

Here, accordingly, the combatants joined issue on two important questions—that of the Fall, and that of the Freedom of the Will ; both of which are most intimately connected with each other. The freedom of the will—not yet set aside among settled questions — engrossed a large share of attention in this controversy. Moral freedom, according to Pelagius, is a freedom of choice at each moment between good and evil. In his own words, “ We have a possibility for good or evil implanted in us by God, so to speak, a certain fruitful root which, according to the will, either blooms with the flowers of virtue, or bristles with the thorns of vice.” Or, to use another illustration, “ the will is a balance in equipoise, free to good or evil. This was the case with man from the beginning, and is now, for the sin of Adam affected his race only by example.” Augustine met this with ingenuity and effect. If the will of man is in equipoise between good and evil, this shows that evil has an effect on man which it ought not to have. Statical equilibrium is the result of the balance of opposing forces ; a needle free to move toward any one of

two magnets must be attracted equally by both. If such a liberty of indifference is natural and normal, as represented by Pelagius, there is required to produce it what is unnatural and abnormal, which is evil ; therefore this representation is untenable, for it supposes a real bondage to the power of evil. Pelagius's pretended freedom is, says Augustine, *real* bondage. But Pelagius's view does not represent man's present state any more than his original state, as Augustine found when he read off his own experience. He had not found his will to be in this state of equipoise, for the power of evil far preponderated ; so much so, that he had believed that he had in him an evil soul and a good soul, and that he was tyrannised over by a principle of evil. He had found deliverance, not by an act of unaided free-will, but by grasping the arm of a celestial helper ; his bondage had ceased at the moment of his complete surrender of himself to divine power ; and, accordingly, he concludes that it is only when man is transformed and swayed by divine influence, that his will becomes perfectly *free*. His ideal of humanity was different entirely from that of Pelagius. He believed in an original condition of purity and perfection, which had no place in the system of his antagonist, and saw in the actual condition of the human race a depth of degradation and a weight of bondage of which Pelagius had never dreamed. For, according to the latter, Adam's sin was that of a thoughtless child against a simple command suited to his infantile condition,

and intended to awaken him to the consciousness of his moral powers, and every man finds himself in the same state of innocence as Adam until they have personally sinned. Sentiments these which found expression on Pelagius's native soil in the famous homily so cleverly dissected some years ago by the *Times*, in which Lord Palmerston bids his rustic hearers depend upon it that they were all born good ; assures them that all sin is the effect of bad example and temptation, and pathetically represents the unfortunate boor pursuing his path guileless and good as Adam in Paradise, until his eye falls on a pipe and a beer-shop, and his hopes are wrecked for ever.

We suspect that neither the celebrated heresiarch, nor the illustrious Prime Minister, can have been so accurate observers of nursery phenomena, or so diligent and fortunate in their inquiries respecting the traditions of their babyhood, as Augustine, in his "Confessions," tells us he was, although, even if they had, it is probable enough that their conclusions might have been different from his. It is no extravagant supposition that Palmerston and Pelagius, in long clothes, conducted themselves very much after the fashion of St Augustine, who informs us that all he could do at first was to suck, to be pleased at what was agreeable to his flesh, and cry at what hurt him ; that then he began to smile, first asleep, then awake, then to become conscious where he was, then to try to express his wishes by throwing out his arms and legs, and, if he was not instantly obeyed, to revenge

himself on all and sundry by crying. All this, and a deal more, he has put on record as the result of his observations and inquiries, and quaintly asks us, "if crying for what would only hurt him—anger, because he was not obeyed by nurses and parents, and trying to strike them—were symptoms of goodness." His examination of infancy led him to the discovery of proofs of degradation and corruption, which he traced to the first sin of the first man—conclusions directly opposed to the views of his antagonist.

The discussion of these, however, would necessitate the attempt to crack some of the hardest of theological nuts. We accordingly must avoid it; our chief object being to show that Augustine's theology grew out of his mental history, this can be most shortly accomplished by exhibiting its general outlines, and laying bare the principles that lie at its foundation. The dialectic and systematizing character of the mind of Augustine impelled him to carry out his principles to their consequences, and to seek logical coherence between his opinions; while his antagonist and his followers, desirous of promoting the interests of morality, and intent chiefly on counteracting what appeared to them the mischievous tendencies of the Augustinian theology, did not aim at constructing a complete system. It would be obviously unfair, therefore, to charge on them all the consequences that flow from their principles; but, notwithstanding the vague expressions they used, in order to make their opinions correspond in form with church

doctrines, there can be no doubt that they denied all internal communication of divine life, and internal influence on man's will and consciousness. In their unwillingness to admit this, lay the secret of their opposition to the Augustinian creed ; for they deemed the assertion of the complete freedom and independence of the will of man of the last practical importance, and regarded the Church idea of grace as totally inconsistent with it.

This celebrated controversy raged with more or less violence throughout the whole Church long after the death of Augustine, although before that event the civil power had come to the aid of orthodoxy, and imperial edicts had combined with the logic of Augustine to crush the party of Pelagius. All his life long Augustine was in harness, writing letters and books, and exerting the influence which he possessed over the North African bishops to endeavour to root out Pelagian opinions, and all modifications of them. Although the sympathy of the Church in general was with the views he advocated, it is doubtful if he could have put down by the weapons of intellectual warfare the opposing party, which had several able chiefs, while he was almost the only effective arm—Jerome excepted—on the orthodox side. Whatever success logic had had in producing the downfall of the party is mainly, however, to be attributed to him ; for although the rescripts of the Emperor did much (and popes and councils are not to be altogether overlooked), the Bishop of Hippo bore the chief

brunt of the fray, and was held in no little dread by the hostile ranks.

He had not a few attached followers, to whom he was a hero ; among these was Prosper of Aquitania, whose poem, "On the Ungrateful," lauds him to the skies as the greatest man of the age, and denounces his opposers and detractors in no measured terms. It is chiefly in connexion with this famous controversy that Augustine has influenced the development of Christian doctrine and the revival of Christian life, in modern times, as it was by it that his fame was widely spread throughout the Church. Yet no man had less of the passions of the polemic than he, and no breast was a less congenial soil than his for the *odium theologicum*. His hatred of error was as intense as his love of truth. He had a strong feeling that all error was mischievous ; and, firm in his own convictions, and confident of the might of truth, his sword was ready to leap out of the scabbard at a moment's notice. There was no heterodoxy that did not feel the weight of his arm. Controversy it was impossible for him to escape in the age in which he lived, which was chaotic enough, and needed sharp conflict to clear away its confusions. He had close and tough work of it to the very last.

At this time of day, we are accustomed to pooh-pooh the strifes of ecclesiastical councils in the past, as if the questions discussed were not worth the pother made about them, or as if a little clever

manipulation of our modern logic could settle what cost the fathers many a fierce dispute, and many a brimstone anathema ; and it perhaps is not easy for us to conceive to what extent the controversies of the period we are now writing about agitated the Roman Empire from end to end, when Jerome was fidgeting and fuming at Bethlehem, Augustine writing book after book at Hippo, and the Olympian Jove at Rome fulminating now in this direction, and now in that, as his own peculiar views dictated, or as the string was pulled behind. But not only were there vital questions at stake, with all the animosity of party spirit, to stir men's blood, but there were also accompaniments of a nature calculated to appeal to those that cared little for truth or party. Theological contests were not only inextricably mixed up with politics, but frequently accompanied with violence and bloodshed.

This was the case especially with the Donatist schism, which Augustine had a principal hand in putting down. The whole of North Africa was convulsed by it. The Donatists were a numerous body, and the most savage excesses were perpetrated in their name by bands of lawless ruffians called Circumcelliones. The struggle between them and the Church "is important," says Neander, "as representing the contest between Catholicism and Separatism, and the reaction against the confusion of ecclesiastical matters with politics"—a wide question, in which Augustine was as much in the dark as his opponents, and to the clearing

up and practical settlement of which much remains still that may be done in the last half of the nineteenth century.

We shall not allow the general question to draw us away from Augustine, who, of course, took the vanguard on the Church side. A very few words on the contest itself will suffice to illustrate the part he took in it. The question on which the Donatists seceded from the Church, was one of discipline. It was, whether traditors, as they were called—those who, in the Diocletian persecution, when asked, delivered up to the authorities sacred books—were to be received back into church membership. On the one hand, the Donatists held that all sacramental acts performed by those who were traditors were null and void; and, on the other, the Catholic party held that there was no salvation out of the Church, and were therefore anxious to bring back the Separatists into her bosom. It was in the Church that Augustine had found peace and rest: hence he became a zealous and devoted churchman. The chiefs of the dissenting party dreaded Augustine's power in debate, and were shy of conference; and when at last imperial authority and influence brought them face to face with their opponents, they conducted themselves with great superciliousness. They yielded at last, as the Pelagians were forced to do, to the combined force of law and logic. In this affair Augustine did good service to the cause of the Church and of good order, and won for himself great fame. But such a struggle is a crucible that

not only thoroughly tests the man, but is dangerous and ruinous to him, if he is too long in it.

The mode in which Augustine proposed to settle the whole matter shows the most beautiful simplicity of character, and the utmost aversion to strife. It was to be a Christian version of the Horatii and the Curiatii. He proposed to a mild, pious, and peace-loving bishop of the opposite faction, that commissioners should be selected from each party to meet, pray for light, and to talk over the points of difference, and that the conclusion to which they came should be binding on both parties. As might have been expected, the proposal pleased nobody but Augustine and his Donatist friend; and by and by far other methods received the sanction of the former.

Persecuting views were against the bent of Augustine's nature, but quite in accordance with the spirit of the age. Such a thing as liberty of conscience was not dreamed of for long ages after; certainly not by Augustine, who, though he at first advised mild measures, and afterwards strove to moderate the severity of military coercion, when he found that fair words and logic were thrown away on the Donatists, blessed God that the strong arm of the Emperor could be brought to bear on them. That it was the duty of the magistrate to put down schism and heresy by force, he firmly believed; and when his opponents, as might be expected, objected to being made examples of the beneficial interference of the civil arm, he naïvely advised them to become churchmen, and told them

that then the powers that he would protect and smile on them. The mischievous tendency of the persecuting principles which he held was considerably counteracted by the mildness, moderation, and prudence with which he himself acted, and which contributed very materially to the total extinction of this party, which had been at one time so formidable, and had disturbed so seriously the peace of the Church in the north of Africa.

So acute and logical a mind as Augustine's could not be the enemy of toleration, without discovering and stating reasons for his principles, and defending them in so far as they were defensible. Accordingly, persecuting Dominicans are as much under obligation to him as Jansenists and Reformers ; and the doctrines of the Inquisition are found clearly and broadly stated in the works of this father, and supported by the most ingenious arguments. We should certainly have regarded him as a much greater man, if he had forerun his peers and time, and grasped the sacred principle of toleration ; but, although we cannot but regret that he should have served the cause of intolerance by his writings, we cannot fail to see that he was much better than his principles, and that he was not at all the stuff of which Bonners and Lauds are made.

But, ere we take our leave of him, we must glance into his church at Hippo, and hear him preach. The bishop is seated, waiting till the church-reader has done, and it is time for him to begin. His carefully-written discourse is there in

a neat sermon-case. No. The sermon-case, with its enclosed paged manuscript, was not in vogue fourteen hundred years ago, although in these times discourses were *sometimes* read. But we look in vain for any trace of a parchment-roll, for reading is not the good bishop's habit. So much the better: we shall expect a grand display of sacred oratory. His countenance, tinged with a solemn sadness, is yet lighted up with the gleam of thought. It is evident that his brain is working; on what we shall perhaps by and by see. Most likely he is thinking of his sermon. He is then, it may be presumed, running along the line of thought, mentally repeating some of his well-turned periods, calling up his images, that each feature may stand out clearly before his mind's eye, going over every step of the exordium, skilfully contrived in order to catch attention, and looking over the forces which are to carry by storm the hearts of his hearers in the peroration. Perhaps—— But this is all useless conjecture, which we may or may not be able either to verify or disprove when we hear him speak. At last he rises. How imposing that presence! how striking that attitude! how finely modulated that voice! what tones! you say. No, none of all this; but you whisper to the swarthy African next you, "That is surely not your bishop?" Yet it is he; and it is because he is a preacher totally different from what you expected, that those citizens of Hippo love him so well. Although a mere rhetorician may prove an ineffective preacher; although a philosopher will

likely find the pulpit not his sphere, and a man may be pious and earnest, and yet be as tiresome a proser as ever wore gown and cassock, yet one might expect, from the combination of rhetoric, philosophy, piety, and earnestness, such a preacher as the world has never seen. All these we have in Augustine, and yet he was not the beau-ideal of a pulpit orator, such as we should suppose to result from the combination of the above-mentioned elements. And yet Augustine's numerous homilies show him to be such a preaching bishop as has never or rarely been seen. Evidently they were fully as often strictly extemporaneous as not. You might often call them rambling, but never pithless or dry. Many of them bear marks of being composed while the reader was reading the lessons for the day ; for they are pretty generally either comments upon them, or topics suggested by them ; and the ingenuity displayed in weaving into one discourse the topics suggested by the psalm and the gospel is often great.

Of the art of the rhetorician, after his conversion, he often speaks almost with scorn and contempt, and he seems to have made no attempt to apply it to preaching ; and the artistic perorations and exordia, by the effort to recollect which we conjecturally accounted for his thoughtful and absorbed look, while the lessons were being read, do not exist. Yet he was both a born and a trained orator ; and although he did not scruple to violate the canons which Cicero, Quintilian, the Abbé Maury, Blair, and Vinet hold sacred, had he been

disposed, he could not have divested himself of the oratorical power and tact which both nature and art had conferred on him. Hence we often find the most eloquent and impassioned apostrophes and appeals in discourses the groundwork of which is unstudied simplicity in thought and diction. He is illustrative rather than declamatory. There is so little of the formality of the rostra in his homilies, that it is difficult to conceive them as spoken out of a Geneva gown, much less out of episcopal lawn. He is profuse in illustration, and that often of the homeliest description. For example, he illustrates the distinction between anger and hatred by the instance of a cow butting at her calf, but showing that she has been influenced, not by hatred, but by temporary displeasure, by seeking it again, and caressing it. In expostulating with his flock on the unreasonableness of preferring a bad life to a good one, he says: "You buy a farm, and look out for a good one; you wish to marry a wife, and look out for a good one; you bargain for shoes, and you do not wish for bad ones; yet a bad life you lead." And showing the folly of those who put off reformation because they think they will live long, he tells them that no one delays taking the dinner because he knows it is to be a good one, and no one puts off a good dinner because it is to be a long one. Homely, familiar, and affectionate, he exemplified the demeanour of Paul and his associates, who wrote to the Thessalonians: "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children," and "exhorted,

and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children." A teacher of babes, a nurse of children, a father to his charge—such was Augustine. Yet he did not think it necessary, like some would-be-simple preachers, to be himself babyish and infantile. He chose for his themes the highest mysteries of faith and life, making it his endeavour to draw the boundary line between what can be and what cannot be understood, making all on one side of the line plain to the most untutored mind, and exhorting them to accept, with humble and unquestioning faith, what was beyond the range of the human intellect.

He is very generally expository, as were most of the great preachers of antiquity. But, while he agglomerates around the sacred text a profusion of rich and eloquent thought, meditative sayings, and quaint, original remark, he is a most unsafe guide as a commentator. His ingenuity in spiritualising and finding mystical meanings is wonderful ; and his mode of treating the Scriptures would tend to produce the belief that they were not at all amenable to the ordinary laws of interpretation, but that they were intended to be a mirror to reflect whatever was presented to them, or a kaleidoscope, whose contents might be made to group themselves into any forms, according as the instrument was shaken. He attaches mystical meanings to numbers. The seventy-seven generations from Adam to Christ, and the seventy times seven times that Jesus Christ bids us forgive our brother, all are significant, according to him. The bread, the fish,

and the egg, which a child is supposed, in the instance of the New Testament, to ask from his father, are explained thus: Bread is charity; the fish is faith, which lives amid the billows of temptation, without being broken or dissolved; the egg is hope, because, though the egg is something, it is not yet the chicken. Such interpretations, of course, to the simple folks of Hippo, would be vastly interesting and edifying, and as firmly believed in as the text of Scripture itself. Not only, however, were his discourses acceptable in his own comparatively humble neighbourhood, but they were taken down by short-hand writers, and circulated over the whole of North Africa. The basis of them is reasoning, explanation, and exhortation. But he rarely misses an opportunity of dealing a blow at Pelagians, Donatists, and others. Even in the pulpit you can often see the cuirass and sword peeping through the gown, and recognise in the affectionate pastor the soldier-priest.

He is almost always master of his theme, and his heart glows with it; he never studies effect, yet rarely fails to produce a profound impression; humble and simple, he has yet about him all the majesty of the ambassador, and all the dignity of lofty aims and a holy heart; he does not dazzle or coruscate, but he gains your heart by persuasion and pathos, not the pathos of high-wrought pictures of misery, intended to move the sensibilities of the hearers, but that which flows from deep and affectionate solicitude for their good. Augustine could *weep* in the pulpit, not for effect, but for

real grief of heart—weep such tears as filled the eyes of that greater preacher, who wrote, “Many walk of whom I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, who glory in their shame.” He himself tells, that he had urged and entreated the people to give up some sinful practice again and again to no purpose, till one day, renewing his exhortations on the same point, he fell a-weeping, and his hearers began to weep with him ; and when they had all wept together for some time, he entertained some hope that there would be an amendment ; and he was not disappointed. It may not be amiss here, by way of parenthesis, to mention, that eminent authorities disapprove of the orator ever actually going the length of crying, although they hold it quite a legitimate object for him to endeavour to draw tears from the eyes of his audience. For they tell us that it is not necessary for him to cry, in order to set his audience a-crying ; reminding us that Horace, a great authority, has not said, “If you wish me to weep, you must first weep yourself,” but only, “If you wish *me* to weep, *you* must first *grieve*,” and admonishing us that the speaker must not allow his emotion to overpower him. Augustine knew all this, and had no doubt inculcated it on his pupils ; but he wept, nevertheless, when his heart was full, and the effect was such that the most iron-hearted listener could not have asked his neighbour, as was done once in the case of a similar exhibition

by a preacher of modern times, "What is the man crying at?" nor could the answer have been returned which was then given: "If you were up there yourself, and had as little to say, perhaps you would cry too."

The last years of Augustine's long and active life were chiefly occupied with his theological works, which the controversies of the day had called forth. To give him time for revising and completing them, he procured the services of Eraclius, a proselyte of his own training, to aid him in his pastoral duties. One of the works to which he devoted the evening of his life is a rare monument of candour, and undoubtedly a curiosity in literature—a critique on all his own works, which he called "Retractationes." It had become, to some extent, necessary, as his views had changed so much in the course of his life, that his adversaries could often produce from his earlier writings flat contradictions of his more mature opinions. One of the most important and best known of his works, "The City of God," belongs to the later part of his life, and occupied him for several years. Death came upon him while working at a treatise written against the Pelagian Julian, Bishop of Eclanum.

His life closed amid political troubles and disasters. The Vandals, whom the Count Boniface had invited over from Spain to aid him in maintaining himself against the Imperial government, against which he had rebelled, turned his enemies, and set about taking possession of the country.

Boniface was one of Augustine's friends, and, at his instance, instead of retiring to a monastery, as he had intended, grasped the sword to aid in beating back the hordes of barbarians that were then pouring in on the decayed Roman empire. To Augustine's great sorrow, he was led into rebellion, and became the means of bringing calamity and ruin on Africa. Hippo was besieged by the Vandals; and the old bishop, whose daily prayer was, either that God would give deliverance to the city or enable it to hold out, or take him out of the world, died in the third month of the siege, in his seventy-sixth year.

His works are too many to be here enumerated. The best known of them are, his "City of God," and his "Confessions,"—the latter of which has been translated into many languages. It is a book quite unique in many respects. It is a delineation of his own character, and a history of his mind, addressed to the Deity, containing here and there, interwoven with the main subject, interesting speculations on points of psychology, philosophy, and theology. While there is a full and penitential disclosure of his sins, yet Augustine maintains a delicate and dignified reserve where the only purpose served by disclosure would be the gratification of curiosity. The "Confessions" blend, to some extent, the varied interest of Pascal's "Thoughts," "Thomas à Kempis," and the "Pilgrim's Progress," and exhibit, although in somewhat sombre light, one of the noblest and most gifted of the sons of the Church—showing much

in him to admire and love, and also a trace of morbidity, acquired from his own errors and those of his times, which somewhat checks the flow of our sympathy towards him. Sure enough we are that, were he allowed to use his pen in the light of the nineteenth century, the first thing he would do would be to write a second critique on his own works, somewhat more sweeping than the first, and make those look somewhat foolish who, at this time of day, admire him and other ancient Fathers chiefly for the darkness and confusion which are in them.



Passages from Augustine.

WHAT WE LOVE WHEN WE LOVE GOD.

WITH no doubtful, but with certain consciousness, O Lord, I love Thee! But what do I love when I love Thee? Not the beauty of corporeal form, nor the gracefulness of time, nor the brightness of light so grateful to those eyes, nor the sweet melodies of songs of every measure, nor the pleasant fragrance of flowers, and ointments, and spices, not manna and honey, not members acceptable to corporeal embraces. It is not these I love when I love my God; and yet I love a light, and a voice, and a fragrance, and a nourishment, when I love my God—the light, the voice, the fragrance, the food, the embrace of my inner man; where there gleams on my soul what is not contained by place, and where there sounds what time does not grasp, and where a fragrance is emitted which is not scattered by the breeze, and where there is a savour which is not lessened by eating, and where there adheres that which satiety does not tear away. It is this I love when I love my God. And what is this? I ask the earth, and it said, It is not I; and whatever is in it admitted the same. I asked the sea and its depths, and the livings things that creep there, and they answered, We are not thy God; seek above us. I asked the blasts of wind, and the universal air with its inhabitants said, Anaximenes is in error, I am not

God. I asked the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars, and they said, Neither are we the God you seek. And I said to all those things which surround the gateways of sense, Ye have said to me concerning my God, that ye are not he; tell me something of him? And they all exclaimed with a loud voice, He made us.—*Confessions*, x. 6.

THE TRUE LIGHT.

Thence being admonished to return to myself, I entered into the recess of my own soul, and was able to do this, since Thou becamest my helper. I entered and saw with the eye of my soul—above the same eye of my soul, above my soul itself, the Unchangeable Light, not this ordinary light seen by all flesh: nor was it as it were a grander light of the same kind, as if it shone with far clearer ray, and was wholly overpowering only on account of its greatness. It was not such, but another—far other than all these. Nor was it above my soul as air above water, or heaven above earth; but it was higher, because it made me, and I lower, because made by it. He who knows truth knows it; and he who knows it knows eternity. Love knows it. O Eternal Truth, and True Love, and Loved Eternity! Thou art my End. To thee I breathe night and day. And when I first knew thee, thou didst bring me to see that what I saw had being, and that I who saw had not yet a being. Thou didst strike upon the weakness of my gaze, darting thy vehement rays into me, and I trembled with love and awe, and I found that I was far from thee, in a

region that had no likeness to thee, as if I heard thy voice from above saying, "I am the food of those that have reached maturity, grow and thou shalt feed on me: thou shalt not change me into thee, as the food which nourishes thy flesh, but thou shalt be changed into me."—*Confessions*, vii. 10.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CONFESSIONS.

What wonder was it that I was so carried into vanities, and went forth from thee, O my God, when there were proposed for my imitation men who, if in relating any of their actions that were not bad, they were guilty of a barbarism or a solecism, were reprehended and confounded, but were praised and boasted, if they narrated their lusts in correct, well-connected words, with copiousness and elegance.—i. 18.

Every part is bad which is out of harmony with the whole.—*Conf.* iii. 8.

O thou good omnipotent One, who carest for each one of us, as if thou caredst for him alone, and carest for all as for one.—iii. 11.

Wretched is every soul that is overcome by the friendship of perishable things, and is lacerated when he loses them, and then perceives the wretchedness by which he is wretched even before he loses them.—iv. 6.

Happy is he who loves Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thee. For he alone loses no one who is dear, to whom all are dear in Him, who is not lost.—iv. 9.

Descend that you may ascend.—iv. 12.

Miserable is the man who knows all these things, but knows not Thee: happy he who knows Thee, though he knows not those things. He too who knows both Thee and them is not happier on account of them, but is happy on account of Thee alone.—v. 4.

ELEGANCE AND TRUTH.—I had already learned that neither ought anything be deemed truly spoken because eloquently spoken; nor falsely spoken because the signs of the lips sound harshly; and, on the other hand, that nothing is true because uttered without polish, nor false because the discourse is brilliant; but that it is with wisdom and folly just as it is with useful and useless viands; that words may be adorned or unadorned, just as both kinds of food can be served up, either in fine or coarse vessels.—v. 6.

But I was whole, and sin had divided me against myself, and that sin, of not thinking myself to be a sinner, was difficult of cure, and execrable was the iniquity of preferring the idea that thou shouldest be overcome in me to my ruin than that I should be overcome by thee to salvation.—v. 10.

It is one thing to see the native land of peace from a sylvan height, without finding the way to it, and another to walk in the way that leads to it, paved by the care of our heavenly Commander.—vii. 21.

Ah me! how lofty Thou art among those things which are lofty, how profound among those that are profound!—viii. 3.

A perverse will begets lust,—by obeying lust a habit is formed,—a habit unresisted becomes a necessity.—viii. 5.

The mind commands the body and is straight-way obeyed, the mind commands itself and is resisted.—viii. 9.

HIDDEN LIFE.

The root lives, but in winter the green tree is like the dry. In the season of winter, the tree which is sapless and the tree which has vitality are alike destitute of the burden of leaves, alike devoid of the burden of fruit. But the summer will come and show the difference between the trees. The living tree produces leaves, and is covered with fruit; the dead tree will remain bare in summer as in winter. And so the storehouse is prepared for the one, the axe applied to the other, that it may be cut down and cast into the fire.

Thus our summer is the advent of Christ, our winter is concealment in heaven. Our summer is the revelation of Christ. In a word, to good and faithful trees, the Apostle addresses these words: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Certainly dead, but dead in appearance, living at the root. Fix your eye on the season of summer that is to come; mark how it follows: "When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—*Sermon 212, on Prov. x.*

FREE WILL.

If we really wish to defend free will, let us not attack that from which its freedom is derived ; for he who assails the grace by which the will is set free to shun evil and do good, wishes his will to be still in bondage.—*Letter 107.*

THE FIRST AND THE SECOND RESURRECTION.

He does not yet speak of the second resurrection—that is, the resurrection of bodies, which will take place at the end—but of the first, which takes place now. In order to distinguish it from the other, he says, “The hour cometh, and now is.” This is not a resurrection of bodies, but of souls ; for souls also have their death in impiety and sins. It is according to this death that they are dead, and of such the Lord says, “Let the dead bury their dead,” viz., the spiritually dead bury the corporeally dead. It is on account of those, then, who are dead in soul through ungodliness and sin, that he has said, “The hour is come, and now is, that the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live. . . .” But there shall come an hour, of which he does not say, “and now is ;” for it shall be at the end of the world—that is, at the last and greatest judgment of God, when all who are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth. He has not said, as in the first, and they who hear shall live ; for all shall not live with that life which, being blessed, alone deserves to be called

life. For without some kind of life they could not hear, and by a corporeal resurrection issue from their tombs. That all shall not live he shows in what follows: "They that have done good," he says, "to the resurrection of life;" these are they who shall live. But "they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation;" these are they who shall not live, for they shall die the second death. As, then, there are two births—one according to faith, which takes place through baptism, or now; another according to the flesh, which will issue in the incorruptibility and immortality of the body in the great and final judgment: so are there two resurrections—one called the first, one which is now, and is a resurrection of souls, and does not permit to come into condemnation; another, which is not now, and will take place at the end of the world, a resurrection, not of souls, but of bodies, which through the last judgment sends some into the second death, and others into that life which knows no death.—*City of God*, book xx., chap. 6.

A SPIRITUAL BODY.

As spirit serving the flesh is not unsuitably named carnal, so flesh serving the spirit is rightly named spiritual, not because changed into spirit, as some suppose from the words of Scripture, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," but because, with perfect and most wonderful facility of obedience, it will be subject to the spirit so as completely to fulfil the serenely calm

volitions of a never-ending immortality—all feeling of uneasiness—all possibility of decay—everything that clogs its motions, being done away with.—*City of God*, book xiii., chap. 23.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES.

(Matthew v. 44.)

Frequently in the Gospel, very dear brethren, we have heard the Lord saying, Love your enemies, do good to them who hate you. But why should our Lord have said, Love your enemies, if we were not to have enemies to bear with? But some one says, Who can love enemies? Before this, your God, though opposed to all impiety, yet loved you in your impiety. And although you are no longer impious, yet you were once; because no one becomes just but from being a sinner. As we have frequently sung, “Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven;” not “Blessed are those who have not committed sins;” but “Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven.” If you ask, then, who has not committed sin, you will find none. Whence, then, shall any one be blessed except by the remission of what he has been guilty of, by the covering of what he has committed. If, then, your sin has already been forgiven, he who is not yet righteous persecutes you. And you, before you were justified, persecuted others. You were lost and were found. And he who opposes you shall be found, and shall no longer persecute. Think not that you have become such as you are by your own merits, for it is the grace of God which has made you such.

And, by considering well, you will see that God is able to make him whom you now seem to hate, with justice, such as you are. For you, speaking in the character of one who is righteous, say, "Great is the patience of God, which suffers such a one to live." Would that this were all you said! But I am afraid that you find fault further, saying, "Why is God pleased to spare such? Why do men commit evils of such enormity and live?" What if another were to say, "O God, wherefore does that man live, who says such presumptuous things, and finds fault with thy justice? For he does not give heed to what he himself says, but to what another does." He who displeases you perhaps does not find fault with God, nor pour forth such reproaches against Him. Perhaps he who to-day is your friend may be guilty of such sins, that he cannot be with you in eternal life. For you do not know what a day may bring forth. And, on the other hand, he who was your enemy may happen to be so turned to repentance, as to be worthy of being your fellow-citizen in the heavenly Jerusalem, and even may be made greater than you. Let not this seem impossible. Let us interrogate the Scriptures, and in them we shall be able to recognise this more clearly. Paul the Apostle was formerly a wicked enemy of the Christians—he seized, he wasted, he raged. When? When the martyr Stephen was stoned, his own hands were not enough; he stoned with the hands of all: for, in order that they might not be encumbered by their garments, but might throw stones with free hands, he kept

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the garments of all, and thus perpetrated that crime with the hands of all. See him, with one word of the Lord, from a persecutor become a preacher. . . . Man and sinner are two names. In these two names ask what God has done, and ask what the devil has advised. Man was made by God, sin was committed by man at the persuasion of the devil. Which of these two persecutes you? If you live well, he only will persecute you who is evil. It is not, then, the man, but the sinner that persecutes you. Pray for the man, that God may extinguish the sinner.—*Homilies*.

THE SAVIOUR INVITING THE HEAVY-LADEN.

Conclusion of sermon on "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—Gal. vi. 2.

The burdens which each one bears are his sins. To those who are bearing the encumbrances of these intolerable burdens and futilely toiling under them, the Lord says, "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." How does he give the burdened rest, but by the forgiveness of their sins? The Preacher of the world, from a tower of lofty authority, exclaims: Hear, O human race; hear, sons of Adam; hear, O toiling and unfruitful race. I see your toil, Behold ye my gift! I know you labour and are heavy-laden, and, what is more miserable, you bind hurtful burdens on your shoulders; and, what is worse, you ask loads to be added, not those you have to be taken off. Who of us is able to describe, in a brief space of time, the multi-

plicity and variety of these burdens? Yet let us enumerate a few, and leave the rest to conjecture. You see a man laden with the load of avarice—you see him sweating under this load, grasping, thirsting, and by labour adding to it. What do you expect, O covetous man, by embracing your load, and taking your burden on your shoulders? What are you looking for, toiling for, panting for, yearning for? The satiating, forsooth, of your avarice! O inane wishes, most wicked conduct! You expect, then to satiate your avarice, do you? It can crush you, but you cannot satisfy it. Perhaps it is not grievous,—this burden of yours—you say? Have you to such an extent lost feeling under this load? Avarice is not grievous, is it? Why then does it rouse you from sleep, while sometimes it does not suffer you even to sleep. Perchance you have along with it another burden of laziness, and these two most wicked burdens, fighting with each other, press you down, and tear you asunder. For their commands do not correspond, their orders are unlike. Laziness says, sleep. Avarice says, rise. Laziness says, don't expose yourself to cold weather. Avarice says, endure even storms on the ocean. The one says, rest; the other does not allow you to rest, it bids you not only walk the ground, but sail beyond sea.—*Sermons.*

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

(From the close of sermon on "John Baptist.")

What says she? "*He hath filled the hungry*

with good things, but the rich He hath sent empty away." Who are the hungry? The humble, the needy. Who are the rich? The proud and vain. I do not send you far away; I show you in one temple the rich belonging to the class who are sent empty away, and the poor belonging to the class who are filled with good things. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee was in the habit of saying, Look at the rich man belching forth his undigested food, glorying in his drunkenness. But this was a mark of his pride, not of his righteousness. "God," he says, "I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess." O rich man, destined to be sent empty away! Come, come, poor man—come, thou hungry publican. Nay, stand there where thou standest;—for the publican stood afar off.—But the Lord drew near to the humble one, who did not dare to raise his eyes to heaven. But where he raised not his eyes, there he had his heart. "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!" O hungry one, destined to be filled with good things! Thou hast heard, Lord, the pleadings; give forth sentence. Hear the sentence put forth, deciding between the two parties. The unsuccessful party does not appeal, because there is none to whom he can. He does not appeal from the Son to the Father. *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.* Let truth then pronounce sentence.

Verily I say unto you that this one went down from the temple justified rather than the Pharisee. Why this? I ask you who wish to hear justice. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Why shall the one be exalted, and he who exalts himself be humbled? Because "He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He hath sent empty away." Go now and publish your riches, boast yourself and say, "If I will, I am righteous; if I do not will, I am not righteous. I have it in my power to be righteous and not to be righteous." Do you not hear in the psalm of those who trust in their virtue? Has, then, God given you flesh, sensation, soul, mind, and intelligence; but you have given to yourself righteousness? What is flesh, what are the senses, what is the soul, what is understanding, without righteousness? Will not all these things, if destitute of righteousness, only lead to punishment? Are you then so rich that, while God has given you what is inferior, you give to yourself what is superior? O wicked rich man! O rich man, to be sent empty away! If yet you have what you have said you have, what have you that you did not receive? And you have not even learned from that proud and rich Pharisee to thank God for what you have said you have.—*Homily 44.*

God is all eye, because He sees all things; all hand, because He performs all things; all foot, because He is everywhere.—*Letter iii.*

THE CHURCH LIKENED TO A SHIP.

Because the billows assail, the ship is tossed ; but because Christ prays, it cannot sink. Look on that ship, brethren, as the Church ; the troubled ocean as this world. When a man of impious intentions and high authority proclaims persecution against the Church, and as far as is in his power endeavours to extinguish the Christian name, a towering wave rises against the ship of Christ. But let the yard-arm be raised, that, suspended to the mast, it may be a figure of the cross. At this let the Christian look and not fail, because, as the Apostle Peter says, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." Also the blessed John says, "For as Christ laid down his life for us, so should we also lay down our lives for the brethren." To this yard-arm, that is, to the cross of Christ, let a guileless conversation and a pure confession be bound like white sails ; and let these sails of ours be washed in the waves, and let the cordage be strained, that they may be found at last without spot or wrinkle. Let the sea rage ever so fiercely, let the wind bear down between billow and billow—that ship may be tossed, but cannot sink. It speeds on its way.

DELAY OF CONVERSION.

Let us turn, dearly beloved brethren. Let us not wish to put off our reformation to the last hour of life, but hear the prophet saying, "Be not slow

in turning to the Lord, nor delay from day to day ; for ye know not what the future time may bring forth." O man, who are delaying from day to day, it may be this is your last. Let us, then, ever dearly beloved brethren, with great fear and trembling, recall to memory the fact, that there is such justice with God that, as has already been said, out of six hundred thousand, two only entered the land of promise.

If we would diligently reflect on this with humble and contrite heart, our minds would be filled with wholesome fear ; we should be extracting from the wounds of others medicines for ourselves, and the death of others would be profitable for our salvation. Again and again I beseech you, brethren, and I admonish you, in order that always with great fear and anxiety we may think upon that severity and just judgment of God, by which his ancient people, through their murmuring in the desert, were consumed, and that we may so love the mercy of God as to fear his justice.

He spares now, and is silent ; but he will not always be silent. Now, in his ineffable love, He not only admonishes us, but beseeches us to recall ourselves from our deadly sins. Let us hear Him while He entreats, lest afterwards He do not hear us, while He judges. Let us hear Him saying by the prophet, "Son, take pity on thy soul by pleasing God." What will human frailty reply to this ? God asks you to pity yourself, and you will not. He pleads your own cause before you, and He cannot gain it. And how shall He hear you suppli-

cating at the day of judgment, when you would not hear Him entreating on your behalf?

Who would not tremble and be afraid at the Jewish people deserving to be punished for forty years for the sin of forty days? For if the fault of one day can be expiated only by punishment for the space of a year,—what of us who commit such heinous sins daily,—if the medicines of alms or penitence do not come to our relief, I fear that not temporal but eternal punishment will be inflicted on us. And as healing applications are wont to be used when wounds are fresh; as often as we sin, let us not wait in fatal security, till our wounds are mortified, nor again add other wounds to them, but let us at once have recourse to the spiritual Physician, and hasten to receive salvation. And just as when we have received a wound in the body, if we apply healing applications immediately, we speedily recover; so if we delay, the sore necessarily heals more slowly, or some unsightly scar remains on our person. If this is our practice in the case of the body, how much more ought it to be so in the case of the wounds of the soul, in which we were made after the image and likeness of God. If we expend so much care on the body, which, whether we will or no, must be reduced to dust, how great solicitude and care should we bestow on the salvation of the soul! that, as the Apostle says, we may be worthy to appear before the tribunal of the eternal Judge, without spot or wrinkle. Lest, perchance, if we come to that nuptial feast lacerated with many wounds of sin, and wrapped in the

filthy rags of vice, it be said to us what the heavenly bridegroom himself said in the Gospel: "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" May God avert from us what follows. For while the sinner, hearing this, was speechless, the Master of the house said: "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

See what a sentence they shall receive, who are more solicitous about the body than the soul, and think more in what way their flesh is to subsist for a very brief period before the eyes of men, than how their soul is to be adorned with good works, and attain to the blessedness and the likeness of angels.—*Sermon 102.*

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

Pharaoh yokes his chariots, musters his host, and ranges them in battle array. No man is left who grieves at being saved. The Egyptians pursue, and the Hebrews are hemmed in between the sea and the foe, between billows and swords. On this side foams the sea, on that armour gleams; here is the roar of the waters, there the din of arms. It is thus that God is wont to deal with his own; and where human counsel fails, then divine aid interposes. The people were struck with terror at the sight. They quailed as they beheld the sea pour its rushing waters on the shore, and unchain its billows to dash against each other, and whirl in eddying flood.

Immediately all with one voice cry to the

Hebrew leader, "In our attempt to free ourselves from Pharaoh's rule we have found danger, and, while of our own will refusing to be slaves, we have come into peril. You have only misfortunes to show to them to whom you have up to this hour promised good. You shut your eyes to the disasters to which you are exposed, and will not believe yourself to be the author of your ruin." To whom, with holy mien, Moses answers: "Fear not, men; arm yourselves with faith, believe the word, which will be fulfilled before your eyes. Believe that triumph is already speeding on to you, and destruction to that insensate race. Without consent of the winds, the billows are curbed, and stop short in their course that they may not punish your enemies before receiving the word of command." Forthwith, at the bidding of God, at the stroke of the rod, the sea burst asunder, the waves divide, and plains hitherto unknown to nature, are disclosed to view. The waves of the deep yawn, and the secret recesses and hidden things of the ocean are laid bare. The sea is piled up in a heap, and shows its waters like walls held up aloft. There is now shore where the sea had rolled, and a way expands straight before for the people of the Lord miraculously to tread.

At the sight of this, the people knew that all had been done on their account, and, at the divine command entered, with dauntless step. They walked, it is said, secure; the Lord fought for them, and they were invincible. The army of Pharaoh followed to meet their doom in the de-

vouring waters. He imagined he could fight where, along with his host, he was destined to perish.

Thus, then, God said to Moses : Now has arrived the destruction of the Egyptians. Those whom I wished to crush I have appointed to perish by this doom. Let the sea return to its former state, that it may work salvation for the just, and ruin for the unjust. In a moment, at the divine command, the assault is made, the Egyptians are seized and overwhelmed by the rush of the waters, and are cast by the rolling flood on the shore. The Egyptians were dead before the Hebrews reached the other shore in safety. This vengeance was requisite, that those who refuse to receive salvation may more swiftly perish.—*Sermon 89.*

ON WHAT THE MORAL VALUE OF ACTIONS DEPENDS.

Let no one reckon his works good previous to faith. Where there was no faith there was no good work. For the moral value of an action depends on the bent of the mind ; and it is faith that gives to the mind a right bent.

You do not consider principally what a man is doing, but the point on which his eye is bended—the point towards which he directs the arms that skilfully guide his course. Suppose, for example, a man steering a vessel in the very best style, but without any idea of the direction in which he is sailing, what avails his dexterity in spreading and trimming the sail and giving the prow to the waves ? He is on his guard lest the sides of the vessel receive injury ; he is possessed of such strength that

he turns the vessel to and from what point he chooses. But were you to say to him, Whither are you bound? he could only say, I have no idea; or, instead of that, he would say, I am bound for yonder port; but runs upon the rocks, not into port.

Is not the danger in proportion to the agility and vigour which such a man displays in the management of the vessel?—the only result of the speed he makes being that he brings it to the shipwreck.

Such also is he who runs with exceeding swiftness, but has missed the way. Would it not have been better far for the captain to have possessed somewhat less vigour, so as not to be able to manage the helm without some labour and difficulty, and for the traveller to have walked with slower and feebler step, provided he had kept the way, than to have run vigorously out of it?—*Exposition of Psalm 31.*

WHAT MAKES A PREACHER?

And so that eloquent preacher of ours labours when he speaks what is just, and holy, and good—for he ought to deliver nothing that is not so,—he labours, I say, to the utmost when he speaks those things, that he may be heard intelligently, willingly, and obediently; and, if he is able to do this, let him not doubt that the degree in which he is able to do it is to be ascribed rather to the piety of his prayers than to the power of his oratory; so that he must be a pleader by praying for

himself and those whom he is to address, before he is a preacher. On the approach of the hour in which he is to speak, let him raise his thirsting soul to God, that he may send forth what he has drunk in, and pour out that with which he has replenished his spirit. For, since on every subject which has to be treated in relation to faith and love, there are many things to be said, and many ways in which they are expressed by those who know them : who knows what is best for us to say, or to be said through us, but He who scans the hearts of all? And who makes the right word to be spoken by us in the right way but He in whose hands both we and our sermons are? And thus let him who wishes both to know and to teach learn all that he requires to teach, and acquire the faculty of speaking as becomes an ecclesiastic ; but at the hour of preaching let him think that more suitable to a pious mind is what our Lord says : "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak ; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak ; for it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." —*Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, iv., 52.

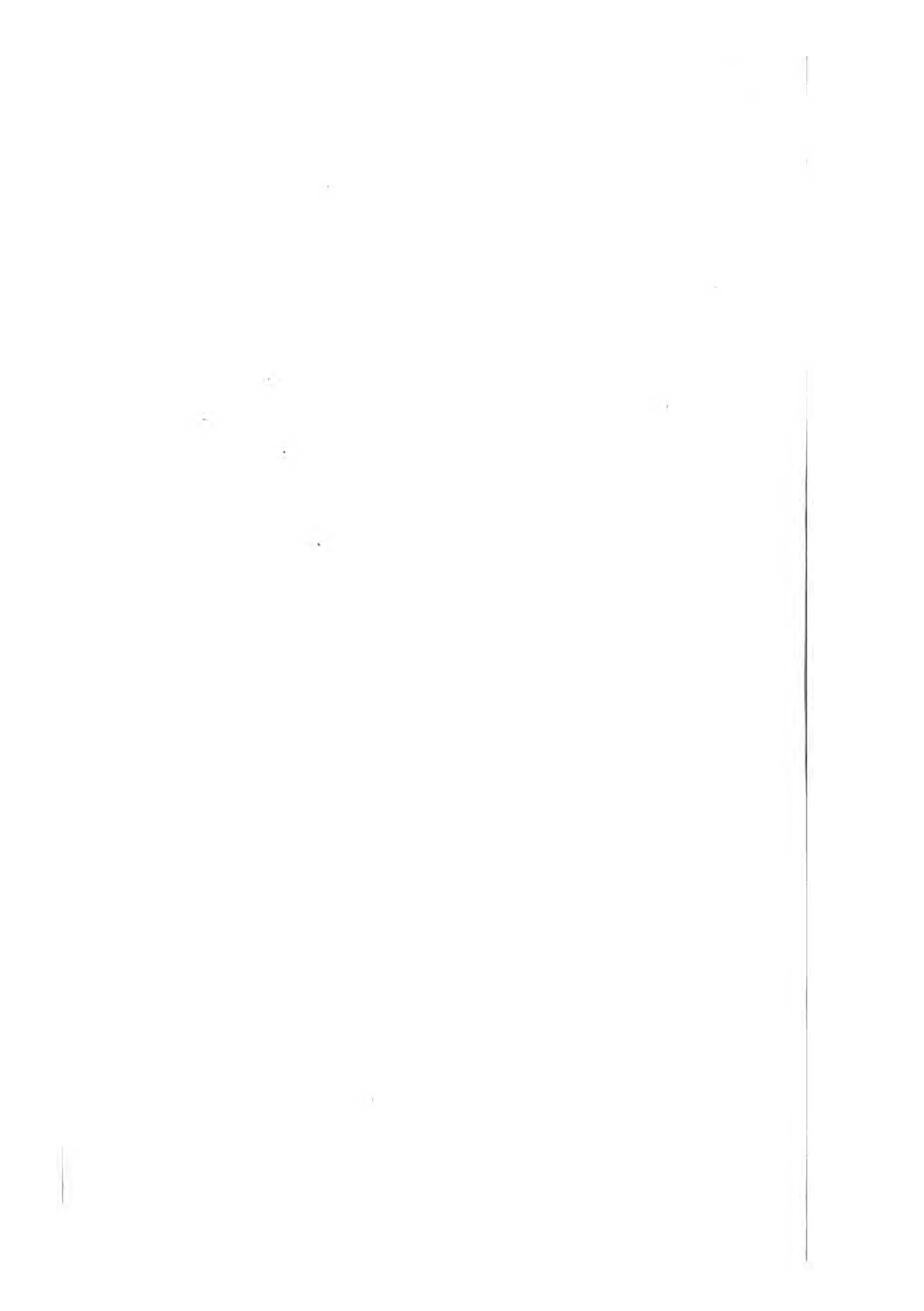




THE FEARLESS BISHOP :

BASIL THE GREAT.







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THE honourable appellation of "the Great," by which Basil of Cæsarea is known, boasts the unchallenged prescription of fourteen centuries. It is explaining, not impugning it to remark, that it does not imply superiority to all patristic celebrities, whose names are undistinguished by the same epithet; while on the other hand his words and works stamp him great, not only among all the Basils of ecclesiastical history, but among preachers, writers, and Christians.

He is one of the fortunate few whose merits have met with full appreciation. For this he is not a little indebted to the eulogies composed after his death by Gregory of Nyssa, his brother, and Gregory of Nazianzum, his bosom friend, Ephraem Syrus, and Amphilochius.

The partial hand of friendship and the exaggeration of rhetoric are visible enough in Gregory of Nazianzum's monody on his friend. He has succeeded in producing a portrait of almost ideal beauty crowned with academic and clerical laurels, whose fresh and fadeless leaves gleam in the radiance of a halo of saintly glory. Almost the one blot on his fair escutcheon, the one wen on that

goodly countenance,—all of shade that is given us to relieve such a mass of light and colour,—is the mistake he committed in conferring on Gregory himself, afterwards thought worthy of the first see of the East, the insignificant bishopric of Sasima. After passing in review the illustrious saints of the Old Testament, from Adam to John, to show that Basil might bear a comparison with any of them, and united in himself the excellences of all, and then declaring him to be the equal of the Apostles, we are not much surprised to hear his eulogist wind up by saying, “Why should I say more? His faults, which belonged to the body and nature rather than to the soul, would have been called virtues in others. If any man thinks that he imitates him, he will be found to be as inferior as a shadow is to a statue, an echo to the voice.”

The materials derived from Gregory and other sources, although they come short of demonstrating Basil to be the quintessence of human excellences, establish his claim to a place among the good and great. Born A.D. 329, and dying A.D. 379, his life extended over the eventful half-century which began with the closing years of the reign of Constantine the Great, and, running through those of Constantius, Julian, and Valens, ended with the first year of Theodosius. His father was called Basil, and his mother Eumelia. Their children were one daughter, Macrina, and four sons, Basil, Gregory, Peter, and Naucratus, three of whom became bishops,—Basil, the subject of the present sketch, at Cæsarea, Gregory at

Nyssa, Peter at Sebaste. The prestige and traditions of his family and the training of his home manifestly had much to do in determining his future career. His grandfather and kindred, who belonged to Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus, had fled from the persecution of Maximin, and lived for seven years in a cave among the mountains. To an influence, such as many of the Christian females of that period were fitted by their piety and intelligence to wield—such as Monica exerted on Augustine, and Anthusa on Chrysostom,—Basil was much indebted. His grandmother Macrina, who had been a confessor of the truth, and was celebrated for her knowledge of the Scriptures, instilled into his mind the lessons she had learned from the lips of Gregory Thaumaturgus, the wonder-worker of Neo-Cæsarea, who had been her pastor. She had treasured up in her heart the words of that apostolic man, and she could tell young Basil, with his sister and brothers, all about the cave, and the horrors of the bloody persecution, and the wonders wrought, and the words spoken, by the revered Gregory. He fondly and frequently mentions both, and expressly states, in a letter to the Neo-Cæsareans, that he had learned his creed in the words of their venerable bishop from the lips of Macrina, and from it had never swerved. The lives of both were written by his brother, Gregory of Nyssa. Many other circumstances concur to show that the grand old form of Thaumaturgus, pictured by his admiring disciple to the ardent imagination of the boy, occupied

a sacred place among the treasures of memory, and fired him with noble aspirations. He was carefully instructed in the elementary branches of education by his father. In the influences amid which his boyhood was passed, we see ground for Gregory of Nazianzum's common-place illustrations of the child being father to the man, and can trace not obscurely the first rude draught of what, after passing through various hands, became the accomplished scholar, the faithful bishop, the champion of the Nicene Creed, and the apostle of the cœnobite life.

Thirsting for knowledge, and ambitious of learning the art of speaking, he passed from his father's hands to the public schools of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, then one of the most celebrated seats of learning, where he was noted for the gravity of his manners, and won high distinction in all the branches of academic study. He next spent some time in Constantinople. The most renowned teacher of the day was Libanius the Sophist, a pagan, and philosopher of the new Platonic school, afterwards the master of Chrysostom, who taught rhetoric and declamation here and elsewhere. To him Basil repaired, to acquire the finish which his hand alone was thought capable of giving. So highly did he think of Libanius as a professor of his art—although his writings, chiefly useful for the light they incidentally throw on the times, show him to have been a most conceited personage—that we find Basil afterwards sending pupils to him.

From Constantinople he next went to Athens, expecting to reap a rich harvest of thought and impulse in the immortal city, which had long ago exchanged her political importance for the intellectual sovereignty of the world, and was the chief centre of Hellenic culture and religion. Here paganism still lingered among its ancient shrines; philosophy wove its dreams in retreats hallowed by immortal names; and under their shade superstitions of all kinds grew up. It was full of pagan priests, hierophants, and rhetoricians. Magic and necromancy, although forbidden, were practised; and theurgy, akin to spirit-rapping—the art of seeing spirits—had not a few devotees. Here Basil made the acquaintance of Julian, who afterwards became Emperor, and sent an invitation to Basil to come to court, which he declined, and formed that friendship with Gregory of Nazianzum which lasted through life. His fame had preceded him here, and he soon became the master-spirit and head of an admiring coterie, and devoted himself assiduously to study. That Basil was so little warped from the simplicity of Christ by the philosophy and vain deceit then so rank; that, while all around them boasted of party names and leaders, he, with his friend Gregory, gloried in the name of Jesus, and reckoned it their most honourable distinction to be called Christians,—are proofs of the depth and earnestness of his character, the strength and intelligence of his faith, and the steadiness with which he looked towards the higher and holier career to which he had early consecrated himself.

His numerous friends and admirers reluctantly allowed him to depart from Athens in order to return to Cæsarea. There he was rejoined, in a short time, by Gregory, whom he had left at Athens. After showing themselves for a little to their friends there, where Basil commenced to teach rhetoric, Gregory went to Nazianzum ; and Basil, after travelling for a little, betook himself to retirement. He was in his twenty-sixth year when he returned to Cæsarea. A feeling of the hollowness of the pursuits to which he had devoted so much time and thought, and the impossibility—in which, in common with his age, he believed—of reaching, in the midst of society, the loftiest attainments of holiness, led to the adoption of the monastic life. He had need of silence and solitude, were it only for the purpose of taking the inventory of the literary stores he had been amassing, and separating the rubbish from what was good. Away from the great world—away from the Babel clamour of lecture-rooms in which he had hitherto lived, in the society of a few kindred spirits—for he had shunned the life of the Eremite—he sought opportunity for communion with himself and with God. The stream of his existence, gliding placidly along, and reposing in the calm depths of meditation, quietly deposited many of the impurities which it had acquired in the rapids and vexed eddies of speculation and study through which it had taken its course. It was altogether a chaotic time, especially in the East. Tendencies of all kinds, latent or nascent in the preceding

century, came to a head in this, and developed into shapes of exaggeration and monstrosity. The Neo-Platonic philosophy, which was predominant among Pagans and Christians, is the best representative of the age—at once the symptom and cause of its characteristics, and the key to its anomalies. Distracted by conflicting systems, and tired of the attempt to select from each what was true, the simple expedient was found out of denying that there was conflict at all; of affirming, in short, that discord was harmony—that chaos was order. Out of the Alexandrian eclecticism, at the close of the second century, Ammonius Saccas developed the method of Syncretism, which discovered the identically same truths in the numbers of Pythagoras, the ideas of Plato, the forms of Aristotle, the ballads of Homer, and the words of Christ.

Relieved from the necessity of deciding between truth and error, the philosopher's whole work consisted in fusing, or rather *confusing* materials collected from every quarter. In fact, there was seen everywhere the same spectacle of discordant and heterogeneous elements meeting and trying to mix, seething, smoking, and boiling and bubbling as in a witch's cauldron. There was consequently double, double, toil and trouble to almost every one. Christianity and heathenism seemed engaged in the insane rivalry of borrowing as much from each other as possible. We need to keep this in our view to do justice to Basil, and to understand why Gregory of Nazianzum should men-

tion it to his praise, that, while he was an adept at astronomy and geometry, and had explored the recesses of philosophy, he despised astrology and all superstitious ideas about forms and numbers, and abhorred magic. When we take into account the quantity of "perilous stuff" which was spread on the board, we shall not be surprised though his piety and that of his age wore a somewhat valetudinarian and atrabiliar look. We shall, notwithstanding, find cause to admire his clearness of head, vigour of understanding, and soundness of heart. His retreat he describes, in a letter to his friend Gregory of Nazianzum, as pleasantly situated on an almost inaccessible height. It was in the neighbourhood of Neo Cæsarea, in Pontus. By and by he was joined by Gregory, and the two friends together studied Origen, and composed the "Philocalia," consisting of Scripture passages, with Origen's comments upon them. Here also Basil drew out his rules for the monastic life. His adoption of this life is only a proof of his seriousness of mind, in an age in which the degeneracy and profligacy that had crept into the Church was such, that the most of those that wished to live piously, righteously, and godly, deemed it necessary to seek some secluded retreat for meditation and prayer. From this time to his death he was a rigid ascetic. The ascetic and contemplative life was the ideal of philosophic sanctity. It was not confined to Christians, and did not spring from the Gospel. The belief in the inherent evil of matter, and the idea of sublimating the soul by abstraction from

objects of sense by inward contemplation, on which asceticism was founded, came from philosophy. In the effort to divest themselves of the attributes of human nature, which made men choose poverty, hunger, and dirt, and filled the deserts with crazy fanatics, we see the humiliating result of the boasted wisdom of this world, an admirable commentary on the Apostle's words: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools;" and a sad proof of the necessity and consequence of the neglect of his warning, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Asceticism was the sphere in which Basil commenced his career of practical activity. He was at once its reformer and apostle. He exposed the defects and evils of the solitary life led by those recluses called Anchorites or Anachorites, and Eremites; and showed the advantages and more Christian character of the cœnobite mode of life, which, while separating those who followed it from the world, formed them into a little world or church by themselves. His objection to the former is that, being based on selfishness, it is entirely alien to the spirit of the Gospel, deranges the relations of the members of the body of Christ to each other, and consequently to the Head; while the latter, being founded on the idea of mutual fellowship and influence, and practical benevolence, enabled each to seek, according to the precept, not only his own good, but that of others. He says, "In one community the influence of the Holy Spirit in each

individual passes over to all: the gifts of each benefit the whole, and the combined advantage of the gifts of all is enjoyed by each. He that lives for himself may have a precious gift, but he renders it worthless by burying it in his bosom."

Although the life of the cloister recommended by Basil is founded on a false idea of the Christian's mission and relation to the world, it is immeasurably nobler and healthier than that of the Eremite, and was suited to prove a check to the extravagances and excesses of asceticism. Such a check was much needed in Pontus and the surrounding countries. The first preacher of the ascetic life in those regions was Eustathius, belonging to a sect of Anchorites, named from various leaders, Eustathians, Lampetians, Adelphians, and Marcianites, also Euchites from their theory of inward prayer, Choreutes from their mystic dances, and Enthusiasts on account of their pretensions to inspiration. They ran into the wildest errors and fanaticism. They despised marriage and the domestic life to such a degree that they would not partake of the Sacrament if the element had been consecrated by a married priest, and would perform no act of devotion in the abode of a married pair. Families were broken up, husbands deserted their wives, and wives their husbands,—parents left their children, and children their parents.

The greatest confusion prevailed, and the contagion was rapidly spreading, when Basil threw himself with enthusiasm into the advocacy of his favourite cœnobitism. In promoting it he came

necessarily into collision with the Anchorites, and also incurred the displeasure of many of the inhabitants of the district, who, not without reason, complained of the withdrawal from society of so many of its members. He nevertheless laboured indefatigably and successfully, and was the founder of several monasteries, *phrontisteria*, or *cœnobia*, as they were variously called, which adopted his rules. They were hives of industry as well as retreats of devotion and contemplation. The click of the loom and the ring of the anvil alternated with the sounds of praise, prayer, and reading of the Scriptures. Shoemakers and carpenters plied their handicrafts, and the monks in social groups cultivated their little patches of ground. The nobleman and the emancipated slave met together in the equality of human and celestial brotherhood ; and free play was given to the exercise of all the social sympathies except those that spring from the ties of family. They were nurseries of youthful piety, one of their main objects being the training of children admitted at an early age. Orphans were taught gratuitously. His regulations, though tinged strongly with the superstitions of his age, display great sobriety of judgment and depth of practical wisdom, and an enlightenment which belonged only to those that were in the front ranks of progress.

But he was soon called to occupy the higher sphere, and more varied and difficult labours, successively, of presbyter and bishop. As a church teacher and church ruler he found scope for the

exercise of his various gifts, and was at his post whenever work of any kind had to be done. Returning, in A.D. 363, to Cæsarea, after an absence of eight years, he was made presbyter at the ripe age of thirty-four, having previously filled the lower grades. Eusebius, who two years before had been made Bishop of Cæsarea, being at the time of his election a layman, and unbaptized, but who afterwards showed himself to be a worthy man, took umbrage at Basil, and endeavoured to expel him from the Church. Basil was popular, and the monks espoused his cause. The consequence was a disturbance and disruption of the Church of so serious a character that two bishops were sent from the West to Cæsarea for the purpose of allaying the storm. Basil showed his moderation and pacific disposition by retiring to his monastery. But they soon had need of his help in Cæsarea. The Arians, who already had one of the city churches, thought that this division in the ranks of the orthodox, and the rawness of the bishop, who was no theologian, gave them an admirable opportunity for endeavouring to get the others into their hands. The emissaries of the Arian Emperor Valens commenced an attack on the broken and dispirited ranks of the orthodox, who had no one to head them. Basil's friend Gregory was employed to communicate with him. Yielding to the invitation, he flew with alacrity to Cæsarea, inspired the faithful by his presence, gained back some that had deserted, confirmed the wavering, and attacked the enemy so successfully that their designs were com-

pletely defeated. With a noble generosity of soul, he sought by good offices to conciliate the bishop Eusebius ; and he, with like magnanimity, forgot the past, and accepted with gratitude the invaluable services of his able coadjutor, resigning almost entirely into his hands the care of the Church, so that Basil was very soon bishop in all but the name. He had his hands full of work, and laboured incessantly. He took care of the poor, and superintended all the other benevolent institutions connected with the Church, governed the monks, composed a liturgy which is still extant, and preached.

An incident belonging to this period gives us a pleasing glimpse of him, and shows the power of his example and eloquence. A grievous famine visited Cæsarea, and the poor were reduced to extremity of suffering. Basil ascended the pulpit, and began his sermon with the words of Amos : "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" A perusal of this discourse shows, what was conclusively demonstrated by its effects, that it was worthy of the preacher, and equal to the crisis. He paints in strong and natural colours the burning, cloudless skies, the parched, languishing, earth, and asks if the God of nature has left his world to take care of itself? He tells his hearers that it is they that have made the heavens above as brass, and the earth as iron ; that God has closed his hand because they have closed their hearts against their brethren. He tells the rich man who is

hoarding his stores, that his listless presence in the house of God is a mockery, and a still greater mockery is it for him to send his wife and children to face God, while he, the real culprit, absents himself to follow the service of mammon. Closer and closer he hems in the rich hard-hearted sinner. He makes him feel that a crisis in his history has come, that God has sent the drought, in order that he might be put on his trial to see whether he would or would not deal his bread to the hungry. He rouses the dormant conscience, he unseals the frozen fountains of pity. He enumerates the horrors of famine, and paints the hunger-stricken wretches wasted to skeletons, famishing and dying. The appeal was irresistible. He opened the hearts and barns of the rich, and mercy was seen blessing the givers and receivers. Provisions poured in, and Basil collected the famished crowd together. He had provided vessels of all kinds, and as a disciple of Him that washed his disciples' feet, he deemed it an honour to be permitted to minister to the poor, his Master's representatives.

On the death of Eusebius, in A.D. 370, Basil became sole bishop, or rather archbishop. His election was opposed by the most influential men of the community. His austere life and faithful preaching offended the wicked and the worldlings. They alleged, as the plea for opposing him, the delicate state of his health, feeble from the first, and greatly impaired by ascetic rigours and incessant study and labours of various kinds—an objection which Gregory of Nazianzum, in a letter which he wrote to

the inhabitants of Cæsarea, in his father's name, told them would be valid if they were choosing an athlete, but was irrelevant in the case of a bishop. He was, however, installed, and until his death, in A.D. 379, held the see. He now redoubled his efforts, and surpassed even the high standard of his former labours. He reformed the abuses that had crept into his own diocese, and restrained the irregularities of his chor-episcopoi or country bishops, who had admitted to the sacred office persons utterly unfit and unworthy. His own wants were few, and the revenues of his bishopric were freely devoted to purposes of benevolence and piety. He founded the Basiliæ at Cæsarea, an asylum for strangers and the sick. This establishment was on so extensive and complete a scale, that Gregory, his friend, could call it a city in miniature. It had shops for all the artisans and labourers which it required, and the physicians resided within the walls. Similar institutions were, through his influence, established throughout his diocese.

In an age in which regard for the poor and the suffering distinguished the churches, Basil's activity and benevolence were pre-eminent. But he was not only a hard-working minister, but one of the most prominent of the defenders of the faith. Three years before he was born, the homoousion, or essential oneness of the Father and Son, was, by the Council of Nice, formally declared to be the belief of the Church. This doctrine, though at first favoured, was afterwards abandoned by Constantine the Great; and his successors, Constantius

and Valens, having espoused the Arian side, the prospects of orthodoxy were very dark in the time of Basil. In his letters to the bishops of the West, and others, he writes in the most melancholy strain. He compares the present state of the Church to that of a fleet in a storm, the vessels dashing against each other to their mutual destruction, and anxiously he wished and prayed for the calming of that terrible tempest. Meanwhile he manfully exerted himself to mitigate as much as possible its effects. His labours in defence of the Nicene doctrine were abundant and invaluable. Its triumph in the East was secured mainly through his instrumentality, and that of his singularly able auxiliaries, the two Gregories, his brother and his friend. He developed it with singular dexterity, eloquence, and conclusiveness in his controversial treatises, and explained it popularly in his homilies. Its establishment was the chief object of his extensive correspondence with the churches in the East and West, and with the leading spirits of the day, including Athanasius and Ambrose of Milan. But we have to admire no less his intrepidity and firmness than the acuteness and ability of the productions of his pen in defending what he believed to be the key-stone of doctrine and of hope, and preserving, for himself and others, from the encroachments of the weltering flood of confusion and error around it, that creed to which they clung as their only rock of safety. Valens had recourse to intrigues, blandishments, confiscation, banishment, and blood, in propa-

gation of his faith. Many of the orthodox clergy were expelled from their churches to make way for the creatures of the Emperor, and eighty of the former, who had come to him as a deputation, were by his orders put on board ship; the ship was set on fire, and all were left to perish.

He came to Cæsarea, and Basil was summoned to appear before the prefect Modestus, an unscrupulous agent of tyranny. He asked the bishop how he dared to differ from the Emperor, and if he thought it nothing to have him as an ally. The replies of Basil filled the prefect with rage, and, rising from his seat, and speaking with rough and savage voice, he said, "What, are you not afraid of my power?" Basil: "Why should I be afraid? What will happen? What shall I suffer?" Modestus: "One of the things that I have in my power to inflict." Basil: "What, pray, are those?" Modestus: "Confiscation, banishment, torture, death." Basil: "If you have anything else to threaten me with, do so, for nothing that you have mentioned touches me. He that has nothing is not exposed to confiscation, unless you want these threadbare and tattered clothes, and a few books, which are all I possess. Banishment I know not, for the whole earth is the Lord's, whose pilgrim and stranger I am. As for torture, the first stroke would kill me, and death would convey me to God." Modestus remarking that no one had ever used such liberty of speech to him, Basil replied, "Perhaps you never have met in the world a bishop, otherwise he would have spoken in the same

way on this matter. In everything else we are submissive, but when God is in the question we look to Him alone. Reproach, threaten at your worst ; tell the Emperor so ; you will never get us to agree to false doctrine." Nothing evidently was to be made of Basil by flattery or by threats. In order to terrify him into submission, the Emperor, however, accompanied by his guards, went into the church on Epiphany, in the face of a crowded congregation, and took his place near the bishop, with a gift in his hand, that he might compel him to receive it, and thus seem to be received into his communion.

Basil remained immoveable, and left the Emperor standing unnoticed, who, completely unmanned by the bishop's calmness, staggered and would have fallen had he not been supported. He would, however, have banished Basil ; but, dreading a disturbance on account of the reverence and respect in which he was held, he rescinded his impolitic and unjust degree, and seems afterwards to have regarded the man by whom he had been so manfully opposed and completely baffled, with feelings of superstitious awe. In this scene Basil rises into heroic proportions. In that sickly emaciated form, keeping an emperor with his guards at bay, we see a symbol not of the contest of priestly arrogance and secular tyranny, but of the impotence of imperial might and menace in the presence of an imperial soul ; an instance of the triumph of Christian faith and principle over the terrors of physical force, which entitles the name of Basil to





BASIL REFUSING TO GIVE UP THE WIDOW.

"The assessor of the prefect of Pontus attempted to compel a noble widow to marry him. Having no other resource, she took refuge in Basil's church, who, having refused to deliver her up, was dragged before the tribunal of the prefect. The officers were ordered to tear off his pallium. Basil offered to do it himself, and welcomed the threat of his flesh being torn with nails, by saying, that it would cure his liver complaint, from which he was then suffering greatly, and release him from all his troubles. The prefect dearly rued his violence." (Page 173.)

be enrolled in the noble army of the defenders of the sacred rights of conscience.

The man on whom the Emperor's wrath had spent itself and had been broken into foam and spray, was not likely to give way before an inferior foe. The assessor of the prefect of Pontus attempted to compel a noble widow to marry him. Having no other resource, she took refuge in Basil's church, who, having refused to deliver her up, was dragged before the tribunal of the prefect. The officers were ordered to tear off his pallium. Basil offered to do it himself, and welcomed the threat of his flesh being torn with nails by saying that it would cure his liver-complaint, from which he was then suffering greatly, and release him from all his troubles. The prefect dearly rued his violence. Immediately on its being known that the bishop had been apprehended, men and women, seizing whatever weapon they could lay their hands upon, rushed to the rescue. From threats the prefect speedily turned to entreaties, and besought Basil to use his influence to quell the riot.

For such a man as Basil, in such a time, ease and peace were out of the question. He was harassed till his dying day, and laid aside his armour only with his life. The shafts of calumny rained upon him thick as hail, and he became involved in irritating and vexatious contests with neighbouring bishops, who envied his greatness, and hated his creed, especially with Anthimus, respecting the limits of their respective dioceses. He retained the monastic habit, and lived on monastic fare, till the last. The

keen sword at length cut through its scabbard. Worn out by austerities, labours, and anxieties, under which his frame, sickly from the first, but for the iron strength of his will and the glowing enthusiasm of his nature, would have long before succumbed, he died in A.D. 379, at the age of fifty. His last words were, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." He was followed to the tomb by the frantic tears of his flock, and the universal Church bewailed the fall of a master in Israel. Such was the concourse of all classes on the day of his funeral, that not a few were crushed to death in the crowd. His literary remains are numerous, and among them nearly a hundred homilies, which, though not cast in the highest mould of pulpit eloquence, are evidently the productions of a well-balanced and highly-cultivated mind. They are marked by a clearness, a silvery sweetness, and a chaste beauty of style, a solidity of thought, cogency of argument, and power of familiar, yet ornate illustration, which contrast favourably with the frothy and affected declamation which at that time passed for eloquence. If the essence of eloquence be defined by its etymological meaning—as speaking out—that term applies well to the discourses of Basil. He is direct and home-thrusting, leads by no circuitous paths, but straight to the mark, smoothing, however, the way by a winning tenderness and a persuasiveness due to his sobriety, common sense, and varied appeals.

He is one of the most pleasing specimens of the success of rhetoric in the pulpit, because he had

so thoroughly mastered his art. The rhetorician's rules had taught him not only to name his tools, but to select and use them with a surprising nicety of adaptation to the object in hand. His homilies are not theological essays, nor his polemic treatises preachments. He was a follower of Origen, but the practical, serious bent of his mind neutralized to a great extent the viciousness of his system of interpretation. His writings on Christian ethics, casuistry, and ascetics, or, as one might rather call it, practical religion, in which is fully delineated his idea of a holy life, are still extant. His five books against Eunomius, and his treatise on the Holy Spirit, are his chief contributions to the Arian controversy. The latter, praised highly by his friend Gregory, although it does not develop the doctrine of the Spirit so fully as was afterwards done, is regarded as the most able of his performances. It was translated by Erasmus, who tells us that when half through, he observed that the style seemed to alter so much—now swelling into the tragic vein, and now sinking into vulgarity, instead of the smooth, sober, and chaste flow of the early part—that he was inclined to think the latter half spurious. The Hexameron course of eleven lectures on the six days' work of creation, necessarily defective in science, breathe a fine Scriptural spirit, and are rich in practical thought and appropriate application. Seventeen homilies on the Psalms, and twenty-nine on various topics, are his chief pulpit relics. He is happy in the popular illustration and explanation of the high

themes that were in his day so much discussed. It was not his habit to soar above his hearers into the regions of mystic and misty speculation. In common with all the greatest preachers of antiquity, he was a man of action, as well as of speech. His eminence as an orator was rather the consequence of his previous training than of close application after he became a preacher. But as the ability to preach even tolerably must have been rare in those days, the people were less exacting in respect to the pulpit than now, and a rhetorical education, by training the faculty of speaking readily, as well as writing and thinking, made the preacher less dependent on preparation, which is indispensable in modern times.

The accession of such a man to the ranks of the Church was not the common phenomenon of a dux boy and prize-man taking orders, but the uncommon one of a man of mark in the literary and philosophic world doing so. He had lived in great cities, and drank of knowledge at the fountain-heads. He had devoted all his life to the acquisition of the art of persuading men by speech, and ere he became bishop had served an apprenticeship in the art of governing them in his monastery.

He is one of the finest specimens of high and varied culture, consecrated by deep and living piety, which the history of the Church affords.

Passages from Basil.

MAN DUST, BUT THE WORKMANSHIP OF GOD.

“The Lord God took dust of the ground.” When you hear the word dust, be taught not to fear man. Accept no man’s person. Why should you entertain lofty thoughts of yourself? When thoughts arise which produce swelling of soul and wrath, remember how you were created. “The Lord God took dust of the ground, and made man.” When may you forget yourself? Then only when you can sever the bond that binds you to the earth. But if you never are severed from the earth, but are by nature suited for the earth, walk on the earth, rest on the earth, possess the earth by right, and whatever you do, whether great or small, you do on the earth—then have you ever near you a remembrancer of your lowliness. . . .

Look to the earth and make the reflection that you were formed of the kindred dust which you despise. What is more despicable—what more deserving of contempt than we? Have you seen a proud man arrayed in splendid attire, his hand sparkling with the lustre of his signet ring, and displaying with manifest pride another ring set with precious stones,—clothed in silken robes, attended by a retinue of servants, affectedly shaking his flowing yellow locks, wearing gold chains, with lofty strut and haughty speech, proud of the number of his servants, of the flatterers he draws

around him, of his sumptuous table, and the salutations with which the lictors greet him as they rise from their seats to do him honour, meet, or pass him?

When you see such magnates passing on, preceded by the loud cry of the herald; when you see them threatening one, grinding down another, confiscating the goods of a third and delivering him up to death, be not afraid on account of what you see—dread not for all this him who orders this to be done, let him not strike you with astonishment,—let not such a spectacle seem strange.

Reflect that God formed man of the dust of the earth. If man is anything else be afraid of him, but if he is dust of the earth despise him.

“And God formed man.” The word “formed” does not mean that the creation of man was the result of a mechanical operation on the part of God. God formed him, it is said. Did He form him as potters form their ware? The sculpturing of a statue, and the making of a plaster-cast, is an imitation, as far as external appearance goes. You have seen how a statue bears the expression of some affection of the mind. The statue of a soldier, for example, is made to express valour. If the bronze has been moulded into the form of a woman, it has a feminine cast of expression. Art is capable, by imitation, of producing any other characteristic expression. The workmanship of God is not of this description. He formed man, by causing his creative power to penetrate inward, and thus organize the whole. If I had time to

go over the human structure, you would learn from it the wisdom of God displayed in your creation. For, in truth, man is a world in miniature, and they have done well who have given him this name.—*From the Hexameron.*

THE MIND COMPARED TO A PAINTER.

Like a painter, the mind delineates its thoughts on the tablet of the soul. Possessed of free will, it is unconfined and unfettered, and on account of its incorporeality there are no limits to the exercise of its love for depicting, for it finds as much space for the delineation of its ideas as it chooses.

Again, just as the painter, immediately after filling his canvass with the various figures that make up the picture,—produces it, and removing its coverings, exhibits it to the gaze of the multitude, no longer requiring to explain what he has painted, but allowing the painting to explain itself: so also the soul, on its departure from this life, is stripped of the veil of the body which covered the tablet within during the whole of life, while the process of painting it with ideas was going on; it shows in distinct outline what has been depicted on it; and the tablet of the soul, filled with its varied tale, lies uncovered for the inspection of the universe.

If sacred lessons and virtuous thoughts have been the subjects of the pencil, then the mind which drew and the tablet which contains the picture, are judged worthy of the highest encomiums. Fascinated with its beauty, the spectators are un-

willing to withdraw their eyes from the spectacle, but all admire the loveliness of the picture—the figures, the divinely graceful forms of the objects depicted, and felicitate that divine painter on the noble use to which he has turned this earthly life, by employing it in painting on the tablet of the soul, with beauty-loving hand, pictures surpassing in loveliness the loftiest ideals of the beholders' minds.

But if these paintings turn out disgraceful and unseemly, then the painter will manifestly deserve shame and derision. Far different, perhaps, were the hopes he cherished previous to the uncovering of his picture. His fond expectations are all dissipated when the veil is removed and his work is shown to the spectators.

Whither, then, shall that artist flee, who is weighed in the balance with the other, is found wanting, and is condemned by all,—his own thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another? Where shall that tablet of the soul be placed that has filled the beholder's eyes with every shameful sight and monstrous idea?—*Treatise on True Virginity.*

SPIRITUAL WORK AND WARFARE.

Art thou a traveller like him who prayed, "Guide my footsteps?" Take heed to thyself, lest thou wander from the way, lest thou turn to the right or the left. Walk on the King's highway. Art thou an architect? Lay firmly the foundation of faith, which is Jesus Christ. Art thou a builder?

Look how thou buildest, and what—not wood, grass, stubble, but gold, silver, and precious stones. A pastor! Take heed lest any of the duties belonging to thine office are omitted. These are three: To lead back the wanderer, bind up the broken heart, and heal the diseased. A husbandman? Dig round the barren fig-tree, and supply it with what is needed to produce fruitfulness. Art thou a soldier? Endure hardship for the Gospel, engage in the good warfare against the spirits of darkness, against the affections of the flesh. Entangle not thyself with the affairs of this life, that thou mayest please him who has called thee to be a soldier. Art thou an athlete? Take heed to thyself, lest thou transgress any of the laws of the contest; for no one is crowned except he strive lawfully.

Imitate Paul in running, wrestling, fighting. Like a skilful pugilist, keep the eye of thy spirit steady—guard the vital parts by placing thy hands before them—let thine eye be fixed on thine adversary. In the race, press on to what is before,—so run that thou mayest obtain. In wrestling, firmly grapple with thine invisible foes.

Such through life the Word requires thee to be, not faint-hearted, not slumberous, but showing thyself sober and vigilant.—*Homily on the Words of Moses, "Look to thyself."*

THE DIGNITY AND LOWLINESS OF HUMAN NATURE.

Are you puffed up on account of your wealth, and proud of your ancestors? Do you boast of

your country, your handsome person, and your distinguished honours? Remember that you are mortal,—that you are earth, and shall return to earth. Look to those who were possessed of like splendid endowments before you. Where are those who were invested with political power—where the fearless orators? Where are those who instituted the public festivals—the renowned horsemen, generals, satraps, and kings? Are they not all dust?—all a myth? Are not their memorial relics comprised in a few bones?

Look into the sepulchres, and see if you can tell which is the master, which the slave; which the poor, which the rich. Distinguish, if you can, the captive from the king, the strong from the weak, the beautiful from the deformed. Remember what you are, and you will never be uplifted; and you will not forget what you are if you consider yourself.

Again, are you sprung of humble origin and unknown to fame, the poor son of poor parents, homeless, a wanderer from city to city, feeble, destitute of what is needed for the supply of your daily wants, in dread of men in power, in dread of all on account of the lowliness of your estate—for the poor, it is said, cannot abide a threat. Do not, for that reason, lose all self-respect, or abandon all hope because there is nothing desirable for you in the mean time. But elevate your thoughts to the good which is given you even now, and to what is in reversion in the promise of God.

First, you are a man,—the only creature here

below that is the immediate offspring of God. Will not any one, who thinks as a wise man, regard it enough to be made by the very hands of God the creator and preserver of the universe, to love the Highest,—to be able, in consequence of being created in the image of God, to rise to angelic dignity?

You have received a reasonable soul, by which you are capable of knowing God, studying the nature of the objects around you, and plucking the sweetest fruits of wisdom. All the beasts of the field, wild and tame—all the denizens of the waters—all the winged tribes that fly in the air, are your servants and subjects.

Have you not discovered arts and founded cities, manufactured what supplies the necessities and ministers to the luxuries of life? Has not your intelligence made a path over the ocean? Do not earth and sea minister to your subsistence? do not the atmosphere and the heavens, and the starry choir, exhibit their movements for you? Why, then, are you downcast in soul? Is it because you have not a horse with a silver bit? What of that, when you have the sun careering on in his swift course, exhibiting for you his torch, and the moon pouring her light around your path, and the myriad-gleam of stars besides? You are not mounted on a gilded chariot, but you have your feet, a conveyance of your own, born with you. Why, then, do you envy the possessor of a large purse, who needs other feet to carry him? You do not sleep in a bed of ivory; but you have the earth,

more valuable than many beds of ivory, and enjoy sweet rest on it, and speedy sleep that banishes care. You do not dwell under gilded roofs, but you have the sky gleaming with the ineffable beauty of the stars. These things belong to this life. There are other things greater. For you God became incarnate—for you the gift of the Spirit was bestowed—for you the hope of resurrection, which will bring life to perfection; and the way to God has been paved by the commandments He has given us, and crowns of righteousness prepared for him who has not shunned the endurance of toil in the pursuit of holiness.—*From the Hexameron.*

PERIL OF PROCRASTINATION.

Put not off, I beseech you, from day to day, from month to month, from year to year, lest, by neglecting to provide oil to feed the lamp, a day come on you which you are not looking for; when the means of maintaining life will fail you for ever, and straits shall be on every side, and anguish that knows no alleviation, and you shall be given up by your physicians, given up by your friends; when your breathing having become quick and dry, and the raging fever burning and scorching you within, you shall groan from your inmost heart, but none will condole with you; and speak in a faint and feeble voice, but none will hear; and all you say will be despised as raving. Who in that hour shall administer baptism to you? Who shall admonish you when sunk in the stupefaction of

suffering? Your relations? They will be overcome with dejection. Strangers? They will be indifferent to your sufferings. Your friends shrink from admonishing you for fear of disturbing you. Perhaps even your physician will deceive you, and you, through the love of life implanted by nature in every breast, will not wholly despair of recovering.

It is night. There is no one at hand to help you—no one to baptise you—death is near. His messengers are urgent. Who is he that summons you? Is it God whom you have despised? But, you say, he will hearken to me then. Yes; for you hearken to Him now! He will defer the appointed hour, you say. Yes; for you have used so well the time that has been already allotted to you.

Let no one deceive you with vain words, for swift destruction will come upon you, and ruin like the sweep of the hurricane. The angel will come, with downcast countenance, to hurry you away by force—to drag away your soul, bound in the fetters of sin, turning often back to look at what is left behind, and with voiceless sorrow bewailing its fate, when the organ of lamentation is closed up for ever. How will you torture yourself? What groans will you utter in unavailing remorse, when you behold the glory of the righteous, shining in the splendour of the gifts bestowed on them? And when you see the despair of sinners sunk in the deepest abysses of darkness, what will you then say in the anguish of your heart? Ah, me! would God I had cast off the burden of my sins

when it was so easy to do so, instead of **dragging** on myself this load of woes! O that I, wretch that I am, had washed away these stains, then should I not now have been foul with the pollution of guilt; I should now have been luxuriating in the bliss of heaven. O the wicked course I have taken! For the temporary enjoyment of sin, I am tormented for ever; for the pleasures of the flesh, I am consigned to the flames. Just is the judgment of God. I was called, but did not obey; I was taught, but gave no heed; men testified, but I scoffed.

Such will be the words you will utter in bewailing yourself, if you are dragged away unbaptized. O man, fear hell; strive to enter the kingdom. Despise not exhortation. Do not say, Hold me excused for this reason, and that other reason. There is no pretext sufficient to excuse you. I cannot but weep when I consider that you prefer deeds of shame to the transcendent glory of God, and by clinging to your sins shut yourself out from the promises of the gospel, so that you will not see the good of the heavenly Jerusalem. . . . There are the myriads of angels, there the general assembly of the first-born, there the thrones of the apostles, the seats of the prophets, the sceptres of the patriarchs, the crowns of martyrs, the praises of the just. Aspire to be numbered with them—being washed and sanctified by the free grace of Christ, that to Him may be the glory and the power, for ever and ever. Amen.—*Peroration of Discourse on Baptism.*

EXORDIUM OF HOMILY ON THE FIRST PSALM.

Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly !

Architects proportion the extent of the foundations of a house to its height. In building a vessel of heavy burden, all its parts are constructed so as to be suitable for the freight it is meant to carry ; and in the production of living creatures the heart is made to correspond to the creature's destined constitution and functions ; and the body being in every case symmetrically framed in accordance with its own individual elementary principles,—which depend on its magnitude,—each creature exhibits its own appropriate peculiarities of structure.

What the foundation is in a house, the keel in a vessel, and the heart in the body of an animal,—this short introductory sentence seems to be in relation to the whole materials of the Psalms. For, being about to exhort the lovers of religion to the performance of much that is full of toil and trouble, as the discourse advances, the Psalmist first points out the blissful end of all ; that, animated by the hope of the good laid up in store, we may bear without a murmur the difficulties we meet, like travellers on a rugged and toilsome road, whose feeling of weariness is lightened when they think of the hoped-for inn at their journey's end.

Further, the value which the merchant sets on the freight makes him brave the perils of the deep ; and the hope of harvest cheers the husbandman's toils. Wherefore the Guide of our life, the Spirit

of truth, wisely and skilfully begins with exhibiting the reward, that we may submit to the toils which are imposed on us, and press forward to the good laid up for us in heaven.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.” One Being alone is pre-eminently and supremely blessed—and that is God. Paul, accordingly, in speaking of Christ, said, “According to the manifestation of the blessed God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

He is essentially blessed because essentially good. He is the centre of universal regard, towards which all creation looks and tends; the immutable nature—the sovereign dignity, the untroubled life, the painless perpetuity: with Him there is no change. Him mutation touches not: He is the ever-gushing fountain, the boundless love, the inexhaustible treasure. But men, ignorant and lovers of the world,—destitute of the knowledge of that which is truly good, give the name of felicity to what is often valueless,—wealth, health, and the splendour of life,—not one of which is in its own nature good, not only because they are easily changed into their opposites, but because they cannot confer happiness on their possessors. Who was ever made just through wealth, or wise through health? On the contrary, these prove fertile sources of sin to those who make improper use of them. Happy, then, is the man who has those things which are of the highest value, and possesses a share of those blessings which cannot be taken away.

But how shall I know those things? “Who

walketh not," says the Psalmist, "in the counsel of the ungodly."

But before saying what it is not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, let me dispose of the question raised here why the prophet singles out the man and pronounces him blessed. Has he excluded the woman from the blessing? Certainly not. For the virtue of man and woman is one, since the creation of both was equally honourable. Consequently the reward of both is the same. Hear the book of Genesis. It is there said, "In the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." Because their nature is one, their faculties are the same; and because their work is equal, their reward is the same. Why then has he mentioned the man, and said nothing of the woman? Because their nature being one, he regarded both as sufficiently indicated by the mention of the principal sex.

Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly. Look carefully at the words; each expression teems with instruction. He has not said "who walketh not," but who hath not walked. For he who is in the world is not yet blessed, on account of the uncertainty that attaches to the final issue of this life. But he who has fulfilled the appointed course of life, and reached the certain goal, then and only then is securely blest.

Why are those blessed who walk in the law of the Lord? For it is not those who *have walked*, but that *are walking* in it that the discourse pro-

nounces blessed. Because they who do good receive in the doing of it the hoped-for reward. But they who avoid evil are not praised for once or twice shunning sin, but only if they are able to resist to the end temptations to evil.

But from what follows, another question of some difficulty arises. It is not the man who has lived a virtuous life, but the man who has not committed sin, that he blesses. How is this? To attach a blessing to mere absence of sin is to extend it to a horse, an ox, and a stone. What inanimate object ever stood in the way of sinners, or sat in the chair of pestilence?* By a little patience you will discover the solution, for he adds, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord." But the observance of the divine law is possible only to a rational nature. We say, moreover, that departure from evil is the first step of reformation; for it is said, "Depart from evil and do good."

Therefore, in leading us wisely and skilfully to virtue, he has made departure from evil the commencement of good.

THE INCARNATION ILLUSTRATED BY ANALOGY.

But how was God in flesh? As fire is in iron, not by being changed into it, but communicated to it.† For the fire does not run forth to the iron, but remaining in its place, communicates its peculiar virtue, and is not diminished by the com-

* In the English version, "the chair of the scorner."

† Not by transition, but by communication; *μετα βασιως* and *μετα δακνως* are the terms employed.

munication, although it fills with itself the whole of the object which partakes of it. Thus, then, the Word neither underwent change of place, although He dwelt among us, nor a change of nature, though He became flesh. Neither was heaven left empty of Him who fills it, and yet earth received into her bosom the heavenly One.

Dream not of a descent of the Divinity, for He does not migrate from place to place like beings invested with bodies. Do not imagine that the Divinity is changed into flesh and altered in nature, for He is immutable and immortal.

Is it asked how the Divine Word was not affected with human weakness? We reply: fire does not take on the properties of the iron heated by it. Iron is black and cold, but, when heated, assumes the aspect of the fire; it acquires the glow of the fire without darkening the fire; it emits flame without extinguishing that of the fire. In like manner, our Lord's flesh was received into union with Divinity, without communicating to Divinity its own infirmities. You are not to ascribe to this mortal nature an effect analogous to that of the fire, and imagine that it acts on the Divine, but only that it is acted on by it in accordance with the analogy which, on account of human weakness, you make use of. Nor need you be at a loss to conceive how the incorruptible nature can remain unaffected, having the familiar spectacle before you—for I still keep by the same image—of the fire unconsumed and unaffected by the rust of the iron which is heated by it.

Learn the mystery why God is in flesh. It is that He may slay death, who lies lurking in human nature. For as poisons lodged in the body are neutralised by introducing antidotes into it,—and as the darkness which reigns in the house is dissipated at the entrance of light, so death, which tyrannised in human nature, vanished at the advent and entrance of Divinity. And as the congelation which binds in rigidity the particles of water during night, is overcome by the beams of the sun when he has become warm, so death reigned till the appearance of Christ; but when the saving grace of God was revealed, and the Sun of righteousness arose, death was swallowed up in victory. It could not abide the presence of the true light. O the depth of the goodness and love of God!—
Sermon on the Nativity.

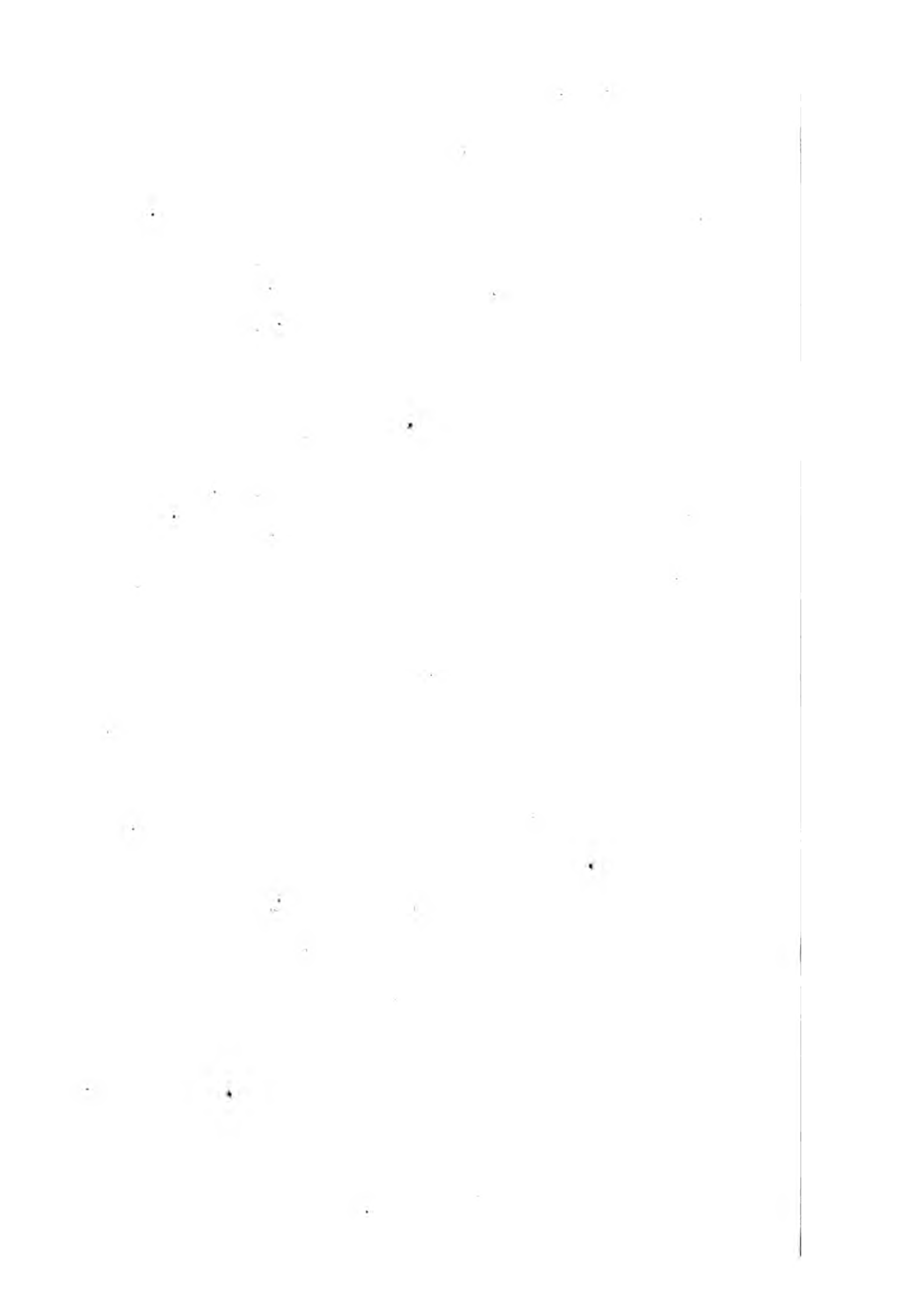




THE GENIAL THEOLOGIAN :

GREGORY NAZIANZEN.







THE GENIAL THEOLOGIAN:

GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN, theologian, orator, and poet, holds a conspicuous place among the lights of the ancient Church. He was the contemporary of Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nissa, and Chrysostom, and survived them all. He outlived Basil twenty years, and took from his hand the banner of orthodoxy, which for a short time he displayed with signal success in Constantinople, a far more important post than Cæsarea, although he never acquired the influence which his friend had wielded in ecclesiastical affairs. His name is thus associated with one of the most remarkable stages in the development of Christian doctrine; and he forms a link in the succession of the defenders of the faith, which stretches unbroken through the fourth century. He saw the brilliant career of Chrysostom, who was twenty years his junior, begin and close. As, however, he had retired from public life ere his distinguished successor in the see of Constantinople entered upon it, his relation to that master of eloquence is rather that of a precursor than a contemporary. He occupies thus an interesting niche in the gallery of patristic preachers, and is an interesting represen-

tative of the oratory, philosophy, and piety of his day. His genius and character had a strongly marked individuality, and his somewhat chequered and singular history is closely interwoven with important events in that of the Church. These and other reasons make it worth while to make the acquaintance of Gregory of Nazianzum, and the works with which he has enriched the literature of the Fathers. By both sides he was of noble, and in the case of his immediate progenitors, of Christian blood. His father, who belonged to a strange sect, whose religion was a mixture of Heathenism and Judaism, was, by the influence of his wife Nonna, brought to embrace Christianity, and was afterwards ordained Bishop of Nazianzum, in Cappadocia, where he died, in A.D. 374, about a hundred years old, forty-five of which he had been bishop.

In an oration in praise of his father, and in others of his works, he dilates on their virtues with the affection of a son and the exaggeration of an orator, not unmixed with that worship of saintship which had ere this time taken root in the Church. From the extravagant heap of rhetorical flowers with which their memory is covered, the one pleasing extract we distil is contained in the brief remark, that they were both persons of simple and devoted piety, tinctured, however, by the prevailing superstition and austerity. The young Gregory—for his father bore the same name—was born A.D. 325. Before his birth he had been, like a second Samuel, devoted by his mother to the service of

God, and the dedication was repeated when he was still an infant by presenting him in the church with a roll of the Gospels in his arms. Thus destined for the sacred office, he was trained with the greatest care. After receiving the rudiments of his education at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, he studied at Cæsarea in Palestine, and at the famous schools of Alexandria in Egypt. He frequently tells us of the ardour which filled his mind even in his boyish days to master the different branches of knowledge, chiefly that he might lay its treasures at the feet of Christ, and turn the weapons it furnished against those who taunted the Christians with ignorance.

In prosecution of his design of gathering the spoils of Grecian lore and consecrating them to Christianity, he went to Athens. On his voyage thither, he encountered a storm, which furnished several amplified and ornate descriptions both to his poems and orations, and still better, so shook his inmost soul with solemn fear of death and awe of God, as to form a crisis in his spiritual history. He spent here five years. His temperament and the proficiency he had already attained in learning and philosophy made him susceptible of glowing enthusiasm amid the temples and statues that embodied the beautiful ideals of the Grecian mind. Capable of associating with Acropolis, and Pnyx, and Piræus, whatever of legend or history was connected with them, for him to live in Athens was to live amid the mighty men and deeds of the past; and to study history, oratory, and philo-

sophy in the city of Pericles, Plato, Socrates, and Demosthenes, and the Acts of the Apostles under the shade of the Areopagus, must have yielded him rare emotions and impressions. The culture of the period, however, was false and superficial. The favourite studies were rhetoric and declamation. Fine set phrases learned by heart, dexterous quibbling, tinsel ornament, grand rhetorical flourishes, were the be-all and the end-all of Pagan and Christian dilettanti; the staple, but unsubstantial, elements of refined education. To draw from the treasures of ancient lore gaudy plumes with which to deck out bare and borrowed platitudes, and by dint of the most perverse twisting and allegorising to make Homer and Pindar teach philosophy, were the great feats aimed at. That he did not escape the influence of this shallow pedantry, his works abundantly show. But they also show him to have been a thoroughly accomplished scholar—of prodigious industry, and with a real liking to the classics especially. He took no pains to disguise his contempt for those who, on the strength of a miscellaneous farrago of literary and philosophic scraps, set up for literati and philosophers. This was the common stamp of men that the most celebrated schools sent forth. Although there had been a succession of erudite and philosophic fathers in the Church, some of them so much devoted to speculative pursuits, that they persisted after ordination in wearing the philosopher's garb,—and although much had been done by the Christian emperors to foster learning in the Church, litera-

ture and philosophy lent their greatest influence to prop up the tottering superstitions. The great mass of the clergy were illiterate, and were, of course, supremely despised by those pert gentlemen, whose empty brains had got a lacquering of the thinnest but most showy accomplishments to be had for a fee from sophists and grammarians. The Scriptures, of course, met the same fate. The canons of criticism voted them vulgar,—utterly destitute of polish and the graces. But it was only in the eighteenth century that a celebrated belles-lettres divine, and elegant preacher, expressed his taste as offended at the frequent mention of blood in Scripture, and pointed out for special censure the expression “washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Our canons have been overhauled considerably since the fourth century,—very considerably even since the days of Kaimes, Blair, and Boileau. They have become less dainty—less observant of minute peccadilloes of grammar, caring less for fugitive and filigree beauty—more tolerant, capacious, deeper, truer; admitting much, very much that was tabooed formerly, even much of the Scriptures. Yet the remark of Chrysostom to one who, jealous for their honour, contended that Paul wrote better Greek than Plato, to the effect, that the ignorance of the Apostles of human learning and art is an evidence of the divinity of the Scriptures, was the best way of meeting the cavils of the half-educated, although the homage paid to them since, by the highest art and criti-

cism, makes it more valid now, with an important modification of meaning.

But Gregory's most important acquisition at Athens, according to his own statement, was the friendship of Basil. With a pun on the name of the latter, intelligible in Greek, he says that, like Saul, who in seeking his father's asses found a kingdom, so he had come to Athens in search of learning and found Basil. In the account which he gives of their first meeting, we get a glimpse of Athenian student-life. The teachers at Athens had their scouts there, and throughout Greece, on the outlook for pupils, and whenever a freshman arrived at Athens he was pounced upon by some of the students, with the view of getting him to attend the master under whom they studied, and whose keen partisans they always were. They showed the new comer the most hospitable attentions, and, to try his mettle, they attempted to bamboozle and browbeat him in argument; and then took him with them to the baths, making as much noise and uproar as possible. By this means they generally succeeded in getting into their own set, and to their own school, any young man they laid hands on. But for the friendly intervention of Gregory, Basil, on his arrival, would have passed through the ordinary ordeal of a novice. These good offices laid the foundations of their famous friendship, and that close intercourse which had but few breaks till Basil's death. While the latter, on their return from Athens, embraced the

monastic life, Gregory returned home to Nazianzum. Ardently attached to speculative and literary pursuits, with strong predilections for a quiet and contemplative life, he shrank from the responsibilities of the ministerial office ; and, not satisfied with the draughts he had taken at the various reservoirs of learning he had frequented, he devoted the next six years to drinking deeper at the fountains of sacred and profane knowledge. In A.D. 361, he allowed himself reluctantly to be made presbyter by his father, but, to prevent himself being made bishop, he fled secretly from Nazianzum, and took refuge with his friend Basil, in his monastery at Neo-Cæsarea. His reasons for taking this step he explained at length in an oration which he delivered on his return. His delineation of the episcopal office there is marked by that rhetorical exaggeration and one-sidedness which appears in all his performances. It is truthful and valuable in the main, but conjures up such an array of difficulties as are sufficient to frighten any one from putting his shoulders under the Atlantean load.

That all the reasons he enumerates had been calmly weighed, and had influenced his decision, is not for a moment to be supposed. Evidently, instead of giving us only his real reasons, he gives us all the possible reasons that could be urged. We are bound to believe his solemn averment that he felt at the time that his main duty was to secure his personal salvation. But his conduct on this and other occasions showed the strong and decided

bent of his nature. He had no delicacy in reference to talking about himself. In this respect he was garrulous to a degree. He delivered orations on himself and his affairs,—he devoted thousands of lines of verse to the same theme. Without being at all selfish, or exactly an egotist, he was conscious of every inch of ability he possessed, and nervously anxious to set himself and his actions in a proper light. He had a genial honest simplicity of soul, which showed itself through all the sophistication of his school-training. And though given a good deal, especially latterly, to musing and brooding over his own feelings, he had little skill in judging of his own motives. His scholarly tastes, and his love of scholarly ease—the former often enough avowed—were, at bottom, the power that dragged him away from the cares and labours of public life. A fine trait in his character is his filial affection. And it was this alone that was powerful enough to overcome his predilection for retirement. He alludes, both in his prose and poetical works, in feeling and tender terms, to his aged father and mother, whose only surviving son he was ; and to his sacrifice of his own tastes to share the burden that now pressed too heavily on the old man. Indeed, it was anxiety to aid and comfort his parents that prevented him from accompanying Basil at once into his monastic retreat ; and under the combined influence of his filial affection and love for study, he consented to be associated with his father in the care of the Church, effecting thus a compromise by which both principles might

be indulged, with the additional recommendation of its opening up a career of usefulness. He once and again expresses his belief that the love of praise and ambition had no power over him—a statement no doubt made sincerely and honestly, but to be accepted with reserve. No man who wrote so much as he did about himself could be free from ambition and vanity. The glimpses we get of him as he relates his own history, in the stilted and stately harangue, or in the flowing hexameters and iambics, are not favourable to clear and correct vision. It is a relief, after the formal periods, the interminable series, and climaxes with so many rounds that you feel your head beginning to swim ere you get to the top—to turn to two letters that breathe something of the freshness of nature, written in reply to one from Basil describing his Pontic retreat. Basil, with his usual grave enthusiasm, drew in his letter an exquisitely beautiful picture. As you read, you seem to inhale the bracing mountain air and the odours of flowers—see the waving woods, musical with birds, girdling the height, and watch the river gliding noiselessly below, till, striking on the projecting rock, it becomes a foaming, roaring whirlpool. It is enough to make the most ardent lover of the town sigh for such a scene of quiet and beauty, and might have certainly been thought enough to lure to it Gregory, who was never weary of singing the praises of solitude, and who loved nature so well. But he, with his propensity for disappointing calculation and perplexing his friends,

turned the whole thing into ridicule and fun. He says that he will dignify Basil's mouse-hole with the name of a monastery if he must. He tells him that he and his monks on a hill-top, covered with woods and exposed to the river fog, are very unenviably condemned to Cimmerian darkness: insinuates his doubts as to whether the mountain path Basil had described led to the kingdom or to Hades, although he professes himself willing, for his friend's sake, to believe that the former is its destination. He will compare the site of their abode, if he must, to the garden of Eden, but suspects that it would be more suitable to describe it as a dreary wilderness, without a Moses to strike the rock. In the same vein of raillery he pities their hard fate in having to climb over rocks and through briars to reach their abode, and condoles with them on their river being too muddy to drink, and fully as plentifully supplied with stones as fish. In his next letter he pictures Basil and his unfortunate companions sitting chattering in a miserable hut without doors or windows, with pools of water that had come through the roof standing on the floor. "How," he goes on to say, "shall I pass over those barren gardens, unfurnished even with pot-herbs—that huge heap of dung, with which we together manured them when I was there—I, who acted as gardener, and you, oh! famous man, with this neck and these hands—which to this day bear the the marks—dragged together the rude waggon (oh! earth and sun, oh! man and manliness, let

me exclaim in tragic style), and all this, not to build a bridge over the Hellespont, but to level the rugged side of the hill."

These letters are a window into his breast. There are few who will not like him all the better for the humour which he here lets run wild, and which crops out in various passages of his writings. The exhibition of it throws around him a human geniality, which gives him a stronger hold of our sympathies. The death of his brother Cæsarius, and consequent disputes concerning his property, were the immediate causes of his return home from Pontus. He then resumed his ministerial work. In consequence of his father having been entrapped into communicating with some Arians, the monks in his diocese seceded in a body from his communion, and a great commotion was the consequence. Gregory convinced his father of his error, and quieted the tumult, and in celebration of the restoration of harmony, delivered his two orations on peace.

Julian, in the meantime, who had succeeded to the imperial throne, died in A.D. 363, after a reign of twenty months. On his death, Gregory delivered two orations against the apostates, filled with the most stinging invective, ably exposing the mean, tortuous, and vexatious policy pursued by Julian towards the Christians, and attacking most successfully the philosophy and paganism he had patronised. The history of his attempt to galvanise into life the extinct body of heathen superstition, by the inspiration of the new Platonic

philosophy, and ideas and practices borrowed from Christianity, was a fair mark for sarcasm and ridicule. His imitation of the Christian pulpit, in his injunction to the priests to deliver harangues to the people, robed in purple, and with fresh garlands on their heads,—his imitation of Christian charity, in the relief of the poor and care of the sick ; his rebuilding of temples and offering of whole hecatombs ; his marching to perform sacrifice, followed by a crowd of admiring old women ; his appearance at the grove of Daphne, where, instead, of the *élite* of the city of Antioch, he was met by a single priest, bearing a wretched goose for an offering,—were all materials which Gregory knew well how to use. He had seen into his character when they were fellow-students at Athens, and had predicted that mischief would come out of him. In these two discourses he amply repaid the hatred with which Julian regarded him in common with all men of learning among the Christians, and crushed the emperor's memory to atoms, and trampled it in the mire.

He co-operated with Basil in the erection of an hospital, and aided him in putting down the Arians at Cæsarea. On the appointment of Basil to the episcopate, he nominated Gregory to the bishopric of Sasima. He declined the post with considerable indignation. He can find no terms too contemptuous to describe the place ; it was insignificant, noisy, dusty, and a kind of debateable ground on the borders of the diocese of Anthimus, with whom Basil was at war respecting the limits

of their dioceses. Again and again, in prose and in verse, this unfortunate affair of Sasima comes up till it becomes quite ludicrous. His chief ground of complaint against his friend is that he knew his decided repugnance to public life. A little after this, however, he yielded to the importunities of his father, and was ordained assistant-bishop of Nazianzum, on the express condition that he was not to be successor. Accordingly, on his father's death, in A.D. 374, in spite of all entreaties, he withdrew to Seleucia, and although, on his return to Nazianzum, he found it still without a bishop, in spite of the tears and entreaties of the people, he refused to undertake the charge. Such was his love for the life of the studious recluse. He was not, however, suffered to remain in obscurity. In A.D. 379, he allowed himself to be persuaded to go to Constantinople, to preach to the remnant of the orthodox there, whose fortunes were then at a very low ebb, having been driven from all but one of the city churches. By his eloquence, prudence, and mildness, he won many back from the ranks of Arianism. His success was signal, but he found Constantinople a bed of thorns. The mob were roused against him, and stoned him. He was dragged before the tribunal of the Consul; an assassin was hired to slay him; but he escaped all the machinations of his foes.

One Maximus, who had been a Cynic philosopher, became a Christian, was kindly treated by Gregory, and was invested with the clerical office. Aspiring to the dignity of the Patriarchate, and

being furnished with the necessary funds, he proceeded to Alexandria, and got himself consecrated by Peter, the successor of Athanasius, who thereby showed most unaccountable vacillation, inasmuch as he had previously assigned the honour to Gregory.

When the news of this reached Constantinople, a tumult ensued. The people were furious at Maximus, and were also angry at Gregory, though innocent of any connivance with Maximus, but, on the contrary, slighted and wronged by his conduct. By wise and seasonable words he stilled the tempest.

His career at Constantinople was the most important period of his life. It was a splendid success. It demonstrated his fitness for a life of action, and gave scope to his really noble gifts and acquirements. It was here that he won his laurels, and gained the title of the Divine or Theologian, for his defence of the divinity of Christ, applied as a distinctive appellation for the first and only time since it was given to the Apostle John. He received it for his famous five discourses against Eunomius, in which the unity of the essence of Father and Son, and the doctrine of the Trinity, are developed with great clearness, power, and conclusiveness. Whatever passions were engendered by the controversy, the spirit in which he approaches the consideration of the high and holy mysteries of Divinity shows that he possessed a deep and holy awe of God, and a deep consciousness of the imperfection of the human mind.

In a noble and elaborately worked up passage, Gregory applies to the contemplation of the Divine Being, the history of Moses communing with God on the mount. He solemnly reminds his hearers that the Infinite One is inconceivable and ineffable. Only the purest of human souls, like Moses, are permitted to scale the lofty eminence where He is spoken with face to face. Others less habituated to holy musings, and less separated from the world, like Nadab and Abihu, and the elders of Israel, though favoured with a glimpse of God—like them must occupy a lower level, and worship afar off; while ordinary Christians, like the people of Israel, stand at the mountain's base, far below the devouring fire and sapphire throne of manifested Deity; and the wicked and profane are the beasts which, if they but touched the sacred mount, were to be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. It is infinitely to his credit that he took the field with reluctance, and buckled on his armour under protest, not influenced by a disputatious spirit, or an effort to be wise above what is written, but to restrain the licence of daring and impious speculation. He censures the presumption of his adversaries in raising and grappling with such questions, and speaks of their capabilities with sarcastic contempt. Addressing Eunomius, he says, "Granting that you are sublime—yea, above the sublime, above the clouds, if you will; the beholder of the invisible, the hearer of the unutterable, the successor of Elias in his translation; a second Moses, honoured with the vision of God; a second Paul,

rapt into heaven ;—granting this, how comes it that you can make others saints in a day—create a theologian by your suffrage—confer knowledge by inspiration, and assemble councils of clowns?" To this he adds a file of equally taunting questions, in which the heretics are accused of collecting the filth and offscouring of men, so as to turn them to a profitable account. This may serve as a specimen of the kind of weapons that were employed on both sides. By common consent, during hostilities, there seems to have been a suspension of the Apostle's rule—"See that no man render railing for railing." It would be equally absurd to vindicate Gregory, and to moralise on the trite subject of the *odium theologicum*.

It ought, however, to be kept in mind that Gregory seemed to consider his mission to be as much that of a satirist as any thing else. It was his vocation, greatly needed at the time, and assiduously he laboured in it. Monks and bishops, priest and laity, alike came in for their share of his lash. With tongue and pen, in prose and poetry, he assailed abuses and corruptions, and had no mean powers of invective and caricature.

The mooting of doctrinal questions, then so fiercely discussed, was the inevitable result of the attempt to widen the area of clear vision, and apply to the articles of faith the principles of the current philosophy ; and in many respects they were so far settled then, that succeeding ages have added but little either to their scientific development or to the analogies by which they are illus-

trated. True, there was much rubbish left to be cleared away, and the greater part of the superstructure of theology to be raised. But in laying the foundations, it must be granted, the theologians of that time, Gregory among the rest, did a fair stroke of work. The noise and confusion of the time were dreadful. There was the deafening roar—the seething tumult—the rising spray, the wreaths of mist, that mark the spot where the stream falls over a precipice; but there were also rainbow gleams hovering over the dark and troubled abyss, and a cataractic flood of truth was pouring into the heart of the Church. The sublime truths wrapped up in the subjects of controversy were also the chief aliment of the piety of the time. And from those who, with unsandaled foot, trod on the holy ground, there beams, if a dim, yet still a perceptible radiance, that gathered on their spirits in communing with the Ineffable Brightness.

It is mentioned by Gregory the Presbyter, who writes his life, that he drew no revenue at Constantinople. Feeling the pressure of his labours, and weary of the cares and turmoil of his position—for he was now past his prime—he would have fain retired, but the attachment of the people forbade him to think of doing so.

On the arrival of the Emperor Theodosius at his capital, he was conducted with great pomp to St Sophia, and there installed in the imperial presence. It was with the greatest reluctance that he allowed himself to be placed on the arch-

bishop's throne in the church. The Council of Constantinople having assembled, by the authority of the Emperor Theodosius, Meletius, the venerable Bishop of Antioch, who presided over it, conferred consecration on Gregory. The western and Egyptian bishops, who had not been present at the beginning, were, for various reasons, chagrined at Gregory's appointment, and objected to it on the ground of the law that forbade the translation of bishops. To prevent strife, he asked and obtained the emperor's permission to resign ; and, after delivering a farewell discourse before the Council, he quitted Constantinople. Simeon Metaphrastes gives a portrait of him, which apparently would suit this period of his life. He describes him as of middle height, pale complexion, and sweet and bland expression. His right eye was partly closed by a wound. His hair was of silvery whiteness, but had begun to fall off ; his beard was short and bushy, his nose was flat, and his eyebrows were prominent. Gregory is again free, and, although not altogether without regret, leaves behind him for ever the capital of the East. The remaining part of his life was spent at his paternal estate of Arianzum, and was employed chiefly in writing poetry. Fifty orations or addresses—sermon is scarcely the word—and two hundred and fifty letters, make up his prose works that remain, although there can be little doubt that he delivered many homilies that have not been preserved. From the study he bestowed on the art of speaking, it is evident that

it was his ambition to be a great Christian orator, and to import into Christian oratory the excellences of the great classical masters of the art. But to be devoted to art of any kind in that age of frigid imitation was to be artificial.

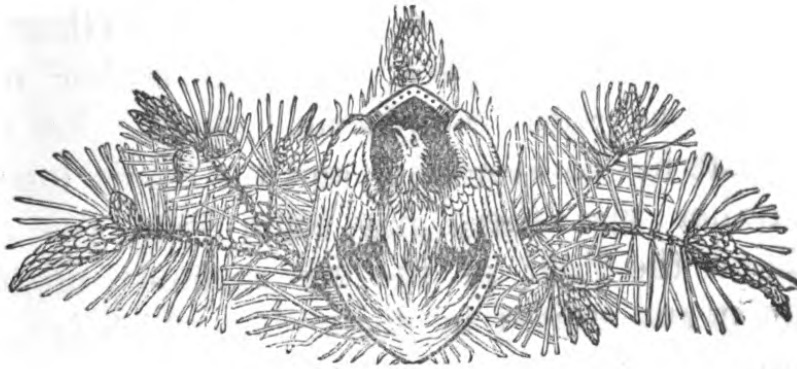
That his faults—which were also very much those of the age—were no drawbacks to his success with his contemporaries, does not admit of question. But his productions would have had incalculably more value for posterity if they had smelt less of the oil and of the schools of heathen learning, and had more evangelical simplicity, unction, and spiritual colouring. His command of words is wonderful; but, though they come forth in torrents, they are regulated by rule and measure. He depends for effect on amplification, rather than compression. He not rarely smothers the fire by the quantity of fuel he heaps on it. The amount of labour he bestows on the subordinate parts of a discourse, and the topics he manages to bring in, create the impression that he worked up common-places, and kept them in his portfolio till they were wanted. His similes are often apt and elegant, but are very frequently too much expanded; also very frequently introduced for ornament, not for illustration. The resources of his imagination are ample, and his range of illustration wide; but he seems to proceed on the principle that no thought is treated properly, unless it is exhibited in figures; and simile is heaped on simile to illustrate the plainest and veriest truisms. One cannot help feeling

often as if the point of supreme importance in the writer's eye was the rounding of his periods, and the balancing of his antitheses. He not rarely, in his anxiety to strengthen his position, overshoots the mark, and outrages common sense. There are passages which remind us of the feat of the divine who, having proved that all sins were equal, next demonstrated that little sins were more heinous than great sins. There is much in him that would be called bombastic, arising from his tendency to over-do and overstrain everything. Speaking of the difficulty of preaching effectively, he most aptly and beautifully compares the promiscuous crowd to a musical instrument consisting of many chords, each of which needs to be struck in a different way to bring out true melody. But he becomes ridiculous when, trying to improve on this, he at length compares the audience to a monster composed of the several natures, habits, instincts, and dispositions of all the beasts in creation.

But, with all its faults, we reckon the Gregorian oration immensely superior to the theological skeleton, or the moral essay. If Gregory had been constantly in harness, in Sasima or elsewhere, had been obliged to write two sermons a week, or even one, it would have improved him as much as it impoverishes those whose intellectual furniture is but scanty.

Had he not been so famous as an orator and theologian, he would have been better known as a poet. He had a genuine vein of poetry. His

facility in versification must have been something extraordinary, for his poems amount to one hundred and forty, besides two hundred and twenty-eight epigrams and short pieces. Among these is one of great length, containing an account of his own life, and a tragedy, named the Suffering Saviour, and a satirical poem on bishops. They are mostly didactic—theology and practical religion being mainly their subject. Many of them might be pretty accurately described as his prose works done into verse. Having latterly nothing to do but brood on his own sorrows and the evils of the time, self-exiled from a world that he had never liked, and that had never liked him, his poems are pervaded by a somewhat sombre and lugubrious tone. They are full of similes finely turned, and conceits of expression, but contain much valuable information on the state of the times. They also breathe a devout and earnest spirit, and show that beneath the gaudy array of the orator there beat a genuinely human and Christ-like heart.



Passages from Gregory Nazianzen.

THE THEOLOGIAN—EXORDIUM.

SINCE we have, in our discourse, vindicated the theologian, discussing what he ought to be, with whom he must reason, and when, and to what extent ; and have seen that he must be of unsullied purity, that by light he may perceive light ; that he must speak to the studious, lest his word falling into unfruitful soil, he produce no fruit ; and that we ought to speak when we have calmness within, and are free from the intrusion of surrounding objects, so as not to be distracted in spirit, like the insane. Having also discussed how far we comprehend and are comprehended by the others, —and having broken up the fallow ground of divine things, so as not to sow among thorns, and having smoothed the surface of the ground, by receiving and making impressions through the Scripture ; come now, let us address ourselves to the discussion of theology, prefacing our discourse with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of whom we have to speak, that the Father may look on us with complacent regard, the Son vouchsafe his co-operation, and the Spirit inspire us, rather that there may come from the one Godhead the light of the one radiance, distinct in unity and united in distinction, which is wonderful.

As I am eagerly ascending the mount, or, to

speak more truly, am eager to ascend, and at the same time struggling—my eagerness being inspired by hope, my struggles arising from weakness—struggling, I say, that I may get within the cloud and have communion with God, for so God commands—if there is any Aaron, let him with alacrity accompany me, even should it be necessary for him to remain without the cloud. And if there be any Nadab or Abihu, or any one of the elders, let him ascend, but let him stand afar off, according to the proper worth of his purification. But, if there is any one of the multitude unworthy of such an elevation and such a spectacle, if he is altogether impure, let him not approach, for to do so were perilous; but if sanctified for the occasion, let him remain below, and hear only the voice of the trumpet—the simple words of piety. Let him look at the mountain smoking and gleaming—a spectacle of threatening and wonder for those who are not able to ascend. But if there is any wicked and savage beast incapable of receiving the word of speculation and theology, let him not knavishly and villanously lurk in the thickets, in order, all of a sudden, to lay hold of some dogma or expression, and with his opprobrious words rend in pieces salutary doctrine. But let him stand still farther away, and withdraw from the mountain, or else he shall be stoned or crushed, and, wretch that he is, shall perish wretchedly. For to those that are like beasts, the words of truth and solidity are stones.—*Orations on the Theologian.*

THE LIMITS OF THE HUMAN INTELLECT.

Despise not what is common ; do not hunt after novelty in order to obtain a reputation with the crowd. Better is a little with, than much without security. Let Solomon instruct you by his counsel: "Better is a poor man who walks in his simplicity"—a proverb unique for its wisdom. The poor in words and knowledge, who confides in simple words, and uses them as a light skiff in which he reaches the haven of safety, is above the man of perverse lips and foolish heart, who shows the foolhardiness of ignorance in wordy argumentation ; and by discussion, in which the weakness of the demonstration proves the discomfiture of the truth, makes the cross of Christ—something far nobler than words—of no effect.

Why, when you have only feet, and not wings, will you soar to heaven? Why will you build a tower, though destitute of the materials for its construction? Why will you measure the ocean with your hand, and heaven with a span, and the whole earth with your grasp—elements so vast as to be capable of measurement only by Him who made them? Know thyself. First comprehend those things which are within your reach. Who art thou? how wast thou formed? and how was thy constitution framed, so that thou art at once the image of God, and hast affinity with the lower creation? Master the knowledge that is conversant about thyself. Solve the mystery of nature. How art thou circumscribed in space,

and yet the mind is confined by no limits—surveying all things without changing its place? How has the eye, which is so small, so wide a range? Is there any effluence from the objects of sight which is received into the eye, or which passes out from the eye to them? How is it the same object communicates and receives motion at the bidding of the will? What is the cessation of motion? What is the function of the senses, and how, through their instrumentality, do we come in contact with external objects and perceive them? How do we apprehend the forms of things? What is the retaining of what has been apprehended, or memory? What the recovery of that which has escaped, or recollection? How is speech the product of the mind, and how does it generate speech in another mind? How is the vitality of the body maintained by the soul, and how does the soul, through the body, come to share its sensations? How does fear produce rigidity, and boldness give free motion; sorrow cramp, and pleasure relax the features? How are the madness of anger and the blush of shame stamped on the countenance by means of the blood overflowing in the one instance, retreating in the other? How come the signs of the passions to be expressed on the body?

What is the throne of reason, and how does it rule and calm all the impetuosity of passion? How is an incorporeal essence held in by blood and breath, and how is it that when these fail the soul departs? Sound the depths of these things, or any one of them, O man! For I do not speak of

the nature or motions of the heavens, the order of the stars, the combination of the elements, the differences of living creatures, the grades, high and low, of the celestial powers, and all beings who have been endowed with an intelligence akin to the creative mind.

I pass by the reasons of the Divine providence and government, and even then I by no means say, Dare!

Be, then, still more afraid to approach themes which are more sublime and above all those which transcend the limits of your faculties. Assuredly all contentious and ambitious discussion is an exercise in wrangling about themes beyond our reach; and, as we mould the minds of children by rudimentary training in their earliest years, that they may be free from faults in future years, so also in disputations let us avoid rashness and folly in insignificant points, and thus we shall effectually guard against the danger of abusing the practice by transferring it to matters of moment. For it is easier at first to keep ourselves free from giving way to evil, and to avoid contact with it, than to repress and overcome it when it is making progress; just as it is easier to fix and hold a piece of rock at first, than to draw it back after it has been set in motion.—*Oration 26, "On the Moderation to be preserved in Discussions; and that it does not belong to every one, nor to every time, to dispute on the Deity."*

FUNERAL ORATION ON HIS BROTHER CÆSARIUS—
PERORATION.

But thou, divine and sacred one, may it be thine to enter heaven and rest in Abraham's bosom,—whatever that is,—to survey the choir of the angels, and the glory and splendour of beatified men! Or rather, be it thine to join in the choral dance, and in the exultation of heaven, smiling from thy elevation at all things here below—at riches, as they are called, and abject dignities, and lying honours, the deception caused by the senses, and the round of this life, and the confusion and ignorance which prevail, as in a battle fought by night—standing beside the Great King, and filled with the light that beams from Him. And may we, who have received here a scanty stream of it, as far as it is visible in mirrors and enigmas,—may we after this reach the fountain-head of goodness itself, to gaze with pure mind upon the pure truth, and to obtain, as the reward of labour bestowed on goodness here, that more perfect participation and contemplation of goodness which is enjoyed yonder. That such will be the end of our spiritual discipline, both the sacred books and minds distinguished for their knowledge of divine things predict.

What yet remains?—To apply to those who grieve the healing of soothing discourse. Powerful is the medicine proffered to mourners, by those whose hearts are wrung by the same sorrow; for those who have an equal amount of suffering

have more influence than others in consoling. Our discourse is directed chiefly to those for whom I should blush, did they not bear the palm for resignation, as well as for every other virtue. For if, more than other parents, they were lovers of their children, still more than other parents they were lovers of wisdom and of Christ, more than others meditating on departure from this life, and teaching their children to do the same, or rather framing their whole life so as to be a training for dissolution. But if still grief darken your thoughts, and, like a film covering the eye, prevents you from seeing the path of duty, come, ye elders, receive the consolation of youth,—ye parents, that of a child—that of one who ought rather to be admonished by such as you who have admonished many, and accumulated the experience of years. Wonder not if a youth should admonish the aged, for it is owing to you if I am able to see anything more clearly than old age. How much longer shall we live, O revered and hoary pair, approaching now to God? How long yet shall we suffer misfortune? Not even the whole life of man is long, when we compare it with the existence which is divine and endless,—much less the residue of vitality,—the release, so to speak, of human breath,—the last part of an evanescent life?

How long has Cæsarius anticipated us? Shall we grieve over him long as departed? Are we not hastening to the same abode? Shall we not soon descend beneath the same stone? Shall we

not after a little become the same dust? Will not our only gain in these few days be that we shall partly see, partly suffer, partly—partly, perchance inflict more evils, so as to pay to the law of nature the common and incommutable tribute it exacts—to follow some and precede others, to weep some and to be lamented by others, to receive from some the contribution of tears we have bestowed on others. Such, brethren, is our existence who live only for a while. Such is the farce enacted on earth: to spring into being out of non-existence, and, after having existed, to be dissolved. We are a dream that vanishes, a vision that eludes the grasp, the flight of a passing bird, a vessel on the ocean, which leaves no trace behind, dust, vapour, the morning dew, a flower that springs up in its season, and in its season decays. “Man! his days are like the grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.” Beautifully has the divine David moralised on our frailty; as also again in those words, “Disclose to me the fewness of my days;” and again, “He appoints the days of man to be an handbreadth.” And what will you say to Jeremiah, who reproaches his mother, grieving that he had been born, and that for the sins of others.

“I have seen everything,” says the Preacher, “I have gone over in thought all human things—riches, luxury, power; glory, which is unstable; wisdom, which oftener eludes the grasp than it is laid hold of;—again luxury, again wisdom, turning often to the same things; the pleasures of the belly, gardens, abundance of servants, abundance

of possessions, male and female cup-bearers, men-singers and women singers, arms, warriors, nations falling at my feet, tributes collected, the pride of empire, whatever the superfluities, whatever the necessities of life, in which I have surpassed all the kings that preceded me. And of all these, what says he? "Vanity of vanities, all are vanity and choice of spirit;"* meaning, perchance, an unreasonable impulse of the soul and distraction of the man, doomed to this, perchance, in consequence of his ancient fall. At the end of the discourse he says, "Hear the whole matter; fear God," for here He places a limit to His perplexity. And this is the only gain you derive from the present life—to be led through the turmoil of things visible and fleeting to those things which are fixed and immoveable.

Wherefore let us not bewail Cæsarius, knowing from what evil he is released, but ourselves, on account of those evils to which we have been left, and which we shall treasure up for ourselves, unless sincerely giving ourselves to God, and passing by all that passes us by, we press on to the life above, and, while still upon the earth, forsaking it, and following the Spirit who leads us to the things which are above. This may be difficult to ignoble spirits, but is easy to the manly of soul. Let us consider thus: Cæsarius will not command, but also will not be commanded by others. He will not inspire awe, but he will not be afraid of a stern master, often unworthy to command.

* English version, *vexation of spirit*.

He will not accumulate wealth ; but he will not fear envy, nor be injured in soul by improperly accumulating, and by seeking always to add as much as he has acquired. For such is the disease of riches, which has no bounds to its desire for more, and makes perpetual drinking the remedy of its thirst. He will not produce eloquent discourses, but he will be praised in the eloquent discourses of others.

Are not these sufficient for consolation ? If not, I will proffer a better remedy. I am persuaded by the words of the wise, that every pure and God-loving soul, when, released from the bonds of the body, it departs hence, instantly coming into the enjoyment and contemplation of the bliss that awaits it,—that which darkened it being purged away or laid aside, or, I know not what else to say—is thrilled with a wondrous pleasure, is enraptured, and gladly wings its way to its Lord, having escaped from this life as from a dreary prison, and having shaken off its enchaining fetters by which the pinion of the intellect was repressed, enjoys the bliss laid up for it, which it now enjoys in semblance ; and a little after receiving its kindred body back from the earth, which gave and had been entrusted with it—in what way God who joined them and dissolved them knows—becomes the joint-inheritor with it of the glory yonder ; and, as it shared its troubles by reason of their natural alliance, so likewise does it impart its own joys, transmuting it all into **itself**, and becoming along with it one essence,

one spirit, intellect, divinity, that which is mortal and fleeting being swallowed up of life.

Hear, then, what is taught by the divine Ezekiel concerning the re-union of the bones and the nerves, and after him by the Apostle Paul, regarding the earthly tabernacle, and the house not made with hands, the one to be taken down, and the other reserved in heaven. He declares absence from the body to be presence with the Lord, and bewails his life here, as an exile, and therefore desiring a speedy dissolution. Why should I grow dispirited regarding the objects of hope? Why should I attend to the things of time?

I will await the voice of the Archangel—the last trumpet, the transformation of the heavens, the change of the earth, the freedom of the elements, the renovation of the whole universe. Then I shall see Cæsarius himself—no more an exile, no longer on a bier, no more deplored, no more pitied; but resplendent, glorified, sublime! such as often, in a dream, thou hast appeared to me, O most loved and most loving of brothers, whether fond fancy or reality shaped the vision.

But now, dismissing these lamentations, I will look to myself, lest I be secretly bearing about with me something more worthy of lamentations, and I will give heed to what concerns myself.

Sons of men, for my discourse passes to you, how long will you be heavy of heart and dull of understanding? How long will you love vanity, and seek after falsehood, imagining this life to be

something great, and these few days to be many, and recoiling from this severance of soul and body, so enviable and delightful, as from something grievous and horrible? Should we not know ourselves? Should we not cast away material appearances and look to spiritual realities? Shall we not, if we must grieve, on the contrary, be distressed at our protracted sojourn here?—as the divine David, who called this earthly scene the tents of darkness, the place of misery, the slime of the abyss, because we linger in those bodies which we carry about with us; because we, who have become gods, die as men the death of sin. This is the fear which makes me tremble. Night and day I encounter it,—it makes me hold my breath,—I mean the glory yonder—the tribunal yonder. For the one I so pant as to be able to say, “My soul faints for thy salvation.” At the other I shudder—I recoil from it. I am not afraid lest this body, mouldering and decaying, should disappear altogether; but lest the workmanship of God—the glorious mind—for glorious it is, when adorned with rectitude, but ignoble when defaced by sin—in which is reason, law, hope, should be doomed to the same dishonour with the brutes, and no longer exist after dissolution. Would that it were so for the sake of the wicked, who are worthy of eternal fire!

O that I might mortify my affections on the earth! O that I might subjugate all to the Spirit, and tread the narrow path open to so few, not the broad and easy one: for a glorious and great hereafter awaits—a hope far transcending our merits.

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? **What** is this new mystery about me? I am insignificant and great, mean and sublime, mortal and immortal, terrestrial and celestial; connected on the one hand with this lower world, on the other hand with God; on the one hand with the flesh, on the other with the Spirit. I must be buried with Christ, rise with Christ; be a joint-heir with Christ, become a son of God, yea, even divine. See where our discourse in its progress has brought us! I am almost thanking my grief, on account of which I have entered on these speculations, and through which I have become inflamed with a desire for departure from this life. This is the meaning of the great mystery. This was wrought for us by God becoming man and becoming poor, that he might raise the body, might preserve his image, and renew the man; so that we might be all one in Christ, who has become perfectly all in all to us, as He himself is; that we should no longer be male and female, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, according to the distinctions of the flesh, but that we might bear alone in us the impress of divinity, by whom and for whom we were created, being so formed and fashioned by Him, as from Him alone to be distinguished.

May we become what we hope to be, according to the great love of our bounteous God, who, asking little, bestows great things on these who sincerely love Him, both now and evermore. May we continue bearing all things, enduring all things, by reason of our love to Him and hope in Him,

giving thanks for all things, adverse as well as prosperous ; for what is sweet and what is bitter, since these also our reason often knows to be the arms of salvation, committing to Him both our own souls and the souls of those who, having travelled with us on a common road, but, being better prepared, have already reached the resting-place.

And now let us cease from speaking. And cease from tears, ye who are hastening to this, your tomb, which Cæsarius has received from you, a sad and lonely gift, prepared for his parents and suited for old age, but to a son and a youth unseasonably assigned ; not however inconsistent with the procedure of Him who orders our affairs.

O Sovereign and Creator of all things, but especially of this human frame ! O God of thine own people, Father and Governor ! O Lord of Life and Death ! O guardian and benefactor of our souls ! O Thou that formest all things, and transformest them by Thy creative word, as Thou knowest best in the depth of Thy wisdom and administration, receive now Cæsarius, the first-fruits of our departure hence ; and if the youngest is first taken, we bend to Thy reasons, by which the universe is governed.

Receive us, hereafter, at Thy fitly-appointed time, ruling us in the flesh as long as is meet ; and receive us, prepared through Thy fear, and not in perturbation, nor recoiling at the last day, and dragged by force thence, like those who love the world and the flesh, but with alacrity ascending to the life above ; the life which is blessed and en-

during ; the life which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

GRADUAL REVELATION OF THE DIVINITY.

The Old Testament proclaimed the Father clearly, the Son more dimly. The New Testament manifested the Son, and gave a glimpse of the divinity of the Spirit, and now the Spirit, by His indwelling and operation, exhibits in greater clearness the revelation of himself. For it would have been perilous to give a distinct manifestation of the Son, when the divinity of the Father was not yet acknowledged ; and before that of the Son was admitted, to add, if I may so speak, the heavier burden of the doctrine of the Spirit, would have been to load us with food beyond our capacity, and to expose a weak vision to the glare of sunshine, thus running the risk of destroying the powers which we already possessed. But rather, by gradual additions, and, as David said, ascents, by advancing and progressing from glory to glory, the light of the Trinity gleamed forth on the souls of those who had already received partial illumination. It is for this reason, in my opinion, that the advent of the Spirit, in the case of the disciples, was gradual. He imparted himself according to the capacity of those who received Him, in the beginning of the Gospel, after the passion,—after the ascension perfecting their powers by inspiration, and appearing in tongues of fire.

Jesus also reveals the Spirit by little and little, as a careful inquiry will discover. "I will pray

the Father," He says, "and He shall send you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth;" that He might not seem to be in antagonism to God, nor to speak as if by any other authority. And then, "He will send in my name." Where omitting the expression "I will pray," He has retained the expression "He will send." Then, "I will send," thus showing his own authority. Then "He shall come," pointing out the Spirit's power. You see the rays of light shining forth on us by degrees, and the order of Theology, which it were better for us to observe, neither bringing the whole truth to the light at once, nor concealing it to the end. The former course betrays a want of skill, the latter is impious; the one may injure those who are strangers to this doctrine, the other may estrange those who favour it. And what perhaps has occurred to others, but I imagine to be the fruit of my own mind, I shall add to what has been already said.

There were points which, although contained in many of the Saviour's instructions, He said that his disciples could not hear, for the reasons I have mentioned, and therefore He concealed them. Again, He said that we should be taught all things by the Spirit which dwelleth in us. One of these things, I am of opinion, was the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, to be made plain afterwards, when the faculty of knowledge had advanced to maturity, after the ascension of Christ, and was no longer able to waver after such a miracle. For what greater than this could

either He promise, or the Spirit teach? If anything ever promised or taught is to be reckoned worthy of the majesty of God, surely this is. Such sentiments I maintain, and would wish to maintain, on these topics. And whoever is my friend, let him adore God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three persons, but one Godhead, undivided in glory, honour, being, and dominion, as not long since an inspired thinker has taught.—*37th Oration, On the Holy Spirit.*

SPRING.

All nature is in unison with the festal celebration, and joins in accordant joy. See what spectacles the queen of the seasons provides in her most queenly days. See how she scatters from her abundant treasures whatever is most lovely and delightful. The sky is clearer; the sun rides higher in the heavens, and is invested with a more dazzling radiance; the moon's orb is more resplendent; the starry choir more brilliant. Now the wave makes its peace with the shore, the cloud no longer obstructs the sunshine, the breezes now keep truce with the air, the earth is genial to the flowers, and the flowers grateful to the eyes.

Now the fountains send forth more limpid streams; the rivers, released from the chains of winter, roll in more copious floods; the meadow gives forth a sweet fragrance, the foliage is rich, the herbage is cropped, and the lambs gambol over their green pastures.

The vessel now quits the harbour and stands out to sea, winged with her sails, while the chant of the rowers, mostly in strains of piety, keeps time to the stroke of the oars. The dolphin gambols around it, breathing the delicious air springing up, and with alacrity following the voyagers.

Now the husbandman prepares his plough, and raising to heaven his eyes, and invoking Him from whose bounteous hand the fruits of harvest come, yokes his oxen, and cuts the pleasant furrow, while hope gladdens his heart. Now the shepherd and herdsman join their reeds, awake their pastoral lay, and enjoy the sweets of grove and grotto. The fowler sets his snares, inspects the branches, and carefully scans the bird on the wing. The fisherman explores the briny deep, washes his nets, and sits on the rock. Now, the industrious bee, unfolding her wing, and quitting the hive, shows her marvellous wisdom, flies over the meadows, rifles the flowers of their sweets, works with her thighs at constructing the cells of hexagonal shape opposite to each other,—straight lines and angles alternating—a work at once of beauty and strength ; she lays up the honey in her repositories, and thus provides for him who provides her with shelter a sweet refection for which he has not laboured. O that we, the hive of Christ, would imitate such an example of industry. Now the birds build their nests ; one returns, another settles in the new-formed abode, and another flies about, makes the grove ring with its

music, and soothes the ear with its warbling. All creation praises and glorifies God in inarticulate voices. For all things I praise God; and their hymn I make mine, since from them I derive the subject of my song. All nature smiles, and every sense is feasted. Now the steed with lofty neck and bristling mane becomes impatient of his stall, and, spurning his bonds, bounds over the plain, and displays his beauty in the river. What more? Now the martyrs assemble the Christ-loving people, hold festal celebrations in the open air, invite to their illustrious seats, and publicly set forth their toils. One of those is he whom I now crown; I claim him as mine, though he is not beside me. Let envy cease. I speak to those who know Mamas, the renowned pastor and martyr who, when in the desert, drew milk from the hinds, that desired to sustain the saint with this strange nutriment, and now feeds the people of the metropolis; and to-day, with many thousands gathered from all quarters, inaugurates a spring pre-eminent for the beauties of virtue, worthy of pastors and panegyric orations. In a word now, we have an earthly spring and a spiritual spring—a spring for the soul and a spring for the body—a spring visible and one invisible. May we enjoy eternal spring in the world beyond the grave, being made the subjects here of a saving change, and may we be renewed, and thus pass to the new life in Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory with the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.—*Oration on the Martyr Mamas.*

ELEGIAC :

CONTEMPLATION OF HIMSELF.

From haunts of men to shade of forest-boughs,
By musing Melancholy lured I sped,
To taste the sweets by Contemplation spread,
To soothe sad hearts and smooth care-furrowed brows.
A myriad warblers on the leafy sprays,
The air with sweetly-blended music filled,
Echo awoke with joy. And joyaunce thrilled
My soul. From verdant sward where sunshine plays,
The grasshopper its noisy chirrup shrilled ;
A crystal brook purled whispering at my side,
While dropping flowerets quaffed its brimming tide.

But not the power of beauteous Nature's smile
Could heal my wounds or charm away my pain ;
The load of mystery pressed my aching brain,
And torturing questions vexed my soul the while.
What was I ere I saw the light of day ?
What now ? And what, to-morrow, shall I be ?
And what, when from corporeal bonds set free ?
Tell me, ye wise ! Say, can ye tear away
This blinding film ; I long in vain to see.
O give me but some fair illusive dream,
This veil of flesh shuts out the heaven-born beam !

That I exist I know. What's that I'd know.
Part of existence fled even while I spake ;
What shall I be to-morrow if I wake ?
Like pauseless stream with restless change I flow—
How fitly imaged by this glancing brook ;
Next moment I'm not what I was before,
And lose the right to use the name I bore.
You seize me, but I flee even while you look.
Thou fleeting wave shalt pass this spot no more,
And he whose image thou dost glass shall ne'er
Again the self-same likeness wear.





THE GOLDEN-MOUTHED ORATOR:

CHRYSOSTOM OF BYZANTIUM.







THE GOLDEN-MOUTHED ORATOR :

CHRYSOSTOM OF BYZANTIUM.

FOUR hundred years of Turkish rule in Constantinople have not obliterated the memorials of the supremacy which the Greek race and the Greek faith once held there. The adherents of the Eastern Church outnumber the Mahometans ; and, tenacious as they are of the superstitions and traditions bequeathed to them by their fathers, especially of their hatred to the Latins, they are, in many respects, true representatives of the volatile, turbulent, superstitious, and corrupt old Byzantines, who for ages profusely cursed, and were cursed by, the Church of the West. The aspirations of the Greeks, the decadence of their masters, and the symptoms of the approaching dissolution of a vast empire that, at the present moment, has not one element of unity, all seem to point forward to a future—how distant it is hard to say—when the cross shall displace the crescent in the city of Constantine, and St Sophia, which of old resounded with the impassioned tones and thrilling appeals of Chrysostom, be again filled with Christian worshippers. That venerable pile stands as a monument of the overthrow of Paganism by Christianity, for it is decorated with

porphyry and verde-antique that once adorned the temples of old deities ; and again, defaced and Islamised as it has been, it tells that the Koran rose to the ascendant when the light of the Star of Bethlehem had faded from the hearts of those that professed to follow it, and that the sceptre dropped from the grasp of a people that had become enfeebled by luxury and superstition.

The degeneracy had early begun.

Ere Chrysostom was made bishop of Constantinople, at the close of the fourth century, the churches of the East had become so debased and corrupted, that men who feared God, and were sick of the voluptuousness and licentiousness that were rampant in great towns, not only among the laity but the clergy, withdrew to monasteries and deserts, to spend their days in penitence and prayer. Constantinople, the metropolis of the empire and the church, led the way, and was hurrying downwards with such accelerated motion, that Chrysostom, with all his piety and eloquence, in vain attempted to arrest its career, and, by his efforts at reformation, only brought destruction on himself.

But we are anticipating, and must, ere we consider his brief career as Bishop of the Byzantine capital, glance at his early life, and the first triumphs of his eloquence in Antioch, where, as a presbyter, he preached for twelve years. Here he was born in the year of Christ 347. His father, Secundus, died when John was but a child, leaving him to the care of his mother. She did not again

enter the wedded state, but devoted herself entirely to the training of her boy, who early displayed marks of genius. She was a woman of great piety and judgment, and exercised an important influence over the mind of the future orator. Under her watchful and pious eye, preserved from the dangers and untainted by the vices of youth, he grew up, the simple faith of his childhood strengthening and expanding with his developing powers. Unlike the great Augustine, the mental struggles of his age seem never to have affected him; there are no remarkable epochs in his religious history, and, as far as we know, there was never room for a revolution of mind so marked and decided as that which the renowned Bishop of Hippo relates in his "Confessions."

For three years he enjoyed the religious instructions of Meletius, the Bishop of Antioch. After this his early aspirations after eloquence drew him to the school of the distinguished rhetorician Libanius, and so brilliant was his success as a student, that his master, being asked which of his pupils would be capable of succeeding him in his school, replied, "John, if the Christians had not stolen him from us." He applied himself to the study of the Platonic philosophy under Andragathius: and at the age of eighteen he devoted himself to sacred literature under Carterius and Diodorus, the latter of whom afterwards became Bishop of Tarsus. If his oratorical training under Libanius contributed to make him the most eloquent of preachers, he in a great degree owed

it to Diodorus that he became one of the most sound, rational, and felicitous of the expounders of Scripture. In opposition to the system of Origen, then universally popular, which dealt in the most extravagant fancies and whimsical conceits, Diodorus, and after him his distinguished pupil, investigated, critically and historically, the literal sense of the Scriptures. This we regard an important period in Chrysostom's life, for during it his mind acquired those logical principles of interpretation to which his power over his contemporaries may in considerable measure be traced, and which have conferred on his homilies an imperishable value. At twenty-one, he became reader in the church at Antioch. Soon after, against the earnest entreaties of his mother, he retired to the mountains to an aged hermit, with whom he lived for four years. Two years more he spent in a solitary cave. During these six years he closely and assiduously studied the Scriptures, and practised at the same time the most rigorous austerities. He returned to the city, emaciated and worn out by his ascetic life. Two years after, he was made deacon in the church at Antioch ; and at the age of thirty-five or thirty-seven he became a presbyter, and began to preach. Although in his first sermon he speaks of himself as a mere youth, he was then in the prime of intellectual power ; and no man, perhaps, ever entered the pulpit more thoroughly equipped for his vocation. His mind was enriched with the spoils of classic learning ; he had studied the

art of moving men by the power of speech, and, by his proficiency in it, had gained academic laurels; he had already appeared before the world as an author; and, that he might consecrate all his varied gifts and attainments to the high and holy vocation he was destined to exercise, he had for six years in solitude communed with his own heart, his Bible, and his God. He enters on public life a finished Christian orator—fitted, by his piety, genius, and high culture, to take the first place among the powers and principalities who wield a moral and intellectual sway. His theological opinions, drawn from the Bible itself, had on many points a clearness far superior to the most of his contemporaries; though many of those doctrines that are now considered cardinal, are kept by him very much in the back-ground, and are rather *implicitly* than *explicitly* taught. He had strongly seized on that aspect of the truth which was calculated to meet the wants of his times.

His young heart had been won to holiness, beaming as it had done upon him from his childhood, blended with the soft light of a mother's love, and united with all the endearing associations of a happy home.

The contagion of a great city, half-heathen, half-Christian, had not corrupted him; but he could not live in Antioch without becoming familiar with sin in a thousand monstrous shapes. He saw much of the old leaven of heathenish licentiousness and impurity. The Christian population.

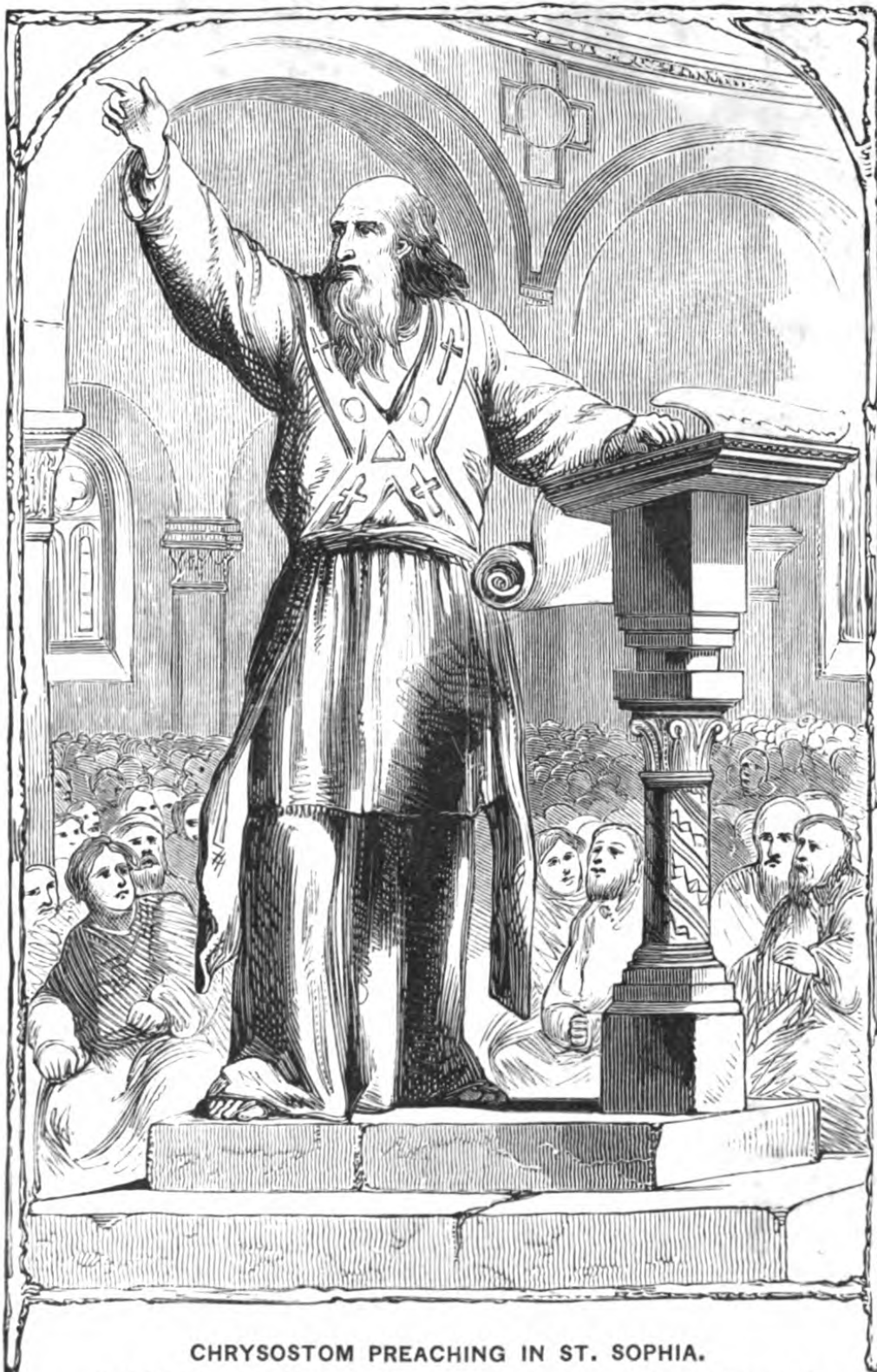
as well as the heathen, were given up to luxury and dissipation ; they left the church on Sabbath to attend the theatre and the circus ; they took part in bacchanalian orgies, and made a point of getting drunk on the first day of the year, under the belief that it would be unlucky to begin it sober. His heart sickens at the sight ; he flies from the town, and with his Bible he hies him to the desert, and finds, no doubt, sin pursuing and haunting him in his solitude. He has banished himself from the city, but, unless he could banish himself from himself, he cannot banish himself from sin ; and with spiritual discipline and mortification he grapples with the demons within, that would soon, were he to relax his efforts, make an Antioch in his own breast. He comes back to the city with this truth, learned in the desert as well as in Antioch, which shall henceforth be his motto, to be repeated again and again, "That sin is the only evil." He has learned, besides, the value of having an iron will, and became heterodox in consequence, for he never tires of asserting the freedom of the will. Over and over again he tells his hearers that they are just what they make themselves, and that they have the remedy in their own hands ; and, although his statements may not always square with the doctrinal canons of symbolical books, composed after centuries of discussion had made precision of language necessary, yet, what he says has always a healthy, practical tendency. And thoroughly practical are all his aims. The only evil he knows is sin, and that

he will war with to the death. He accordingly appears among his townsmen like another Elijah, or John the Baptist, risen from the dead. Simple and ascetic in his mode of life, like his namesake, whose dress was of the roughest and his fare of the simplest, he is in his own person a reproof of the luxury of his times ; like him, he is the unflinching denouncer of vice, a stern and austere reformer, earnest, bold, impetuous. Every sermon concludes with a reproof of some vice, and an exhortation to some virtue ; and the reproof and exhortation are repeated again and again—though his hearers complain that he is harping on one string—until he witnesses an amendment. A crisis soon arrives that gives full scope to his eloquence.

In the second year of his ministry, in the week before Lent, A.D. 387, the inhabitants might have been seen hurrying in crowds to hear their preacher. We do not know whether the Antiochian grandees, in order to secure places, sent their valets to pass the night in the church, as the Parisians did, when any of their great preachers were expected to appear in the pulpit next day ; but it is certain that the *golden-mouthed** John, during that season of Lent, never preached without the church being crowded to suffocation. It was rarely otherwise at any time, although he sometimes congratulated himself on the select character of his audience, when it happened to be thin, and denounced those who had forsaken the church to attend the circus

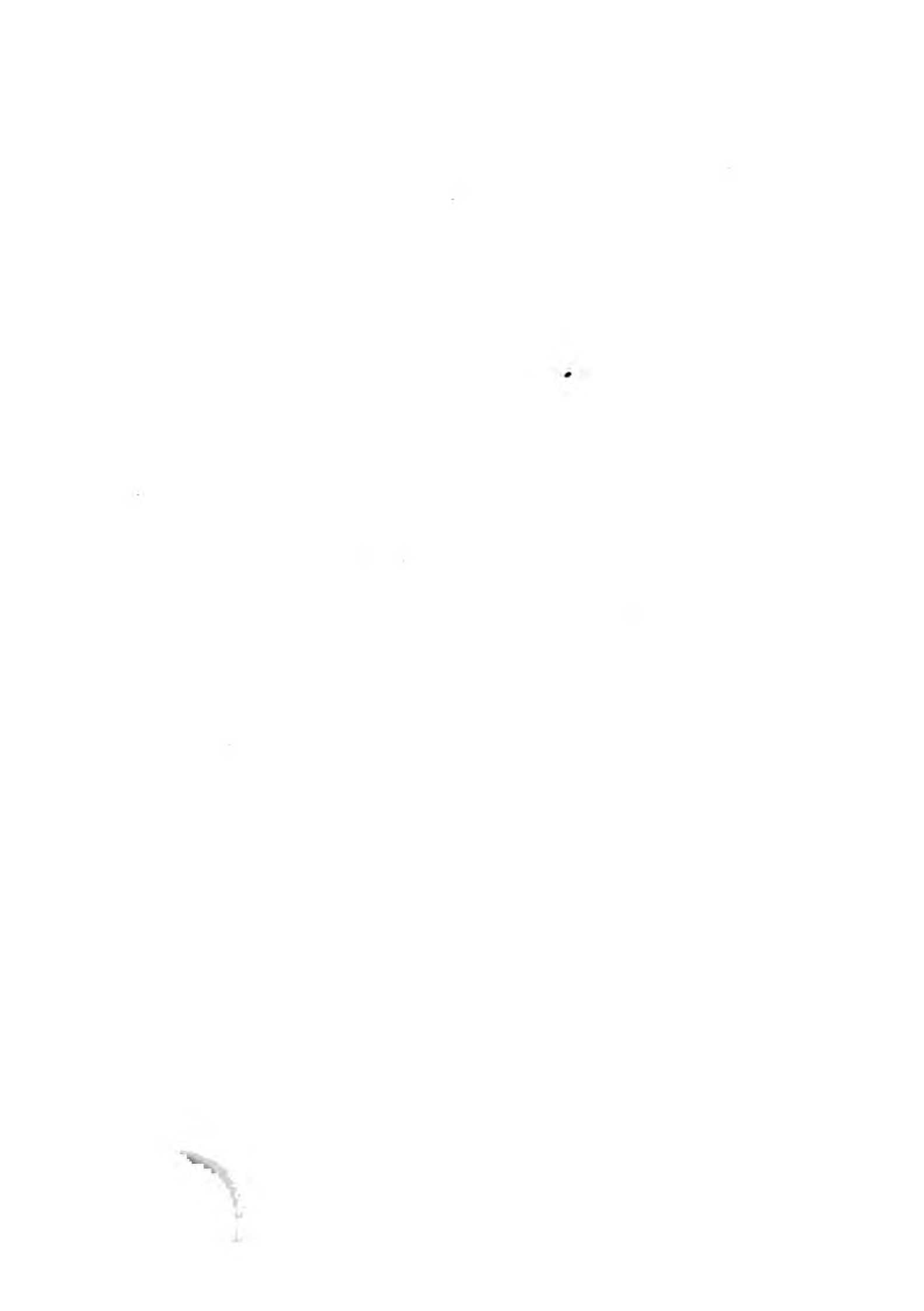
* Chrysostom : *i.e.*, *golden mouth*.

or the theatre. On this occasion he has for hearers all of the hundred thousand Christian inhabitants of Antioch that could crowd into the large Basilica. He holds them all spell-bound. You can see the changing emotions of their minds express themselves successively on their countenances, as the preacher makes chord after chord vibrate in their bosoms. Every eye is fixed on that emaciated face, lighted up with the glow of earnestness and enthusiasm ; every ear drinks in the melodious flow of speech that rolls through the sanctuary in tones now deep and solemn, and now thrilling with passion ; every time he strikes his left palm with his right forefinger—as he did when excited—some heart surrenders to the irresistible force of his eloquence ; not a posture is changed, not a breath drawn, not a whisper heard, among the listeners, until at last their emotion expresses itself into one simultaneous burst of applause, and the church re-echoes with a tumultuous and deafening clapping of hands. The flush of triumph at first visible on the preacher's face is speedily followed by a deep shade of disappointment and sorrow, and, when silence is restored, he chides them for filling the house of God with the noise and clamour of a theatre, telling them that these plaudits for a moment fill him with sinful pride, but afterwards produce the deepest sorrow, as they are proofs that he has only moved their admiration, without reaching their consciences. This tumultuous applause on the present occasion, however, is only the effect of inveterate habit, and not the sign of levity. For



CHRYSOSTOM PREACHING IN ST. SOPHIA.

"He holds them all spell-bound. You can see the changing emotions of their minds express themselves successively on their countenances, as the preacher makes chord after chord vibrate in their bosoms. . . . Not a posture is changed, not a breath drawn, not a whisper heard, among the listeners, until at last their emotion expresses itself in one simultaneous burst of applause, and the church re-echoes with a tumultuous and deafening clapping of hands." (Page 246.)



terror is depicted on every countenance, all seem panic-struck, and we have only to listen, as the homily proceeds, to learn the cause of their alarm.

Oppressed, as they thought, by excessive taxation, they had broken out into sedition. For several days the town had been a scene of uproar and violence; and the statues of the Emperor Theodosius and his wife Flavilla had been thrown down by the mob, and dragged about the streets. By this time, however, the tumult had been quelled; order had been restored; and the people, now that their frenzy had spent its force, contemplated with dismay the excesses of which they had been guilty, and trembled for the consequences. The insult they had shown to the emperor filled them with the liveliest dread of his vengeance—a vengeance which they felt they had deserved, and had every reason to believe would fall upon them with pitiless severity. Chrysostom saw that the moment was favourable for producing on their minds deep religious impressions. They are in terror at having offended their emperor: he will make them tremble before God; he will fill their minds with the agony of contrition, and rouse them to a speedy and thorough reformation. Such is his object in this discourse, which is no other than the second of the series of twenty-one homilies, known as the “Homilies of the Statues,” in which, delivered as they were during the various vicissitudes of this period of excitement, the genius, piety, and zeal of Chrysostom shine forth conspicuous. A few days before the outbreak, he had

expatiated on the prevalence of blasphemy, and had exhorted his hearers to use the most summary methods of putting it down. "Reprove the blasphemer," he had said; "and if he will not desist for this, *smite* him"—a questionable and not very Christian mode of dealing with their heathen neighbours, for it was at them he pointed. While the town was seething with tumult and violence, he had been prudently silent. He probably knew that his eloquence would be impotent to curb the wild fury of the townsmen, and that it would have been unsafe to attempt it. But now that shame and fear have taken possession of their minds, he takes advantage of their altered mood, and, resuming the subject of his previous discourse, he tells them that the sedition was a judgment sent by Heaven to punish them for tolerating blasphemy, and that, unless they repented, and set themselves with a vigorous hand to crush the evil, they need not expect that God would interpose to avert from them the doom which they dreaded.

Discourse followed discourse in rapid succession. He is almost every day in the pulpit, turning to account every event and every change of feeling which constant rumours were producing on the inhabitants. He never for a moment, amid all the terror and commotion around him, loses sight of his high aims. He is never satisfied with bringing his audience to tears, or paralysing them with terror; ever at the close of the discourse comes the practical exhortation to cut off an offending right hand, or pluck out an offending eye. He

never will allow his hearers to depart feeling, or saying that they feel, themselves much improved in consequence of having had a dose of horror or a fit of weeping. He has always some fault for them to correct, or some work to do; and, powerfully aided as he is by the circumstance, his appeals take effect; and again and again he changes his tone of reproof and admonition for commendation and praise. We cannot linger over the successive acts of this drama, the details of which would have long ago perished, had they not been embalmed in the immortal homilies that they called forth. Although it had, in each of its stages, an agonising interest to the Antiochians, it would have gone down to the oblivion to which many a city brawl has descended long ago, had there not been a Chrysostom in the pulpit at the time. The Emperor, his commissioners, the bishops, the prefects, the monks, and all the personages that figured in it, are all preserved by his genius, just as a piece of sea-weed is preserved in the precious amber which has formed around it. Our notice of them, and of the events that then took place, shall accordingly be very brief. Before apprising Theodosius of the riot, the prefects of the city had preceded to severe measures, and Flavian, the bishop, had set out for Constantinople, to intercede for his peccant flock. During the succeeding week, the citizens crowded the church, and, in almost unceasing hymns and litanies, implored Heaven to move the Emperor's heart to pity. The subsequent arrival of Hellebichus and Cesarius,

the imperial commissioners, would have realised their worst fears, but for the intervention of the monks. The baths were closed, the senate imprisoned, Antioch degraded from its rank, and the last severities were being resorted to, when the monks, pouring in from the surrounding country, besieged the ears of their sovereign's representatives with their prayers. At last they were induced to pause in the execution of vengeance till they heard from the Emperor. The incidents of this period Chrysostom seizes upon, and makes use of with consummate oratorical tact and ability. The active benevolence and intrepidity of the monks he contrasted with the cowardice and selfishness of the philosophers, who in the hour of danger were lurking in holes and corners; and hence urged the claims of the monks on their reverence, and the superiority of the spirit of the Gospel over that of philosophy. He told with the most graphic power how Macedonius, a poor illiterate monk, had arrested the arm of vengeance, by bidding the commissioners admonish the Emperor not to destroy the image of God, lest he should kindle in his heart a wrath like that with which he himself was filled on account of the dishonour done to his brazen statues. He had before him a congregation waiting in awful suspense for the imperial word that would decide their doom; and he transported them to the tribunal of God—he made them imagine themselves waiting their sentence at his bar. He tells them that he had seen a mother with dishevelled hair uttering the most piteous cries to

save her son, but all in vain ; and then he painted before them that dread scene, when the judgment shall be set and the books opened, and the imploring voice of father, mother, wife, and child will be all unavailing to deliver. But, while he spoke in this strain, he exerted all his eloquence to soothe, reassure, and console them, until the arrival of Flavian with the Emperor's generous forgiveness dismissed all their apprehensions. In his last discourse he communicated this to his audience, and described Flavian's journey and intercession. With this concluded the affair of the statues, in which the character of Chrysostom's preaching and the power of his eloquence are so strikingly displayed.

Although he often seems to be roughly casting stones at his hearers' heads rather than seed into their hearts, he is far from being devoid of softness and tenderness. He dealt perhaps too much with the selfish passion of fear. But he was master of the whole diapason of feeling, and knew how to take advantage of the gentler emotions of the breast, as is apparent by the following simile, occurring in his discourse on the eighty-fourth Psalm : "The lover requires to see not only the beloved one, but likewise her dwelling ; and not the door only, but the very alley or street in which her dwelling is ; and in her garment or her shoe he thinks he beholds the beloved herself." Chrysostom could venture on such a style of illustration all the more safely that, in the estimation of most of his hearers, he would not be regarded as drawing from his own personal feel-

ings. But we think it would be rather hazardous for a modern preacher, especially if not a monk, to follow Chrysostom's example,—if for no other reason at least for this, that it bears a strong resemblance to the soliloquy of the redoubtable Don Pedro de Armado—"I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which is basest, doth tread:" the associations connected therewith being nowise calculated to promote edification.

The crowds that flocked to the great church at Antioch during the period of which we have spoken, let it be known, for the consolation of preachers in general, could by no means be calculated upon at other times. All the eloquence of Chrysostom did not always secure a full house. During seasons of public emergency, multitudes were often in former times drawn to church by the same instincts that lead them now to crowd the news-room, and devour the leading articles and the latest news by electric telegraph. Chrysostom—as the preacher continued for long centuries after him—was the people's newspaper, and his sermon their leading articles.

When the people wished to know the contents of the emperor's letter, they required to go to church, as there was no Antiochian "Weekly" or "Daily" that would gladly grasp at it to fill one of its columns. And no doubt the pulpit would recover the supremacy it is said to have lost, if editors, magazine-writers, reviewers, and electric telegraphs, were abolished. If the preacher were

expected to cram his sermon with the news of the week, and to give his opinion on the debates in Parliament, the protocols of embassies, and the events of the war, multitudes, who like Falstaff have forgot what the inside of a church is made of, would throng to listen, even at the risk of the orator winding up with an exhortation to repentance and faith. We have heard of a church where you are sure to get an interesting epitome of the news of the week; and, in consequence of this, combined with the glib popular eloquence of the minister, there is no lack of attendance.

We are far from condemning "preaching to the times," but we have always admired Archbishop Leighton's reply to his brethren, when they complained of his not preaching to the times, "that surely one poor brother might be allowed to preach Jesus Christ:" while, at the same time, it must always be maintained that, to seize on the impressions, opinions, and events that, are floating in the popular mind, and make them the vehicles of religious instruction, is what must ever be the aim of the man who seeks from the pulpit to exert a wide influence over his fellow-men.

But to return to Chrysostom. After labouring for twelve years in Antioch, he was made Bishop of Constantinople—that then took rank next after Rome as an episcopal see, and by the middle of next century, supported by a decree of the Council of Chalcedon, and the efforts of the Greek emperors, claimed the same ecclesiastical honours and prerogatives as the capital of the West. En-

dowed with the authority of bishop, or rather metropolitan, Chrysostom set about reformation with a vigorous hand. He began with his clergy, who were indolent and dissolute to a high degree. He rated them for their covetousness and luxury; dismissed from their families the matrons whom they kept, to the great scandal of the faithful; and retrenched the expenses of the episcopal table, feeding the poor with the surplus. He suspended all refractory ministers, and reproved the gaiety of the widows that were maintained at the expense of the Church. He built an infirmary. He extended the limits of his diocese; prosecuted a home mission among the Arian Goths in Constantinople; and exerted himself to spread the Gospel among barbarous nations, and to reclaim heretics.

He was as diligent in preaching as he was in ruling and reforming. Regularly three times a week, and sometimes on seven successive days, he preached in the church of St Sophia; and the crowds that filled its immense area were so great that, to be heard, he required to place himself in the reader's desk in the middle of the church. There he was the same fiery, vehement, and popular, though elegant as well as eloquent orator, that he had been in Antioch; but his career was shorter. Clouds soon began to gather around him, and ere long he was assailed with a storm of opposition, which overwhelmed him. He had fearlessly assailed the court as well as the clergy; and these, headed by the proud Empress Eudoxia,

whom he had once called Jezebel, formed a combination for his ruin. The combination was joined by Sisinnius, the Novatian bishop, whom Milner calls, "*a polite, facetious, and well-bred gentleman*, who made himself very agreeable to all parties, and was a contrast to the severity of Chrysostom by his engaging manners." With such a man Chrysostom would have little sympathy and little patience, and there would be little love lost between them. The result was, that he was summoned before a council, held by Theophilus of Alexandria, his determined enemy, to answer forty-six charges, all of them frivolous or false. Having denied the competency of the court, and refused to appear, he was deposed for contumacy, and banished to a port in the Black Sea. As soon as this became known, the whole city broke out into a tumult; so that Eudoxia, terrified at the tempest she had assisted in raising, procured his recall, and wrote to him with many protestations of reverence and grief. He returned to his bishopric, but did not remain long in it. A silver statue of Eudoxia had been set up before the church of St Sophia, with many heathenish ceremonies, and the congregation was disturbed by the sports and pastimes practised around it. The bishop's fiery temper was roused; he ascended the pulpit, and began his sermon with "Now again Herodias raves and is vexed; again she dances, again she desires John's head in a charger." This at once procured his downfall. He was banished to Cucusus in Armenia. There he often preached,

and employed himself in works of benevolence ; but his constitution, weakened by his labours and austerities, broke down under the influence of the cold ungenial winter of his place of banishment ; and, though he seemed to rally again, he died soon after on the road to Pityus in Colchis. His guards, who by his enemies' order were conveying him thither, treated him with the utmost inhumanity. He had entreated them to allow him to rest at an oratory by the way. They cruelly refused, but had not gone four miles from the spot, when nature sank, and they were compelled to return with him. His last words were his usual doxology, "Glory be to God for all events." Thus Chrysostom, at the age of fifty-two years, finished his noble career in banishment. He lived not long ; but he had lived with all his might ; and three hundred and fifty sermons and orations, six hundred and twenty homilies, two hundred and fifty letters, a work on the priesthood, and some tracts on monasticism, which he has bequeathed to posterity, attest his literary activity, and form an enduring monument of his genius. He is undeniably prince of patristic orators, and undoubtedly the best of patristic expositors. In him we find what is but rare—the union of critical expository power with richness of imagination and fervid eloquence ; so that the critic never fails on a disputed passage to quote the opinion of Chrysostom, and the writer on sacred oratory invariably gives specimens of his perorations and exordia. His rhetorical tact often enabled him to

apprehend correctly the meaning of passages and the sequence of ideas, where those commentators that always look for ideas in a logical order, and forget that in Scripture they generally come in the order best adapted to convince and instruct, are often greatly at fault.

In his discourses he hits off the most profound and valuable criticisms in the easiest and most felicitous style of popular expression. Occasionally he exhibits the faults of the Byzantines—a tawdry ornamentation, a pompous and florid diction, and a wire-drawing of figures. But this is rare. In general, his style is lucid, strong, and natural; and with the fresh and lofty thoughts and glowing emotions of which it is the vesture, and the fire that animated him when he spoke, he must have been irresistible. A popular preacher is a title that perhaps is not generally considered as implying any very strong claim to intellectual superiority. Yet the highest eloquence, as indeed the highest poetry, must be, and always is, popular. “The true region, the natural medium of eloquence,” says an acute modern writer, “is formed of the thoughts of all, and consequently as much as possible of the language of all.” In this medium Chrysostom expatiated, and although he often takes bold and lofty flights, he never soars above it, so as to be intelligible and impressive only to the select class of the cultured and refined; he never sinks below it, by addressing himself exclusively to the rude and ignorant. The man who aspires to move promiscuous masses of his fellow-men,

from the platform or the pulpit, must deal with those elementary principles, thoughts, and feelings which we feel as men, to which the hearts of the most cultured and the rudest are alike susceptible. He must be deeply and broadly human. And it is for this reason that the man whose mind is deeply imbued with Scripture thoughts and images will be popular; for the Bible is the book that is at once the most human and the most divine, and fitted, therefore, more than any other book, to move the common heart of humanity. A fine passage from an oration or sermon has always seemed to us much like the brick carried about by the novice as a sample of the house; because a sermon is as much a unity as a house, and you can judge of the merit of each part only by seeing its relation to the whole.

It will not be inconsistent with this remark to produce a solitary illustration, to show that he whom we have ranked among the greatest of pulpit orators did not owe his power to high-sounding phrases and sonorous periods, but mainly to a style of thought and language homely and familiar, though never coarse—such as a father would adopt in speaking to his children. His illustrations were often similar to the following:—“As wheresoever the mire is, there will swine flock; but wheresoever sweet odours and incense are, there will bees resort. In like manner, wheresoever ungodly songs are sung, there will devils be gathered together; and wheresoever spiritual songs are sung, there will the grace of the Spirit fly to sanctify both mouth and

soul." His taste would be fastidious. whom this would offend, and his comprehension dull. who could not understand it ; and though a man forgot all the rest of the sermon, the swine, the devils, and the bees, with the lesson they inculcated, could not fail to stick. But we must now take our leave of Chrysostom, to whom we cannot refuse that reverence and admiration which nobleness and intrepidity of soul, lofty and unselfish aims, and undoubted genius, must ever command. Plentifully "dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love," he was the scourge of all triflers and of all the dissolute, the enemy and the destroyer of what was false and bad ; and did his work always bravely and painfully, though not always wisely and meekly. The ascetic rigour of his life, and the uncompromising sternness of his character, at first check the flow of our sympathy and cordiality towards him. The piety of the time had certainly a severe and iron look ; and Chrysostom's ~~does wear~~ that aspect. But he was free in a great measure of those monastic ideas that were entertained by many of his contemporaries ; for, though he recommends a solitary and secluded life, and never married, he did not seek to impose on others the austerities he practised himself, and recommended early wedlock. He was capable of the warmest friendship, as is shown by his intimacy with Basil ; he had a heart that felt for want and sorrow, and a hand ever active in administering relief. For a considerable time after his death, a party in Constantinople espoused his cause, and

stood aloof from the Church, but rejoined it on the accession of a bishop, who began his duties by pronouncing a panegyric on Chrysostom. His age needed him, though unworthy of him. He lived not for it alone, but for posterity and the Church. He still guides the student of the sacred page by the strong, clear light he cast upon it; his noble thoughts, and the wealth of his exuberant imagination, have enriched those who have availed themselves of his bequests: and the fire of his spirit, burning unspent in his ancient pages, is still fit to inspire hearts with holy enthusiasm and earnestness.



Passages from Chrysostom.

THE TRIUMPHS OF THE CROSS—PARADISE OPENED.

To-day we hold a festival and an assembly, beloved ; for our Lord is fixed with nails to the cross. And think it not strange that so sad an event should be the occasion of a festival celebration, for such are spiritual things, contrary to what ordinarily happens in human affairs. To show this clearly : The cross was once the symbol of condemnation and punishment, but has now become an object venerable and dear. The cross was once the theme of ignominy and doom, but has become now the means of glory and honour. That you may learn that the cross is glory, listen to the Saviour's words : "Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Here he calls the cross glory. The cross is the summit of our salvation, the foundation of countless blessings. Through it we who before were dishonoured and cast off, are now raised to the rank of sons ; through it it is that we wander no longer in error, but have attained the knowledge of the truth ; through it we, who worshipped stocks and stones, now know the Creator of all ; by it we who were slaves of sin have been brought into the freedom of righteousness ; through it earth has become, and will henceforth be, heaven.

The cross has freed us from our wandering, it has led us to the truth, it has reconciled God to

man, it has drawn us up from the depths of sin, and raised us to the highest pinnacle of virtue ; it has quenched the delusion of demons, it has abolished their deceit. Through it there is no longer the smoke and smell of the shedding of the blood of beasts, but everywhere spiritual service—hymns and prayers ; through it the demons have fled away, through it is the devil put to flight ; through it human nature aspires to live the life of angels ; through it virginity walks the earth, for since the time that he came born of a virgin the nature of man has known the way to this virtue. It has enlightened us who were sitting in darkness ; it has reconciled us who were up in arms ; it has brought nigh those who were afar off ; it has made those who were alienated friends ; it has constituted those who had become foreigners citizens of heaven ; it has become the abolisher of war ; it is the safeguard of peace. Through it it is we no longer dread the fiery darts of the devil, for we have discovered the fountain of life ; through it we are no longer in widowhood, for we have received the bridegroom ; through it it is we no longer fear the wolf, for we know the good Shepherd : “I am,” says he, “the Good Shepherd ;” by it we no more dread the tyrant, for we have run to the rightful King.

You see of what blessings the cross is the cause. With reason, then, we keep a festival. Thus also Paul exhorts to hold a festal celebration, when he says, “Let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice

and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. And why, O blessed Paul! dost thou bid us keep a feast? Tell us the reason. "Because our passover is sacrificed for us," he says, "even Christ, who is God." Do you see how the cross is a festival? You have learned that on account of the cross he bids us keep a festival; for he was sacrificed on the cross. And where there is sacrifice there is the taking away of sin, there reconciliation to God, there festivity and joy.

Would you learn another most illustrious achievement of the cross, transcending all human thought? The closed gate of Paradise he has opened to-day; for to-day he has brought into it the thief. Two most sublime achievements these! He both opened Paradise and brought in the thief. He restored to him the primeval fatherland of man, He led him back to the ancestral city. "To-day shalt thou be with me," he says, "in Paradise." What sayest thou? Thou art crucified and fixed to the cross with nails, and dost thou promise Paradise? How wilt thou confer such a gift? Paul, indeed, says, "He was crucified in weakness;" but hear what follows, "yet he liveth," he says, "by the power of God;" and again, in another place, "my strength is made perfect in weakness. Wherefore, now on the cross," he says, "I promise that by this thou mayest know my power." The spectacle itself is sad: look not at what the cross is in itself, lest thou despair, but

raise thine eye to the power of the Crucified, that thy countenance may gleam with the radiance of joy—for this end he shows to thee there his might.

For it was not when raising the dead, it was not when commanding the sea, it was not when chiding demons,—but when crucified, nailed to the tree, insulted, spit upon, railed at, mocked, tortured by all,—that he exerted his might in drawing to himself the sinful soul of the thief. See, on this side and that, the effulgence of his power. He shook creation, rent the rocks; and the heart of the thief, harder than rock, he made softer than wax. “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” What sayest thou? The cherubim and the flaming sword guard Paradise, and dost thou promise admission there to the thief? Yea, is his reply, for I am the Lord of the cherubim, and I have the power of flame and hell, and life and death. And therefore, he says, “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” The moment these celestial powers behold their Lord, they will withdraw and give place.

Though no king would permit a thief or any one of his servants to occupy the same seat with him, and to ride thus into the city, yet our gracious Lord did it. For at his entrance into his holy fatherland, he brings in along with him the thief; not dishonouring Paradise with the feet of the thief—far be it from him—but rather in this way conferring on it honour. For it is the glory of Paradise to have such a Lord so full of power

and love, as to be able to make a thief worthy of the joys of Paradise.

For when he called publicans and harlots into the kingdom, he did this not to dishonour the kingdom, but to confer on it the highest renown, and to show that the Lord of the kingdom is such as to be able to bestow on harlots and publicans an excellence so perfect, that they are seen to be worthy of the honours and gifts that are there.

As, therefore, we admire a physician, when we see those who are labouring under incurable diseases released from their maladies and restored to perfect health, so, beloved, admire Christ, and be astonished that, laying his hand on those that are afflicted with incurable maladies of the soul, he has power to deliver them from the evils under which they groan, and make those who have reached the utmost extremity of wickedness fit for the kingdom of heaven.—*Homily on the Cross and the Penitent Thief.*

[The above noble extract is taken from the beginning of the second of two discourses on the same subject. The last is enlarged and altered ; but many passages are *verbatim* the same in both. They were delivered at the interval of several years, as is calculated, on the same annual day of preparation. There are other examples of Chrysostom's practice of revising and re-delivering his sermons.]

THE RICHNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.”—1 Tim. v. 23.

You have heard the Apostolic voice, the trumpet from heaven, the lyre of the spirit ; for, like a

trumpet sounding a note of terror and war, it strikes the enemy with alarm, and raises the dejected spirits of its own ranks; and, by inspiring those who attend to it with dauntless courage, renders them unconquerable by the devil; and again, like a lyre, which soothes by its rich, soul-captivating melody, it lulls the perturbations of unwelcome thoughts, and along with delight, confers on us important benefit. You have then heard to-day the Apostle discoursing to Timothy of many necessary things. For, in reference to ecclesiastical elections, he has written, saying: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins;" and has set forth the grievous peril of such a transgression, by showing that men will have to bear the punishment of sins committed by other men along with the perpetrators of them, in consequence of their conferring power on wickedness by ordination. Then, again, he says, "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."

To-day, also, he has discoursed to us on the subjection of servants, the insanity of the covetous, the infatuation of the rich, and many other points. Since, then, it is impossible to go over each in detail, what part of the word spoken do you wish me to select and speak of to your love? For, as in a meadow, I perceive in what has been read, not only many flowers of varied hue, roses and violets in profusion, and lilies in equal abundance, but also the fruit of the Spirit scattered everywhere in variety and plenty, and I scent a rich fragrance.

Nay, rather is the lesson of the divine Scriptures which we have read a paradise—not only a meadow—for these flowers have not only fragrance, but also fruit, to nourish the soul. What part, then, of the words spoken do you wish me to treat of to-day? Do you wish what seems least important—what is easily comprehended by all—to be that which we shall handle on this occasion? To me this seems best, and I know well that this is your opinion likewise. What, then, is it which is plainest of all? What else, but that which seems to any one easy and succinct in expression. Well, what is there here of this nature? “Use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”

Come, then, let us expend the whole of our discourse on this one sentence. We do so, not for love of praise, not out of eagerness to make an exhibition of our powers of oratory, for the things we speak are not our own, but inspired by the grace of the Spirit, and our object is to excite those who are slow to hear, and to convince them how great the treasure of the Scriptures is, and that to run them over carelessly is not without risk and peril. For if this simple and obvious text, which seems to the multitude to contain nothing essential, appear to us a source yielding abundant wealth, and affording us the means of rising to the loftiest wisdom, much rather will such texts as show of themselves their native richness, fill with their inexhaustible treasures those who attend to them.

Let us not, then, cursorily pass over even those thoughts of the Scriptures which appear to be

simple, for these also proceed from the Spirit's grace ; and the Spirit's grace is never insignificant and mean, but great and wonderful, and worthy of the munificence of the Giver. Let us, therefore, not listen indolently, since those who smelt the metallic ore, when they cast it into the furnace, not only lift the masses of the gold, but collect the small particles with the utmost care. Since, then, we smelt the gold drawn from the Apostolic mines, not by casting it into a furnace, but by committing it to the intelligence of your mind ; not by lighting a flame, but by kindling up the fire of the Spirit ; let us carefully gather up even the minute particles. For if the expression is concise, its force is great. It is not from the bulk of their substance, but from their beauty, that pearls derive their peculiar value. So also is it the case with the lessons of Divine Scripture. For worldly instruction, rolling forth its trifles in plenty, and deluging the hearers with frivolous prating, sends them away with empty hands, without reaping any good, great or small. It is not so with the grace of the Spirit, but quite the contrary. By means of short sayings it inspires with wisdom all who give heed ; and often a single expression taken thence has proved sufficient provision for the whole of life.

Since then the riches before us are so great, let us arouse ourselves, and with wakeful mind receive what we are told ; since I am preparing to carry the discussion to a great depth. For to many the exhortation itself has seemed to be impertinent and superfluous. They speak thus : " Could not Timothy

have known of himself what he required to make use of, instead of waiting to learn from his teacher? Then did the teacher not only enjoin this, but also set it down in writing as on a brazen pillar by inscribing it in the epistle he wrote to him; and was he not ashamed to give directions about such matters when writing a public letter to his disciple?"

In order, therefore, that you may learn that so far from the exhortation being out of place, it was necessary and most profitable, and that—I do not say the utterance of it merely—but the committing of it to writing and the handing of it down by means of this epistle to succeeding generations, was not of Paul, but of the Spirit's grace,—I proceed forthwith to the proof.—*Exordium of First Homily of the Statues.*

THE SACREDNESS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

How spotless should he be who celebrates this sacrifice!—of what sunlike purity should be the hand that dispenses this flesh,—the mouth that is filled with spiritual fire, the tongue that is em-purpled with this awful blood!

Consider with what a dignity thou art invested, of what a table thou partakest. That body, at the sight of which angels thrill with awe, on which they cannot fix their eyes for the lightning-gleam that bursts from it,—by this body we are nourished, with it we are commingled, and we become the one body and the one flesh of Christ. "Who can utter forth the mighty acts of the Lord, and show forth

all his praise?" What shepherd feeds his sheep with his own members? Why should I name a shepherd? Mothers there oft have been who, after enduring the pains of childbirth, have consigned their children to the breasts of strangers. He could not bear this, but nourishes us with his own blood, and incorporates us with himself. Reflect! He was made of our substance. To each one of those that believe, by means of the mysteries He unites himself; and those to whom He has given birth He nourishes himself, and does not commit to another; and hereby again He persuades thee of the truth, that He has assumed thy flesh.

Let not us, then, on whom He has deigned to bestow such love and honour, exhibit a listless indifference. Do you not see with what readiness children seize the breast—with what eagerness they apply their lips to the teat. So let us approach this table and the nourishment of this spiritual cup,—yea, with more ardent longing let us, like infants at the breast, draw the grace of the Spirit, and let it be our only grief not to partake of this nourishment. Therefore let no Judas, no covetous man, approach. If a man be not a disciple, let him withdraw. The table does not admit of such as he: "For with my disciples," says Christ, "I keep the passover." This is the same table, and it is in no respect inferior. Let no one who is inhuman, cruel, and merciless approach; no one, in a word, who is unclean.

These exhortations I offer, not only to you who partake, but to you who administer. For it is

necessary also for me to address you, that with zealous care ye may dispense those gifts. Not light will be your punishment if ye permit any one to partake, knowing that he is stained with guilt. His blood shall be required at your hand. Though a general, though a viceroy, even though one encircled with the royal diadem itself, should approach unworthily, restrain him. Thou art invested with higher power than he. If thou wert entrusted with a fountain of water to keep it pure for a flock, and saw a number of sheep advancing with mud on their mouths, thou wouldest not permit them to bend down and pollute the stream. Now thou art entrusted not with a fountain of water, but of blood and spirit; and seeing some approaching who are stained with what is worse than earth and mud—sin, art thou not grieved? Dost thou not debar him? And what excuse hast thou? God has invested thee with this dignity for this very purpose, that thou shouldst exercise this discrimination. It is this that is thy honour, thy dignity, thy crown, not to go about clothed in a white and dazzling robe. “But how,” you will say, “can I distinguish between one and another?” It is not of those who are unknown, but of those who are manifest, that I speak. Let no one of those who are not disciples communicate; let no one be received as Judas, lest he share the fate of Judas. This assembly is also the body of Christ. Beware, then, ye who dispense the mysteries, lest you offend your Lord by not preserving this his body pure, lest you give a sword instead

of food. But should any one come in ignorance to partake, debar him, be not afraid. Fear God, not man. If you fear man, you will be despised by man; but if you fear God, you will be held in reverence by men. But if you have not the courage, come to me; I will not permit such presumptuous deeds to be done. I will yield up my breath sooner than impart the blood of the Lord unworthily; my own blood I will sooner shed than impart unlawfully that hallowed blood.—*From the Peroration of Homily LXXXII. on Matthew.*

[The theme of this extract is one on which Chrysostom delights to expatiate, in solemn and lofty language, in which, if we have the grandeur of mystery, we have also its haziness, and that boldness and confusion of metaphorical representation which did so much to develop the gross dogma of transubstantiation.]

THE BOUNDLESS LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD.

A man* has been insulted, and we are all in fear and trembling—both those of us who have been guilty of this insult, and those of us who are conscious of innocence. But God is insulted every day. Why do I say every day? Rather should I say every hour, by rich and by poor, by those who are at ease, and those who are in trouble, by those who calumniate, and those who are calumniated. And yet there is never a word of this. Therefore God has permitted our fellow-servant to be insulted, that thou mayest know the loving-kindness of the Lord. This offence has been committed only for the first time, yet we do not on that

* The Emperor—See Life of Chrysostom.

account expect to reap the advantage of excuse or apology. We provoke God every day, and make no movement of returning to Him; and yet He bears with all long-suffering. See you how great is the loving-kindness of the Lord. In this present outrage, the culprits have been apprehended, thrown into prison, and punished; and yet we are in fear. He who has been insulted has not heard of what has been done, nor pronounced sentence; and we are all trembling. But God hears day by day the insults offered to him, and no one turns to him, although God is so kind and loving. With him it is enough to acknowledge the sin, and the guilt is absolved. . . . Do you not hence conclude how unspeakable is the love of God, how boundless, how it surpasses all description. Here he who has been insulted is of the same nature with ourselves; only once in all his life has he been so treated, and that not to his face, not while he was present and seeing and hearing, and yet none of the offenders have been pardoned. But in the case of God, not one of these things can be said. For so vast is the distance between man and God, that no words can express it, and every day is He insulted while He is present, looking on and hearing; and yet He neither hurls thunder-bolts, nor bids the sea overflow the earth and drown all its inhabitants, nor commands the earth to yawn and swallow up all who have insulted Him; but he forbears, and is long-suffering, and offers pardon to those by whom He has been outraged, if they only repent and promise to do so

no more. Oh, surely it is high time to exclaim, "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all his praise?"—*Homilies of the Statues, III.*

AN AWAKENING AND ITS EFFECTS.

Though we have been hindered by sickness from taking our place along with you in the spiritual choir, yet you have not been deterred by the fatigue of travelling, though also that exertion has brought you here dripping profusely with perspiration; yet the teaching of the word has changed our sickness into health, and, aided by the soothing power of psalmody, has charmed away your weariness. Therefore, neither have I, through debility kept my tongue chained in silence, nor have you, through exhaustion, refrained from hearing. The moment that the word appeared my sickness vanished; the moment that instruction appeared your exhaustion fled. Instruction for the soul is the cure and remedy for weakness and weariness of body.

As far as the soul is superior to the body, so far are remedies for the one more precious than remedies for the other. Wherefore, although not sickness only, but ten thousand other impediments interposed, I have not kept myself away from the embrace of your love, I have not absented myself from the glorious festival.

Up to this moment we were chained to our bed. But God did not permit us utterly to perish by famine; for as it would have been famine to you

not to hear, so would it have been famine to us not to speak. So, also, often a mother, when ill, will far rather have her infant draining her breast than see him pine away with hunger : let my body also be drained ; for who would not cheerfully shed even his blood for you—men who are so fervent in piety, so ardent in your enthusiasm for hearing, who have recently so strikingly shown your repentance ? You make no distinction between day and night, but turn all into day, not by changing the sky, but by illumining the night with your vigils. Your nights are sleepless ; the sway of slumber is broken ; for your yearning after Christ has overcome the weakness of the flesh. You have passed from the corporeal frailty incident to humanity, to the imitation of the celestial powers, in enduring want of sleep, protracted fasting, and such fatigue of travel—fatigue by nature, relaxation by choice.

Such is the fruit of alarms, such the gain of the earthquake—a gain never to be squandered, a gain which gives abundance to the needy, and even enriches the rich. It abolishes the distinction between wealth and poverty. The earthquake came, and put an end to the inequalities of life. Where, now, are those who were clad in silks ? Where is the gold ? All these are gone, brushed away more easily than a spider's web—faded sooner than the flowers of spring. But since I see your mind prepared, I wish to spread before you a peculiarly sumptuous table. I see your bodies wearied, but your spirits fresh. The fountains of perspiration

are abundant, but they cleanse the conscience. For if athletes bedew themselves with blood for bay-leaves given to-day and withered to-morrow, much more ought ye, who have entered on the good fight, to refuse to surrender to the pains that must be encountered for the sake of virtue, and to faint under them. The theatre in which you exhibit is my crown, and one of you as a hearer is worth to me a whole city. For some have crowned the cups, some have celebrated Satanic banquets, others have set a luxurious table. But such vigils ye have kept, and the whole city ye have purified by the tread of your sacred feet. You have traversed in procession the forum, and made the very air holy; for the air is hallowed by psalmody, as ye have to-day heard God saying to Moses, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." You have hallowed the ground and the forum; the city you have made a church. For as a mountain brook, overflowing its banks and rushing on with copious flood, overthrows everything in its course; so the spiritual stream, the river of God, which gladdens the city of God, has been filled with waters, and has swept away the slime of impiety. There is no one profligate, or rather every profligate undergoes a transformation. He hears the voice, and his mind is changed, the melody enters his ear, and ungodliness is abandoned. The passion of avarice flees away, and if it does not, yet, like the wild beasts in winter, it betakes itself to its den. Licentiousness, too, digs for itself a cave, and as serpents when the cold stiffens their bodies, creep under

ground, as also those caitiff and slavish passions hide themselves as it were in a deep pit. Those who carry them about are ashamed of them. They carry them about, but no longer alive. The voice pierces the ear of the covetous man, and if it does not expel, it deadens his passion. It pierces the ear of the licentious and the proud, and if it slay not licentiousness and pride, it hides them underground. It is no trifling result to make wickedness ashamed to show its face. I said also, yesterday, that the earthquake had produced abundant fruit. You have seen the love of the Lord, who, while he shook the city, established your heart; while he made its foundations to totter, gave steadiness to your thoughts; while he even rent the city, imparted strength to your minds. Think on his love; the earthquake was of short duration, the stability he imparted is enduring. Let your piety continue for ever. For a little you were overwhelmed with grief, but you are rooted now for evermore. For well I know that through dread of God your piety has taken root; and though the cause of fear has ceased, the fruit remains. There shall no more be thorns to choke the word, nor deluging rain to inundate. The influence of fear on you has been salutary; it has proved an able ally to my words.

I am silent, and the foundations of the earth speak. I hold my peace, and the earthquake utters a voice, louder than a trumpet's clang, saying, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and full of pity. I have come not to crush you, but to

strengthen you." Such are the words of the earthquake. It says, "I have terrified you, not to fill you with anguish, but to teach you circumspection." Consider carefully my words. When my voice failed, vengeance spoke; when my teaching became feeble, fear came to its aid, &c.—*Discourse on the Earthquake at Antioch (which happened while Chrysostom was lying ill,)*—a noble specimen of his extemporaneous eloquence while still labouring under sickness.

THE EYE.

I do not so much admire the statuary who fashions a beautiful figure out of gold, as him who, by the resources of his art, can, out of crumbling clay, bring out a marvellous and inimitable specimen of beauty of workmanship. For, in the one case, the material contributes to the artist's success; in the other, there is a naked display of art. Would you learn how great is the wisdom of Him who created us? Consider what is formed out of clay! Is there anything more than brick and pottery? Yes, the supreme Artist has been able, solely of the material of which bricks and pottery are made, to make an eye of such beauty as to strike with wonder all who behold it, and to endow it with such power, that it can survey the lofty aerial expanse, and by the aid of a small pupil, to embrace objects of immense size,—woods, mountains, forests, and hills, oceans, and the heaven—to embrace all these, I say by this minute apparatus.

Speak not then to me of tears and rheums, for

these came through your sin ; but consider its beauty and visual power, and how, in traversing such an extent of air, it feels no weariness nor pain ; while the feet, after going a small distance, feel fatigue and weakness. But the eye, in scaling such a height, and ranging over such a wide expanse, is never sensible of feebleness.—*Homilies of the Statues, XI.*

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE.

Therefore, as when the winter is gone, and the summer appears, the mariner draws his vessel to the deep, the soldier burnishes his arms, and prepares his horse for the fray, the husbandman sharpens his sickle, and the traveller has courage to undertake a long journey, and the athlete bares and strips himself for the contest,—so also, now that we enjoy, in this fast which has made its appearance, a spiritual summer, let us, as soldiers, burnish our arms ; as husbandmen, whet the sickle ; as pilots, right our thoughts, so as to buffet the waves of unseemly lusts ; as wayfarers, enter on the journey to heaven ; as athletes, strip for the contest. For the believer is husbandman, pilot, soldier, athlete, and traveller. Therefore Paul says, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood ; but against principalities and powers : put on therefore the whole armour of God.” Have you seen the athlete ? Have you seen the soldier ? If you are an athlete, you have to enter in the contest naked ; if a soldier, you must stand in rank armed. How, you ask, are both possible, to be naked and

not naked, to be stripped and not stripped? How? I will tell you. Put off the things of the world, and you become an athlete; put on spiritual armour, and you become a soldier. Strip yourself of the cares of this life, for it is a time for wrestling; array yourself with spiritual armour, for a stern warfare must be waged with demons. Wherefore, you must be naked, so as to present nothing for the devil to lay hold on; and armed at all points, so as to ward off the deadly blow wherever it is aimed. Cultivate your soul, root out the thorns, sow the seed of godliness, tend with zealous care the fair plants of wisdom, and you will become a true husbandman. Paul says to you, "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." This art he practised himself. Wherefore, writing to the Corinthians, he said, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." Sharpen your sickle which you have blunted with gluttony—sharpen it with fasting. Enter on the path that leads to heaven—enter on the rugged and narrow path, and walk in it. But how shall you be able to enter and hold on your way? By keeping under your body and bringing it into subjection. For where the way is narrow the flesh that comes from gluttony is a great hindrance. Still the billows of unholy lusts beat back the tempest of evil thoughts, save the bark, show thus the perfection of your skill, and you are worthy of the name of pilot.—*Homilies of the Statues*, iii.

PRAYER.

Prayer is a powerful weapon, a boundless trea-

sure, inexhaustible wealth, a placid and waveless haven, the source of unruffled calm, and the root, the fountain, the mother of ten thousand blessings. Prayer is more potent than regal power. Oft when the wearer of the diadem is in the grasp of the fever, and lies prostrate on his couch, scorched in every vein, with physicians, and guards, and servants, and generals around his bed ; and neither the skill of his physicians, nor the presence of his friends, nor the assiduity of his attendants, nor the abundance of remedies, nor the magnificence of palatial pomp, nor the greatness of his riches, nor any human resource, has power to charm away the malady which presses sore upon him ;—should one who has access to God enter and only touch the body, and over it offer with holy lips a prayer, he puts the malady to flight. And that which no wealth was able to effect, no multitude of servants, no skill of the most experienced physician, no pomp of royalty,—that has been oft achieved by the prayer of one poor and even indigent man.

I speak not of that prayer which is feeble and full of langour, but of that which is made with earnestness, whose birth is accompanied with spirit throes, and which is produced by the intense concentrated exercise of the faculties of the mind. This is the prayer that wings its way to heaven.

As water, while flowing over a level plain and spreading unconfined on either side, springs not upwards ; but when forced to descend into a channel, and compressed into narrow space, it bounds aloft with the speed of an arrow, so is it with the

human mind. When it enjoys unbroken tranquillity it flows smoothly on and dissipates its energies; but when, through the force of circumstances, it is depressed and imprisoned in a narrow channel, the influence of this salutary pressure makes it pour forth on high pure and impassioned prayers.—*Extract from the Peroration of St Chrysostom's Fifth Oration on the Incomprehensible.*



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